

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FEMINISM**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

Feminism is a movement for women's emancipation and women's equality with men. It is against misogyny and values women as human beings and subjects and do not see women as objects. Today feminism cover issues like economic, social, religious, racial, transgender etc., and not just women's issue. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2000), the term 'feminism' originated from French word 'féminisme', and terms it as 'the advocacy of women's rights on the grounds of sexual equality'. Kunjakkan (2002) wrote that women's movement or women's liberation movement in short is known as feminism. It is a product of the western society, and it is described rather than defined (p. 87). Though the term 'feminism' was used by the Western world around 1890s, women's struggle to resist discrimination and sexist oppression goes much further back (Jenainati and Groves 2007, p. 4).

Barker (2004) has observed that feminism could be understood both as a diverse body of theoretical work and as a social and political movement. In either case, he said, "feminism

has sought to examine the position of women in society and to further their interests” (p. 68). Audi (1999), is also of the view that the goals of feminists is to explain why women are suppressed, repressed and oppressed in ways that men are not, and to suggest morally desirable and politically feasible ways to give women the same justice, freedom and equality that men have (p. 306). Barker (2004) further stated that feminists argued that subordination of women take place across social institutions and practices which make it a structural phenomenon. To him this structural subordination of women is patriarchy, which derives its meaning from the male-headed family, mastery and superiority (p. 68).

Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (2011) while discussing about feminism said that feminism has a history as long as women’s subordination, and women, according to them have been dominated always and everywhere. They are of the opinion that feminist theory develops a system of ideas about human life that features women as objects and doers. They also pointed out that the feminist theory is women-centered in three ways.

First, its major “object” for investigation, the starting point of all its investigation, is the situation (or the situations) and experiences of women in society. Second, it treats women as the central “subjects” in the investigation process; that is, it seeks to see the world from the distinctive vantage points of women in the social world. Third, feminist theory is critical and activist on behalf of women, seeking to produce a better world for women- and thus, it argues, for humankind (p. 443).

## **5.2. DEFINITION OF FEMINISM**

Feminism is not a science or philosophy; it has no belief or doctrine, no connection to realities or rationality, wrote Kunjakkan (2002, p.87) in simple terms it is as “a movement ‘of women, by women, and for women’ to achieve women’s rights”. Feminism stands for gender equality to eradicate domination, discrimination and subordination. It symbolizes major changes and transforms society - both social and political, as feminism thoroughly

questions the understanding of men, women and social structure which maintains the difference (Kunjakkan 2002, p. 87).

Bhavani (1993) wrote, according to the feminists, the nature and value of persons is not to be judged basing on gender, because everybody has the right to freedom and equality. She further defines feminism as a political ideology which has a vision of social and political arrangements based on equality of men and women as free individuals (p. 9). Pushpa Joseph (2010) summed up Schüssler Fiorenza's definition of feminism as "Feminism is the radical notion that women are people" (p. 101). Feminism is a movement towards greater equality and freedom, to which particular feminists and feminisms contribute both positively and partially (Hoffman 2001, p. 195). Sawicki (1991) sees feminism "as a pluralistic and emancipatory radical politics" (p. 8).

According to Ovung (2009),

Feminism as an ideology has developed as a consequence of historical process. Feminism can be considered as; a) a holistic theory concerned with the nature of women's global oppression and subordination to men; b) a social-political theory and practice which aims to free all women from female supremacy and exploitation; c) a social movement encompassing strategic confrontation with the sex-class system; and d) an ideology, which stands in dialectical opposition to all misogynous ideologies and practices (p. 95).

According to Soper (1997), "Feminism is the quest for the registration and realization of feminine 'difference': of that ineffable 'otherness' or negation of human culture and its symbolic order (and gender system)" (p. 287). Hoffman (2001), quoting Benhabib's definition of feminist theory wrote, it is the theoretical articulation of the emancipatory aspirations of women (p. 195). Flax (1996) offers one definition of feminist theory by describing its basis in the assumptions that: men and women have different experiences; women's oppression is not a subset of some other social relationship; the oppression of women is part of the way the structure of the world is organized; and one task of feminist theory is to explain how and why this structure evolved (pp. 18-19). Katz, (2000), has opined that 'Feminism, like cultural studies, inquiries into the connections between power and subjectivity, and it does so from the standpoint of the dominated' (p. 66). Feminism is

an ideology or belief system, an integrated set of theoretical assumptions that taken together structure a worldview that its adherents take to be true (Farganis 1994, p. 102).

Some feminists like Hirsch and Keller (1990) argued that feminism itself is not a unitary ideal for them,

Feminism, like theory, is an activity that would only be imagined as unified and seamless under the illusion of a governing ideal.... But it is no improvement to displace one governing ideal by several disparate ideals of 'woman' or 'truth' (p. 2).

### **5.3. WHAT IS A WOMAN?**

Man is commonly designated as human beings and woman represents only the negative. A man is right being a man and it is woman who is in the wrong. Even from ancient times, man or the masculine is defined as complete human kind, the body of a woman is a hindrance and the fact that woman had ovaries and uterus imprisoned her. As though not enough, it is also said that woman thinks with her glands (Kunjakkan 2002, p. 98). Since, the development of thought in ancient Greece, women were looked upon as inferior to men. To Aristotle, a woman is to man as the slave to the master, she is an unfinished product. Woman is weak in will and incapable of independent character or position. She is best to be confined to a home and be ruled over by man. He even sees the enslavement of woman by man as a rare achievement for man. Plato held that women should not be made more like men. Even Socrates sees women as inferior to men. To him, the courage of a man is shown in commanding while women in obeying (Durant 1961, pp. 83-84). Kunjakkan (2002) also quoting Aristotle wrote, 'the female is a female by virtue of certain lack of qualities', 'we should regard the female nature as afflicted with natural defectiveness' and St. Thomas who also stated woman as 'imperfect man' and 'incidental' being (p. 98).

There is a general perception that rationality is associated with 'masculinity' and emotionality with 'femininity' (Audi 1999, p. 305) to which Angami culture is no exception. Gallagher (2003) also noted that history suppressed women and there is presence of gender bias (pp. 110-111). Women have remained buried in illiteracy and backwardness for long period of time in history (Doshi 2012, p. 146). Joseph (2010), in her book *Feminist Hermeneutics*, symbolizes nature as feminine, and says that 'the violation of nature is specifically related to the violation of women in patriarchal culture' (p. 14).

Kunjakkan (2002) quoting from Benda wrote,

The body of man makes sense in itself quite apart from that of a woman, whereas the later seems wanting in significance by itself.... Man can think of himself without a woman. She cannot think of herself without man. And she is simply what man decrees; thus she is called 'the sex', by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex-absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the absolute – she is the other (pp. 98-99).

Robinson writing on Nietzsche wrote that his views on women are 'horrendously sexist', and the role of women is best suited being mothers and child- bearers. It is pointless for women to try to be like men when their role (mothers and child- bearers) should give them a high status in society. He further said that men and women rarely understood each other because men see women as calm and tender, whereas in reality they are 'wild'. At the same time he also exerted that there is no basic precision in the nature of men and women and there are no preset and stable characteristics.

The Overman, which is a translation of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, or in other words superman and superwoman, must create themselves. Many postmodern feminists and activists find his anti-essentialist view useful. In the observations of Nietzsche, equality is a myth because the oppressed women try to repress their rage and attempt revenge on their oppressors through equality. Gaining equality means victims suppress that which is different and unique about them. Taking this into account, some postmodern feminists suggest that

this is where traditional feminism has been in error because if by gaining equality means wiping out sexual difference and assuming an auxiliary kind of male identity, then the cost is too high. As a result postmodern feminist found Nietzsche's interpretations constructive in their efforts to re-evaluate traditional views on individuality and in seeking a new kind of feminist politics that affirms difference (Robinson 1999, pp. 48-49).

## **5.4. WAVES OF FEMINISM**

According to Kunjakkan (2002), feminism has gone through three wave's *viz.*, first wave, second wave and contemporary feminism. Feminist themselves do not have any idea when and where one wave begins and ends. But the idea that "women are unequal to men because men created the meanings of equality" remained throughout the waves of feminism (p. 91).

### **5.4.1 First Wave Feminism**

The first wave feminism began as a movement with the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, in western New York. It started with a group of women who were active in abolishing slavery in the US and also fought for legal and political equality for women (Chrisler and McHugh 2011, p. 37; Oving 2009, p. 95). Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (2011) also said that first wave feminism is seen as focused in women's struggle for political rights, especially the vote. They pointed out two dates which they termed as 'key dates', the first was 1848 when the first women's rights convention was held in New York. This convention is also known as the Seneca Falls Convention. The second key date which they pointed out was in 1920 when the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment gave women the right to vote (p. 447).

According to Jenainati and Groves (2007), the first wave started as organized feminist activity in Britain and USA in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their primary concern was the injustices they encountered and they do not label themselves as feminists. Some of their achievements were opening of higher education for women and the reform of secondary education for girls and the enactment of Married Women's Property Act, 1870. They remained active till the outbreak of the first world war in 1914 (pp. 20-21). Dickens and Fontana (1994) has assumed that the first wave feminist inquired about women's rights in terms of traditional liberal theory, giving importance to equality (p. 14) because women were treated as objects, and it was women's bodies which made possible the domination of women by men (Kunjakkan 2002, pp. 90-101). The first wave revolved around the middle and upper-class white women for women's suffrage and political equality (Feminist Movement, n/d).

Some of the contributors of the first wave feminism discussed by Kunjakkan (2002) are, Olive Schreiner with her work, *Woman and Labour* (1911); which is about feminism and equal rights and that the problem for feminism is men and not women. It is called 'the Bible of the women's movement' by Vera Brittain. Virginia Woolf comes next with her works, *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guines* (1938), the former work centered on the history and social milieu of women's literary production, the latter work gave particular attention to the relation between male power and the law, medicine, education and militarism. Cicily Isabel Fairfield popularly known as Rebecca West with her works, *The Fountain Overflows* (1957), *The Free Women* (1911) which continued in her work *The Strange Necessity* (1928). Rebecca supported feminism and their demand through her articles about the economic exploitation of working class women. She believed in women's creativity which she felt developed from an imaginative feminine unconsciousness (Kunjakkan 2002, pp. 91-94).

Another prominent contributor to the first wave feminism was Starchey, who was an equality feminist. She committed her work to support economic and political rights of women. Her work, *The Cause* (1928) delivered a message that feminism was characterized by the movement for women's entry into the public sphere and also for productive unity

with men. It also gave a detailed account of women's achievement in education, law etc. She connected the liberation of women with the achievement of citizenship and a more democratic society; her main concern was to organize the younger generation of women to feminism. Vera Brittain and Winifred Holthy like Starchey were both equal rights feminist. They fervently fought for equal pay, for equal work and equal opportunities for women in education and profession. Simone De Beauvoir in her work, *The Second Sex (Le Deuxieme Sexe, 1949)* argued that society placed the male as positive norm and 'woman' as negative, second sex or 'other'. For her women's role as the 'other' dated back to the pre-historic time when women were reduced to productive sphere which ended up in sexual division of labour (Kunjakkan 2002, pp. 94-96).

Dyhouse (2010) talking about women, history and feminism held that in first wave feminism, emancipation was sometimes more apparent than reality. In 1918, women more than thirty years of age gained the right to vote, but the fears that women voters might outnumber men delayed full female suffrage until ten years later (p. 13).

#### **5.4.2 Second Wave Feminism**

The term 'second wave' was coined by Marsha Lear to describe the increased in feminist activities in America, Britain and Europe. The second wave feminism was shaped by two political movements such as Women's Right Movement (WRM) and Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). WLM emerged out of the new left of the WRM in the late 1960s. The second wave feminists insisted on challenging the myth of a universal feminine experience, since women's attitudes varied in accordance to their race, class, age and levels of education. They challenged society's definition of femininity and its insistence on equating men with 'mind' and women with nature and 'body' (Jenainati and Groves 2007, pp. 86–87 & 155). The second wave attempted to fight social and cultural inequalities faced by women (Feminist Movement n/d). Supporting this view, Kunjakkan (2002) wrote that the second wave feminism combated the 'legalities' of the patriarchal world (p. 90).



The second wave feminists in western world fought mainly for equal pay, equal education and opportunities, free contraception and abortion on demand; whereas access to food, fuel and water were the most vital needs of women in the third world, and tribal women were no exception. The second wave in general was concerned with understanding and taking into account the oppressions which was believed to be experienced by every woman. It also highlighted women's relationships not only to the male social order but also with each other (Ovung 2009, p. 95). With the rise of second wave feminism in the late 1960's, 'glamour' became a dirty word which was associated with the sexual objectification of women's bodies and Miss World competitions was compared to the cattle market (Dyhouse 2010, p. 4). Feminists attacked the Miss America competition in Atlantic City in 1968, during which bras were purportedly burned or dumped into a Freedom Trash Can, and also in 1971, feminists in London disrupted the Miss World contest at the Albert Hall. For the second wave feminists, glamour was no longer associated with female agency, instead, it was seen as undignified and women investing in their appearance were a form of 'false consciousnesses' or politics of appearance encouraged by patriarchy and capitalism (Dyhouse 2010, pp. 123-124). Second wave feminists argued more about the unique biological and cultural uniqueness of women and that, in some cases it made them superior to men (Dickens and Fontana 1994, p. 14).

The second wave feminism developed the issue of reproduction, experience and difference. Second wave took reproduction as their starting point at the same time sharing the first waves stand on legal, educational and economic rights for women. Nevertheless first and second wave's feminism had the same stand that woman's oppression was coupled with her sexuality. As mentioned earlier that reproductive right was the centre of the second wave feminism, Mary O'Brien implied that feminist theory began with the process of women's reproduction. The second wave feminism gained its momentum in America from the New Left, the Civil Rights and Antipsychiatry movements, and in Britain from Socialist and Marxist anti-Vietnam campaigns. Some of the contributors of second wave feminism were: Kate Millett with *Sexual Politics* (1970), Millett argued that ideological indoctrination as much as economic inequality was the cause of women's oppression and that women's oppression did not develop from biology but from the social construction of femininity.

Sexual politics was an example of social power, and like all social power, sexual power controlled individuals both through indoctrination and violence. Shulamith Firestone's, *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), stated that reproduction was the root cause of female subjection and a universal answer to why women were dominated universally by men. Firestone's, *The Dialectic of Sex* identified women's oppression in a grand way; it traced the relationship between reproduction and sexual division of labour and also discussed the contradictions of racism and sexism. Susan Brownmiller also contributed to this wave with her book, *Against Our Will Men, Women and Rape* (1975). While Firestone claimed that women's lack of control over reproduction was the cause of social subordination, on the other hand Brownmiller argued that it was sexual violence, in particular rape and the threat of rape which enabled men to control women.

Susan Griffin who was both a poet and a feminist theorist contributed through her works, *In Women and Nature* (1978), *Rape.....and Power of Consciousness* (1979) and *Pornography and Silence* (1981). She argued that in the past, global violence had to do with men's fear of rejection by women and that rape was a practice of masculine violence. She compared nature with the female and claimed that a greater understanding of nature was given to women. Andrea Dworkin known for her theories about pornography, in her work, *Particularly in Pornography* (1981), tackled the relationship between masculine power, sexual aggression and pornography. She showed that pornography had put men's need on the right side to objectify women with racist intent in the sense that sexual antagonism was created by pornography which was heightened by a racist male hierarchy (Kunjakkan 2002, pp. 101-109).

Sondra Farganis (1994) had classified the second wave feminism in USA into three phases. The first phase concerned with achieving gender equality through anti-discriminatory legislation, gender differences mattered little, provided people were treated equally as individuals. In the second phase, theoretical writings on women shifted toward importance on examining women's experiences, emotions, and feelings. This phase saw a celebration of women's traits and the feminist in this phase, argued that seeing the world through women's eyes would not only lead to new perspective but also one that was significantly better. They

called for equal treatment and placed feminine values on the same level as masculine values or even placing feminine values at a higher regard. Feminists in the third phase collaborated with the postmodern feminist, they emphasized on the ways in which women were diverse and that gender should be understood as a continuum and not a dichotomy (pp. 103-107). Joseph (2010) held the view that the second wave called for the need for emancipatory collective action which required the presence of a critical group consciousness, solidarity and a sense of injustice and of discrimination (p. 102).

The second wave reached its pinnacle around 1980, after many political and legal gains had been achieved. But with the rise of the Religious Right in the US, it ushered in a conservative mood that made feminism unpopular (Rosen, 2000). Criticisms of WLM as too white, too middle class and anti-family made women draw back from feminism. In response to this criticism, new forms of feminism and feminist psychology emerged such as the Black feminist thought and eco-feminist. The black feminist argued for the self-definition of Black women and the impracticality of separating race, gender, and class oppression. Eco-feminists were mainly concerned with the interrelationship between humans, other organisms, and the environment (Chrisler and McHugh 2011, p. 41).

#### **5.4.3. Third Wave Feminism**

In the early 1990s, the third-wave feminism arose as a response to perceived failures of the second-wave, and also to react against the initiatives and movements created by the second-wave (Feminism n/d). The third wave continued to attend to the social and cultural inequalities and also influenced women to take part in politics and media (Feminist Movement n/d). In the 1990's it became evident that the third wave feminism was forming with the Girl Power Movement to develop a positive girls' culture and make room for girls and women in the society. The third wave was formed to support young women and transgender youth. Objectification of women was a major issue in the third wave. Developing empowered sexuality, defining gender identity, violence against women, women's health issues were the main objectives of the third wave feminist (Chrisler and

McHugh 2011, p. 42). According to Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (2011) “third wave feminism is emerging as a term to describe the feminist ideas of a new generation of young women who will lead most of the adult lives in the twenty-first century” (p. 447). In the third wave, discourse with postmodernism began, and the women’s standpoint approach gave way to a more radical consideration of differences among women in terms of race, religion, and social class (Dickens and Fontana 1994, p. 14).

## **5.5. FORMS OF FEMINISM**

There are various forms of feminism and Kunjakkan’s view (2002) is worth quoting here: “it is not feminism but ‘Feminisms’ as there are many offshoots of feminist thinking by different writers. This indicates the diversity of feminist view” (p. 110). Joseph (2010) also pointed to the divergent views of feminism, she remarked:

There are nevertheless divergent forms of feminism. Schüssler Fiorenza identifies at least seventeen schools of feminism. Though we can only talk of feminism in the plural most agree that feminism is not only a political movement like other emancipatory movements but also an intellectual methodology for investigating and theorizing the experience and structures of women’s oppression (p. 101).

Theory ends up in practice, likewise feminism as a campaigning movement is giving way to feminism as a discourse in more and more varied forms (Soper 1997, p. 289). The following paragraphs discuss the various forms of feminism.

### **5.5.1. Cultural Feminism**

Cultural feminists believe that women have been separated from each other and convinced of their inferiority in the society (Jenainati and Groves 2007, p. 97). Cultural feminists view women’s experience as different from men’s experience and envisage a transformation of

society based on women's unique strengths. They celebrate women's ways of knowing and being, and nurture women's culture. Cultural feminists value feminine community over masculine individualism (Chrisler and McHugh 2011, p. 40).

### **5.5.2. Existentialist Feminism**

According to Audi (1999),

Existentialist feminists claim that the ultimate cause of women's subordination is ontological. Women are the Other; men are the Self. Unless women define themselves in terms of themselves, they will continue to be defined in terms of what they are not: men (p. 306).

Echoing similar views, Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (2011) opines that the world develop out of culture created by men and assume men as subject, and culture constructs women as "the other" and an objectified being, who is assigned traits that represent the opposite of the subject male (p. 453).

### **5.5.3. Socialist Feminism**

Socialist feminists, according to Barker (2004), stress on the equality between men and women (p. 69). Socialist feminists claim that women are held back by social discrimination and lack of education. They also argued that in order to integrate women in all levels of society, the society needs to change its attitude towards women (Jenainati and Groves 2007, p. 98). Socialist feminists attempted to intertwine the distinctive filament of feminist social and political thought into a theoretical one. They made efforts to establish a feminine standpoint that represented how women see the world. Their argument is, 'women's condition was over determined by the structures of production, reproduction and sexuality, and the socialization of children'. For them, the status and function of women in these structures must change in order to get full emancipation; moreover the outlook of women must also change. Then, only, would women be liberated from the patriarchal thoughts that

made them the 'Other' (Audi 1999, p. 306). Socialist feminists viewed that the competition, exploitation, and inequalities of the economic system were the root cause for women's subordinated status. They sought women's liberation through efforts to undermine, modify, or eliminate capitalism and the social class system (Chrisler and McHugh 201, pp. 40-41).

According to Cathia Jenainati and Judy Groves (2007),

A socialist feminist society would demand/ensure:

1. Free, humane, competent medical care
  2. People's control over their own bodies
  3. Availability of housing for private and collective use
  4. Varied, nutritious and abundant diet
  5. Social respect for the work people do
  6. Democratic councils
  7. Scientific improvements geared towards the improvement of human life
  8. An end of housework as unpaid labour
  9. Redefinition of jobs
  10. Political and civil liberties encouraging participation by all
  11. Disarming of and community control of police
  12. Social responsibility for the raising of children
  13. Free, public, quality education
  14. Freedom to define social and sexual relationships
  15. A popular culture which enhances self-respect and respect for others
  16. Supporting for internal development and self-determination of countries around the world
- (p. 98)

Jenainati and Groves (2007) also opine that socialist feminists in order to unite women and seize power, also developed a tripartite. They are:

1. Win real concrete reforms that meet women's needs
2. Give women a sense of their own power
3. Alter the relations of power (p. 99)

#### **5.5.4. Marxist Feminism**

The Marxist feminists argue against the economic subordination of women and sexual division of labour. Marxist feminist started the domestic labour debate of feminism. They related paid work and domestic work and drew attention to sexual division of labour by pointing out that women at home do more work. Juliet Mitchel (*Women the Longest Revolution*), Sheila Rowbotham (*Women's Conciousness, Man's World*), Heidi Hartmann (*Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex, The Unhappy marriage of Marxism and Feminism.....Towards a More Progressive Union*), Michale Barrett (*Women's Oppression Today, Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis*) and Catharine Ms. Kinnon (*Feminism, Marxism, Methods and the State and Agenda for Theory*) are some Marxist feminist and their works (Kunjakkan 2002, p. 110). According to Audi (1999), "Marxist feminists believe that women cannot be men's equal until women enter the work force en masse and domestic work and child care are socialized" (p. 306). Marxist feminism ascribes social factors such as class divisions to women's oppression; they advocate the eradication of the bourgeois family structure which depends on women's unpaid domestic labour (Jenainati and Groves 2007, p. 100).

#### **5.5.5. Humanist Feminism**

According to Jenainati and Groves (2007), "humanist feminists argue that both men and women are being forced into socially constructed masculine and feminine roles which hinder the development of their authentic selves" (p. 103).

#### **5.5.6. Lesbianism or Lesbian Feminism**

Lesbian feminists claim heterosexuality as intransigent and that heterosexual woman are associated with patriarchy. To them 'Feminism is the theory and Lesbianism the practice' (Kunjakkan 2002, p. 110). According to Jenainati and Groves (2007), for the lesbian

feminist, sex is not private: it is a political matter of oppression, domination and power. The lesbian rejects male sexual/political domination; she defies his world, his social organization, his ideology, and his definition of her as inferior (p. 97).

### **5.5.7. Liberal Feminism**

The predominant position advocated by the first wave feminists, and later by the National Organization for Women (NOW) is known as liberal feminism. They sought equal opportunities for women through education and the elimination of prejudice and discrimination and stress on public engagement, political participation, and employment and leadership positions. Liberal feminists fought for the rights of women and the inclusion of women in all aspects of society as equals of men (Chrisler and McHugh 2011, pp. 40-41; Bijukumar 2013, p. 37). To Barker (2004), “liberal feminists regard differences between men and women as social-economic and cultural constructs rather than the outcome of an eternal biology” (p. 69). To him, the liberal feminists stressed on the equality of opportunity for women in all spheres of life. The aim of liberal feminist was to achieve equal legal, political and social rights for women. They fought for equal civil rights, equal access to education, health and welfare and equal pay. They argued that women should have the same civil liberty and educational parity with men (Kunjakkan 2002, pp. 110-111). In the same line of thought, Audi (1999) also argues, women have the same rights as men so society must provide women with the same educational and occupational opportunities that men have (p. 306).

### **5.5.8. Radical Feminism**

According to Jenainati and Groves (2007),

Radical feminists saw themselves as revolutionary, they held the view that women’s emancipation was not enough and argued that women were still oppressed and exploited. The only way to free or emancipate women was to counter patriarchy and marriage. Radical feminist demanded re-consideration of language, which was male defined and



expresses male dominated values, so that male definitions of the world could be corrected to reflect women's experience and participation in it (p. 101).

Chrisler and McHugh (2011) noted:

According to the radical feminists, fundamental social and political change is needed to eliminate the oppression of women. Gender oppression is viewed as a fundamental problem, and radical feminists argue that social institutions, especially marriage and traditional male–female relationships, are based on, and perpetuate, male dominance. Hence, these institutions and gender relations must be radically transformed. Unlike other forms of feminism rooted in the 19th century, radical feminism emerged during the second wave (p. 41).

Radical feminists suppose the basic cause of women's subjugation is sexual and claim that the reproductive and sexual role of women is the main cause for their oppression. They argue that unless women set their own reproductive goals *i.e.*, childlessness which is an alternative to motherhood and sexual agendas *i.e.*, lesbianism, autoeroticism and celibacy which are alternatives to heterosexuality, they would remain subjugated (Audi 1999, p. 306).

### **5.5.9. Eco-Feminism**

The term eco-feminism is coined by Françoise D'Eubonne. Though it was in use from the 1970's it became popular only after numerous activities and protests against environmental destruction (leading to ecological disaster). The first eco-feminist conference was held in USA, in March 1980 under the banner 'Women and Life on Earth: A Conference on Eco-Feminism in the Eighties' (Mies and Shiva 1997, pp. 497-498). Eco-feminists view the destruction of the natural environment is politically akin to the continued domination and violence against women. They aim to find ways in which the oppression of women could be correlated to the destruction of the environment and coming up with solutions to both problems. They equate women with nature (Jenainati and Groves 2007, pp. 104-105). Chrisler and McHugh (2011), are of the view:

According to ecofeminists, the oppression of women is one aspect of the patriarchal domination of nature; a healthy and balanced ecosystem requires a balance of power between women and men and a respect for the interdependent web of life. Ecofeminists have contributed to feminist psychology by articulating a critical perspective on patriarchal and positivist science as potentially harmful (p. 42).

#### **5.5.10. Psycho-Analysis Feminism**

It is the most prominent feminist thought, which started from Karen Horney's essay on femininity. Other feminists in this branch are Kate Millet, Dorothy Dinnerstein, Jean Baker Miller, Adrienne Rich and Nancy Chodorow. They started their own branch of psychoanalytic theory with reference to heterosexual relations. Their writings provided the basis of the current psycho-analytic feminism. They describe women's identity in new and positive terms (Kunjakkan 2002, p. 111). 'Psychoanalysis regards madness as a normative characteristic of femininity'. From this point, the debate started as to whether Freudian psychoanalysis could be used to explain women's lives. From 1974, feminist theorists used psychoanalysis to analyze the patriarchal society (Jenainati and Groves 2007, p. 106). According to Freud, "anatomy is destiny", it signifies that a woman's reproductive role, gender identity and sexual preference are determined by the lack of penis. As a result, any woman who does not act according to what biology has determined for her is "abnormal" (Jenainati and Groves 2007, p. 126).

Another branch of psycho-analysis feminism examines the relation between women with nature and men with culture. They argue with the concept that women are close to nature and men to culture (Kunjakkan 2002, p. 111). According to Audi (1999),

Psychoanalytic feminists believe that women's subordination is the result of early childhood experiences that cause them to overdevelop their abilities to relate to other people on the one hand and to underdevelop their abilities to assert themselves as autonomous agents on the other. Women's greatest strength, a capacity for deep relationships, may also be their greatest weakness: a tendency to be controlled by needs and wants of others (p. 306).

### 5.5.11. Postmodern Feminism

Postmodern feminists challenge the socialist feminist standpoint and brand it as a kind of representation of typical male view that told only one side of the story about reality, truth, knowledge, ethics and politics. For them, such a story is not feasible because women's experience differ from class, racial and cultural position and at the same time not desirable because the "One" and the "True" are a philosophical myth which is used by traditional philosophy to silence the voice of many (Audi 1999, p. 306).

According to Chrisler and McHugh (2011):

Postmodern feminism resists grand theories, avoids essentialism and calls for a more complex understanding of gender..... Postmodern feminism not only allows, but encourages, us to shift our thinking from one position and method to another. From the postmodern perspective, we may employ social constructionism, empiricism, and other epistemological and methodological approaches strategically, without becoming mired in orthodoxy or wedded to any position. Postmodern thinking advocates for feminisms (i.e. multiple feminist positions and perspective), rather than divisive arguments over which perspective is best or true (p. 53).

The term Post-feminism means anything that has postdated and surpassed the second wave feminism. Poststructuralist feminism and postcolonial feminism are the two streams of post-feminism. Psychoanalytic form of poststructuralist feminism has focused upon sex/gender difference between men and women under the influence of the 'French feminist' like Julia Kristava, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous. They analyzed the theories of Freud and Jacques Lacan (Raddeker 2007, p. 113).

Postmodern feminism in France took its inception in 1968 when the WLM split into two factions. While the one group claimed that achieving equality with men should be the main aim of the movement, the others, argued for the importance of maintaining the difference between men and women. They stressed on the importance of recognizing the primary difference between men and women in order to appreciate women's numerous subjectivities. The second branch of WLM *i.e.*, the postmodern feminist faction include

psychoanalytic critic like Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous (Jenainati and Groves 2007, p. 107). They (Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva) are opposed to difference feminism (Soper 1997, p. 287).

In the following paragraphs, Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva and their contributions to postmodern feminism through their works are discussed.

Hélène Cixous, a critic and a commentator saw feminine sexuality as rich and plural and drew a similarity between feminine libido and writing. She also believed that feminine writing could confront the patriarchal order in society because in patriarchal society women became the other. This otherness or difference resulted in power hierarchy. Cixous's strategy in order to overcome those hierarchies was to explore the revolutionary possibilities of a feminine writing practice. She also argued for the prospect of supporting bisexuality, not as a denial of sexual difference, but as recognition of plurality, of the presence of masculinity and femininity within an individual person. In her views, writing was a privileged space for exploring such non-hierarchical arranged bisexuality (Sarup 2001, pp. 109-111).

Luce Irigaray's main aim was to expose the foundations of patriarchy and define female identity. Her main concern was to encourage and develop a social form specific to women. For her a sociality among and between women was a necessary condition for the creation of female identity and subjectivity. Many writers had described rationality as male and unconsciousness as female. Irigaray also categorized rationality as male not to oppose but to suggest a more adequate conceptualization in which the male did not repress female or split off the unconscious, but acknowledged and integrated it. She also argued that women needed to present their status not only in economic terms but also in symbolic terms as well, which was the only way where the status of women could be fundamentally altered. Irigaray further stated that women needed a language of their own. Women were captives in an invisible prison; they needed a house of language, a house of habitation where they could grow. Language was referred by Irigaray to cultural transformation, like a distinction between speaking like a women and speaking as a woman. Irigaray emphasized women as

subjects and said that occupying the subject position was not just simply a question of position of enunciation but it must be rooted in social practice as well. Woman as subject also mean that women must be involved in the making of cultural and political reality (Sarup 2001, pp. 116-121).

Sarup (2001) writing about a house of language further wrote:

It is often said that to speak or write like a man is to assert mastery, to be in control of meaning, to claim truth, objectivity, knowledge, whereas to speak like a woman is to refuse mastery, to allow meaning to be elusive or shifting, not to be in control, or in possession of truth or knowledge. In other words, to be assertive, to make claims, to be 'dogmatic', which means to have a thesis, a meaning, a political position, is to take up a 'male' stance, whatever one's sex (p. 121).

According to Kate Soper (1997), Cixous's and Irigaray's theories of the feminine can be found in Cixous's concept of *écriture féminine* and Irigaray's encouragement of *parler femme* as speaking to a kind of feminine unconscious. Their theories were like language, whether spoken or written, unswervingly represented physical structures and their theories of the feminine was that language, whether spoken or written directly, reflected in the physical morphology (p. 288).

Soper (1997) further added:

It is a radical misunderstanding of nature of signs to suppose that the two lips of the vulva or breast milk or menstrual blood are 'represented' in contiguous statements or in the unencodable libidinal gushings of feminine prose in any but a purely metaphorical sense. But if we treat the supposed representation as purely metaphorical, then 'feminine writing' is being defined in terms of a certain image or metaphor of itself, and we end up with a purely tautological argument (p. 288).

Julia Kristeva first started as a linguist in 1960s; her main interests were language, ethics, sexuality and love. She was aware of the historical and social aspect of significance and subjectivity. For her the imaginary was not a visual order; it was also organized by voice, touch, taste and smell. Kristeva perceived the principle and theoretical foundation of modern linguistic as fundamentally authoritarian and oppressive. She also observed that language

was not a single system but a complex heterogeneous process located in and between subjects. Feminine to her was a form of language opened to both male and female writers. She did not have a theory of femininity and even less of femaleness, but had a theory of marginality, subversion and dissidence (Sarup 2001, pp. 122-123).

According to Kate Soper (1997), Kristeva was opposed to difference feminists (those who questioned any ultimate compatibility), and all theoretical moves to essentialism of femininity and hence to a denegation of the symbolic or gender system and removal of the feminine from the order of language. To her if feminine exists, it only did so within the order of meaning and importance where she herself was totally raising a feminine otherness (p. 287).

James Williams (2012) writing on Kristeva inscribed that her work claimed about revolutionary power of art because she did not only believe in the revolution of poetry and literature but also social, linguistic and political revolution. Kristeva was of the perception that by challenging and changing language, art could reveal and shake wider political and social structures, and only by achieving a revolution in language a revolution in society could be achieved. For her language was dominated by male structures, desires and forms of thought. It could be clearly seen that language and society were both male dominated, by ways of representing, organizing, working and structuring that were male because it excluded women, particularly feminine forms or feminine processes (pp. 133-134).

As discussed above about the different theories and persons associated with feminism, Audi's (1999) perception of feminist philosophy is apt to be mentioned here.

Feminist philosophy must be many and not One because women are many and not One. The more feminist thoughts, the better. By refusing to center, congeal, and cement separate thoughts into a unified and flexible truth, feminist philosophers can avoid the pitfalls of traditional philosophy (p. 306).

## **5.6. FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN THE NAGA SOCIETY**

In the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the Naga society was plagued by social problems where alcoholism and drug addiction became very severe. This period was when families were breaking up, violence and theft were commonly heard of. In this period, the words “shot dead” became very frequent and was heard almost every day. Many women lost their husbands and were left with the burden of looking after the family, many mothers lost their sons who were left to deal with the loss and bear the pain silently. It was also a time when rape by the Indian Army plagued the Naga society. The reason for most of these problems was the fight for separate identity which is commonly known as the Naga political issue. The prolonged fight for a separate identity resulted in killings, displacements, militarization and economic disparity. At the same time the conflicts and tensions elevated the level of alcoholism and drug abuse. At a time of complete chaos and turmoil, a group of Naga women came together and decided to bring the Naga women under one roof to fight against the social problems enveloping the society. They brought women together mainly because women and mothers were the most affected. Moreover, they felt that it was a mother who understood better the damages caused in the society. As a result the Naga Mothers’ Association (NMA) was formed in 1984. The NMA has been fighting for peace in the state, against alcoholism, drug abuse and human rights violation since its inception. The NMA played a prominent role in the peace process and women’s issues in Nagaland. The NMA has fought and won many battles, they are fighting and will continue to fight for a peaceful and gender friendly society (Personal interview on 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2014).

Recognizing the contribution of NMA to the Naga society, in restoring peace and also fighting for gender justice, the Association was awarded the Lifetime Contribution Award at the Times of India (TOI) Social Impact Awards ceremony in 2013. At the award, President Pranab Mukherjee presented the award and said:

They come from a region that is far from the mainstream and does not get much attention in the national media. They have served as peacemakers in a frequently conflict-ridden area. They are living testimony to the healing power that women have to offer a troubled world (Naga Mothers Association 2013).

## 5.7. FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN THE ANGAMI SOCIETY

In the year 1980, cases of rape and killing of women in one Angami village was reported. As a reaction towards these inhuman acts, the *Angamimiapfü* (Angami women) came together from different Angami villages for a meeting and marched to the office of the then Chief Minister Mr. Vizol Angami. They met him personally and in their meeting they submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister. This was the first time where women came out together in massive numbers to fight and stand for each other. Consequently with this the first women organization was born in the Angami society. The organization had no particular name at first, but it continued to address the issues of women.

The year 1992 was a huge landmark in the history of Angami women. The organization took its rebirth as *Angamimiapfü Mechü Krotho* on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1992. Later in 1996, in a general conference of the *Angamimiapfü Mechü Krotho* held on 4<sup>th</sup> April, the organization was renamed “Angami Women Organization” (AWO). Women’s organizations from all the four regions of the Angami *i.e.* Northern Angami Women’s Organization, Western Angami Women’s Organization, Southern Angami Women’s Organization and Chakhro Angami Women’s Organization formed the Angami Women’s Organization.

The Angami Women’s Organization since its inception have not only addressed issues of women and issues relating to women but they also fought against anti-social elements in the society. The organization was among the first to ban sale of liquor, drugs and ban video halls, and fight for human rights violations. They also fought against the influx of illegal immigrants and domestic help. In order to sensitize women on health care, family and education, the organization has been organizing various seminars for women in all the four Angami regions. For the women in rural areas to be economically independent, the AWO also organized various training programme on handicrafts, animal husbandry, manufacture of home based products etc. The AWO has been working for the upliftment of the status of women in different forms and also working for a better and peaceful society (Personal interview on 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2013).



## **5.8. FEMINISTS IN THE ANGAMI SOCIETY**

This section discussed three prominent women leaders of the Angamis, their life, work and contribution to society and particularly to women are highlighted below:

### **5.8.1. Rano Mese Shaiza**

Rano Mese Shaiza the first Naga woman to be elected as member of the Lok Sabha belongs to Khonoma village of the Angami tribe. She was born on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1928 in Phek district, to Dr. Sevilie Iralu and Mrs. Vituonuo Iralu. She completed her early education from the Baptist English School now known as Baptist High, Kohima, then she went to Welsh's Mission Girl High School in Golaghat and later went to the Government High School now known as Government Higher Secondary School, Kohima from where she passed her matriculation. She later went to St. Mary's College, Shillong and did her ISc which is equivalent to Pre University (PU) degree. She opted for teaching and served as Headmistress of Baptist English School, Kohima, now known as Baptist High and also in Government M.E. School in Phek and Phughoboto respectively. Rano Shaiza married Lungshim Shaiza of Ukhrul district in Manipur on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1954. She had two daughters and three sons.

After the inauguration of the State of Nagaland, Rano Shaiza was elected as the President of United Democratic Front (UDF) now known as Naga Peoples Front (NPF), from 1973 to 1975. She was elected to the Lok Sabha as United Democratic Front nominee on March 1977, in the 6<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha Election. She was elected to the Lok Sabha when Nagaland State was under President Rule, a time when the Naga society was ravaged by war, rape and everything was vandalized by the Indian Army. Her main concern was the welfare of women and children. She stood and spoke for the Nagas and raised many issues relating to Nagaland in the Parliament, proving that Naga women were strong and not less than their

male counterparts. Among all the MP from Nagaland, there was no one like Rano Shaiza in raising her voice for the Nagas.

She served as President of All Naga Women's Federation, Secretary of Naga Women's Organization, General Secretary of Board of Private School Association Nagaland, Member of Nagaland Bhasha Parishad, Convener of Ura Academy (Social Education Division), Member of Baptist Women's Welfare Nagaland and Member of Petitions Committee. She was a founding member of Naga Mothers' Association (NMA) and active member of the prohibition movement both at the National and State level.

Rano Shaiza was an active social worker engaged in many social activities for the development of the people specially women. Deeply concerned for the welfare of women, even at her later life she worked fervently on health and issues relating to women. In most of her speeches she spoke for women and children. She was an active Social Worker till her death. She died on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015 at the age of 86 years. So far Rano Shaiza was the only woman MP from Nagaland (Zhale 2012, pp. 47-48).

### **5.8.2. Rosemary Dzüvichü**

Rosemary Dzüvichü one of the most prominent figures in the feminist movement in Nagaland is from L. Khel of Kohima village. She was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1962 to Mr. Suosahie Dzüvichü and Mrs. Alhou-u Dzüvichü. She did her schooling from Little Flower School, now known as Little Flower Higher Secondary School, and later she went to St. Mary's College, Shillong. For her post-graduation, she went to North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, from where she did her post-graduation in English Literature. She took up teaching as her profession and currently, she is a Senior Associate Professor in the Department of English and is also the Director of the Women Studies Centre in Nagaland University.

Rosemary Dzüvichü served as a member of the Governing Body of Nagaland Art and Culture Council under the Government of Nagaland. She was also the first President of Lhisemia Khel Gazetted Officers' Body. She also served as the President of the Kohima Mahila Congress. It was during her tenure as the President of the Kohima Mahila Congress that she drafted the first manifesto for women. Currently she is the President of Nagaland University Teachers Association (NUTA), Board member of Indigenous Women's Resource Centre North East India, Expert member on North East Women National Commission for Women, Charter President of International Service Rotary Club Kohima and Advisor of Naga Mothers Association.

Though she is from a State ravaged by violence, conflicts and turmoil, and also from a society, where traditionally women do not have equal status with men, yet she has succeeded in creating a stand for herself, at the same time fighting for the rights of many voiceless women. Marriage and motherhood did not put a stop to her quest, as a result her marriage ended in divorce after eleven years. She was called names and discriminated, but it made her even stronger to stand up and fight for women's rights.

Rosemary Dzüvichü is one of the key figures fighting for the rights of women in a patriarchal society. Backing the Naga Mothers Association, she is the one who is fervently working for the implementation of 33 per cent reservation of seats for women in both the local bodies and the State Assembly. In 2011, the Naga Mothers Association under the leadership of Rosemary Dzüvichü, filed a petition at the Kohima bench of Guwahati High Court urging them to direct the State government, State Election Commission and Urban Commissioner to hold elections for the municipal and town councils throughout Nagaland with a third of the seats reserved for women in accordance with Article 243 T (3) of the Constitution of India and Section 23A of the Nagaland Municipal (First Amendment) Act, 2006. However, apex tribal bodies like the Naga Hoho and Eastern Nagaland Peoples Organization turned down the petition. As a result it was not implemented. She did not give up and continues to fight for the voiceless and she continues to be the voice of women. In spite of all odds, she is zealously working to uplift the status of women in the Naga society (The Hindu 2012, p. 1).

### 5.8.3. Neidonuo Angami

Neidonuo Angami was born on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1950 in L.Khel Kohima village. When she was six years old, her father Mr. Vilelhou Dzüvichü, who was a *Dobashi* was killed by the Naga insurgents and she was raised by her mother Mrs. Vinyü-ü Dzüvichü. She did her early schooling at Cambridge school now known as Mezbur Higher Secondary School, and later went to Baptist English School now known as Baptist High. She passed her matriculation from Government High School now known as Government Higher Secondary School in 1968. After completing Pre-University from Kohima College, she joined the first batch of the women police force and worked as a Sub-Inspector in 1971. However, she did not stay in that post for long and in 1972 she started to work as a teacher.

Neidonuo Angami started the Nagaland Weavers Association in 1978, and served as the General Secretary from 1978 to 1983. She was the Project coordinator of North East Region for Kripa Foundation Mumbai from 1991 to 1993. She was also one of the founding members of Mount Gilead Home and also served as chairperson of HIV/AIDS Care Hospice. She was one of the founding members of Naga Mothers Association (NMA) and the first General Secretary of the NMA from 1984-1991. From 1994-2003 she was the President of NMA and became the Advisor to NMA from 2003-2005. Neidonuo Angami started many organizations to help the people especially drug addicts and those affected by AIDS/HIV.

She also launched campaigns to stop senseless killing among brothers and played an important role in peace talks. Neidonuo Angami was one of the most prominent figures representing the NMA in the peace process of Nagaland, held in Delhi, Nagaland and Thailand. With her role as the trust builder in the peace process, the Naga women, today have a say in the peace process. For her contribution to the society and her role in the peace process, the Government of India conferred the Padmashree award on her on 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2005. Neidonuo Angami was one among the 1000 people from 150 countries to be selected as the “Nobel Peace Prize Nominee, 2005”. She is the first Naga to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Niedonuo Angami is an active social worker, whose main concern is to bring peace among different groups, fight for women and issues and problems faced by women, and work for HIV/AIDS infected people in the society. She works actively in spreading awareness to women to root out anti-social elements in the society (Personal interview on 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2014).

## **5.9. WOMEN IN THE FESTIVALS OF THE ANGAMIS**

In the Angami society agriculture and festivals go together and one is not complete without the other. The different festivals of the Angamis and the role played by women are discussed in this section. Women are as important as the festivals and without women; festival cannot be complete as women play the most important role in the festivals.

Festivals play an important role in the life of the Angami Nagas. Each festival of the Angamis is celebrated with a pageantry of color and feasts. Festivals are mostly connected to agricultural operations (Vitso 2003, p. 33). The Angamis follow the *Khrüphrüi* (Lunar Calendar) in their agricultural operation and celebration of festivals.

Every festival has a common ritual known as *Kizie* meaning dedication of the house. The night before the *kizie*, the woman of the house prepares rice beer (*zu*) by soaking rice, pounding it and putting into a vessel. The vessel is placed on the fire hearth for a brief moment and it is stirred and put aside overnight. The following day, the woman of the house puts some rice beer in a molded banana leaf (*theü*) and ties it to a post of the house. Then she will take some rice beer and sprinkle it on the house. This ritual of sprinkling rice beer on the house on the molded leaf on *kizie* is known as *dzü thu ki va* (Personal interview on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2012). *Kizie* is the first ritual of every festival and it is performed only by women. A man without a wife or widower does not perform this ritual.

### 5.9.1. Festivals of the Angamis

The Angamis celebrate the following festivals viz. *Terhünyi*, *Sekrenyi*, *Phousanyi*, *Ngonyi*, *Kerunyi*, *Chadanyi*, *Khoupfhünyi* and *Vatenyi*. The timing of celebrating the above mentioned festivals differ from village to village, nevertheless all the festivals are connected and are concerned with the agricultural operation of the Angamis.

#### 5.9.1.1. *Terhünyi*

*Terhünyi* is a celebration for the rich. During this celebration, the rich give feasts to the *Phichümia* (elders) of the village (Personal interview on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2012). This feast is mainly celebrated to invoke blessings on the people by the elders. At this festival *dzü thu ki va* (sprinkling of water in the house) is done to ward off accidents and calamities for the year. *Dzü thu ki va* as an integral ritual of *kizie* is a purgative of the womenfolk.

The *Terhünyi* is also celebrated by the Angamis to commemorate and remember the departed souls (Kelhou 1993, p. 56). The feast begins with *kizie* followed by *Mekhruzie*, where the tombs of the departed souls are cleansed or renovated. Like the *kizie*, the women of the house prepare rice beer the previous night. Early the next morning she pours rice beer on the graves in molded leaves (*theü*). This ritual is known as *mekhruzie*. It is a popular belief of the Angamis that the spirits of the departed souls visit them during this festival. Work related to the maintenance of graveyard and tombs are done only during this time of the year, which otherwise is a taboo. At this festival as the graveyards are cleansed, the mother of the house pours rice beer and places some food on the graves saying, “come and dine, do not be hungry or thirsty, take this food and drink and share with your friends”. It is at this festival the remains of the dead are relocated in case it has been buried outside the village. The festival comes to an end with a ritual known as *Kesiameruo* (Personal interview on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2012).

The legend associated with the taboo of maintaining tombs only during the feast of *Terhünyi*, is *Sopfünüo* and her child who turned to stones. It is a common legend told by many. As legend says, *Sopfünüo* was a girl from *Rüsoma* village. She grew up to be a beautiful woman. She married a man from *Sotsüma* village and they were blessed with a son. Because of her husband's infidelity, he sent her away along with their child one night. *Sopfünüo* and her child died on their way to her parent's village and legend says that they turned to stones. After some time her brother went to visit her in her husband's house. On hearing about the incident, her brother went looking for them and found two stones. The villagers tried to pull the stone of *Sopfünüo* but could not, only resulting in a great storm. That very night, she appeared in their dreams and told them that they would have to pull both the stones because she could not leave her son. As told in their dreams, the villagers the next day pulled both the stones and brought them to her native village *Rüsoma*. If anyone touches the stones of *Sopfünüo* and her son heavy and devastating storm occurs destroying houses and crops. Even to this day, people refrain from touching the stones of *Sopfünüo* and her son for fear of natural calamities.

#### **5.9.1.2. *Sekrenyi***

*Sekrenyi* is the biggest festival of the Angamis. It is celebrated on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month of *kezei* (February, in leap years the month of February is known as *kenuo*). This festival has been recognized as the official festival of the Angamis by the State Government of Nagaland and it is annually celebrated on 25<sup>th</sup> February. *Sekrenyi* is also known as *Phousanyi* (feast of purification). The festival circles around a number of rituals and ceremonies. The first ritual of *Sekrenyi* like all festivals of the Angamis is *kizie* and *dzüseva* (sprinkling of water).

On the first day of the festival, the menfolk go to the village water source (spring) at dawn with two shawls (*pfhese*), spears, machetes (*daos*) and guns. On reaching the water source, they touch the water and sprinkle it on their chest, knees and right arms and also on their clothes and weapons. This ritual of touching and sprinkling the water on the body and

weapon is known as *dzüseva* (Personal interview on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2012). The *Dzüseva* symbolizes the washing off of the bad past and invoking blessings for what is to come. On their return, every male child old enough to throttle a fowl sacrifices it by throttling it. This is done to foresee the omens of the year through the position of the fowl's leg as it fall dead to the ground. When the right leg falls over the left leg, it is considered a good omen; otherwise it is a bad omen. The meat of the fowl is then cooked and eaten. The meat is cooked in a new pot and put on a new fire. The womenfolk are kept at bay during this festival as they are considered impure. The *Sekrenyi* is a feast of purification to purify men's health and renew their energy for warfare (Thinuokhrieü 1996, p. 8). At this feast a fire known as *seguomi* is made with bamboo. The fire making is then followed by *thekra he*, the fourth day of the *Sekrenyi*, where the youth in their traditional attire feast and sing the traditional tunes for two to three days (Shürhozelie 1981, p. 11).

#### 5.9.1.3. *Ngonyi*

*Ngonyi* is celebrated in the month of *Ketshü* (April). *Ngonyi* is also known as *kengonyi* because during this festival meat and salt are used scantily unlike other festivals and merry making (Personal interview on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2012). This festival is celebrated for five days, which commemorates the onset of the sowing season. Sowing of seeds is initiated by the *Tsiakrü-u* (the First Sower), before him nobody is allowed to sow their seed lest calamities befall them. On the day of sowing, which is specially set aside, *Tsiakrü-u* takes some seeds and goes out of the village gate. He places the seeds on the ground and invokes blessings upon it saying: *A tsie nnyie khapie kijü khru keshü ha, puo bu keviu chüliecie, sidi a bu se chü terhü zu thu, mia nuosenuoyie tieü chücie* (the seeds which I sow, may it bear much fruit and let me after having the fruit be able to overcome my enemies in times of war and let my generations prosper). After the sowing of seeds is done by the *Tsiakrü-u*, five days of *penyie* (abstinence from manual work) is observed. During these five days of *penyie*, the *Tsiakrü-u* avoids talking to outsiders and prepares his own food. After five days of *penyie*, the entire community commences the sowing of seeds. Like most rituals, *Kizie* ritual is performed before the commencement of sowing the seeds (Personal interview on 1<sup>st</sup> May,



2012). As seen above that *kizie* is performed only by the womenfolk so even though the *Tsiakrü-u* is a man, he cannot proceed with the sowing of seeds without women performing the *kizie* ritual.

#### **5.9.1.4. *Kerunyi***

*Kirunyi* also known as *khuthonyi* is celebrated in the month of *Cacü* (May) prior to the commencement of transplanting paddy to the terrace fields. The *Phichü-u* (elder) of the village does the *tekhu sekhrü* (initiation of transplantation) in his terrace field (Personal interview on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2012). The ritual of *Kizie* is performed the next day to avert sickness, plague and other epidemics to prevent it from harming the people. After the initiation of transplantation by the elder of the village, the entire community commences the transplanting of paddy in their terrace fields. *Kerunyi* is celebrated with lots of feasting and merry making. As this festival is celebrated right before the season of transplantation, people nurture themselves with all the good food and rice beer. They, thus, mobilize themselves for the hard work of the year. It is a backbreaking and a toiling job for the people during this season.

#### **5.9.1.5. *Chadanyi or Chüinyi***

When the crops in the fields begin to ripen the Angamis start to prepare for the harvest by clearing the foot-path to their fields. The festival associated with this preparation of the harvest by clearing the foot-path is known as *Chadanyi*. This festival coincides with the cultivation and harvest of millet (*chü*). Hence, this festival is also known as *chüinyi* (Bareh 1970, p. 70). *Chadanyi* or *chüinyi* falls in the month of *Tsierie* (August) and *Rüyo* (September). Like any other festival, *kizie* is performed by women before the festival commences. The Angami tribe cultivates not only in a particular place but the cultivation is scattered in different areas. Therefore, at the time of clearing the foot-path, a raised platform (*theba*) is made at the junction of foot-paths leading to different sights of cultivation. The

raised platform facilitates the people for resting during the time of harvesting and carrying of paddy from the fields to their home.

#### **5.9.1.6. *Theyu-u Khupfhünyi***

*Khupfhünyi* falls in the month of *Thenyie* (October), it is also known as *Theyu-u Khupfhünyi*. Before the *Khupfhü* festival begins *kizie* ritual is performed by the womenfolk. Legends hold that when the Nagas first settled in Khezhakeno village, they found a toad (*Theyu-u*) with a bunch of rice plants in its mouth. This signifies that the toad brings grains (*lhatsü lhale*) for them. *Khupfhünyi* is celebrated before the harvest begins. As the festival begins, the mother of the family performs some special rice giving ritual to the toad. On the night before the festival begins, women cook rice without tasting it, five to six leaves are placed on the floor after which a small amount of rice and a pinch of salt are added on each leaf. The leaves are then wrapped and kept aside. The next day they take it out and hide it behind the huge baskets (*Chünüo*) in their granaries (Personal interview on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2012). Only After performing this ritual they return to cook for their family. During this festival meat is prepared in plenty and is given to the neighbours. It is also a time when children exchange cooked meat with each other.

This is followed by the harvesting season which is one of the most important seasons as people bring home the whole year's labour. Like other festivals, *kizie* is performed by the womenfolk before the *liede* (Commencement of harvest). *Liede* is done by a woman known as *Liedepfü*. On the day of *liede*, the *liedepfü* goes to her field early in the morning, she ties some rice to a rice plant and cuts two bunches of rice and takes it home (Personal interview on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2012). On reaching her house she pronounces: *Mha kevi capfü vorshü ho* which means "all good things are asked and brought home" (*Angamimia Thezo Leshüda Kenie-u - Angami Customary Law* 1990, p. 64).

#### 5.9.1.7. *Vatenyi*

*Vatenyi* is celebrated after the harvest. It is celebrated either in *Ziephie* (November) or *Rüde* (December). *Vatenyi* unlike most festival of the Angamis is devoid of feasting but pregnant with rituals and meanings (Personal interview on 1<sup>st</sup> Mat, 2012). On the morn of the *Vatenyi*, womenfolk go to the water source (spring) to fetch water in their *meshü* (gourd). As they return, they pluck the stem of a wild plant. On reaching their home, they dip the stem of the wild plant into the water and sprinkle it on their vessel, cooking pots and baskets used for storing their grains. This festival is celebrated to invoke God's blessings and His protection. The mother of the family on the first day of the festival abstains from food (rice) until dusk but consumes *zu* (rice beer), crabs, frogs, snails and fishes. As the mother abstains from food she implores *ke di ke pu* (abundance and plentiful of crops). Imploring for abundant and plentiful crops is known as *ke di ke pu cha*. It is also known as *ke vate* (abstinence from food) because the mother fasts on behalf of the family members. The main theme of this festival is seeking god's blessing over the harvest to be plentiful and to be judiciously used to ensure that the harvested crops do not recede fast. As the mother of the family fasts for the family and their crops, the male members of the family go fishing and ensnare crabs, frogs, snails and fish to feed the mother in the evening. The rich family prepares varieties of meat and give it to the mother. The Angamis prefer to feed their mothers with meat of animals or creatures that hibernate for some time in a year without food, so that their harvest will last for a longer period.

### 5. 10. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Taking account of the festivals of the Angamis, it is pertinent to remark that women folk play a vital role in the Angami society. The 'woman' in the Angami society, is the initiator, mediator and sustainer though she does not perform a visible role like her male counter-part. Drawing our attention to the *Liede* ritual performed after the *theyu-u khupfunyi*, it only

affirms that the 'woman' is the initiator for cultivation which is the source of livelihood of the Angamis. The 'woman' in the Angami society has a direct bearing on the cultural, religious and economical life of the Angamis except for the political life. The 'woman' in the Angami society is the background and facilitator on a stage of which the Angami man is the actor.

In fact, no festival and cultural activity is possible without the 'woman' in the Angami society. But the irony is that the Angami women do not enjoy the same status as her male counter-part. *Sekrenyi*, the most popular and the biggest festival of the Angamis is primarily a sanctification and glorification of the male chauvinism of the Angamis. On this festival, although the womenfolk perform *kizie*, they are look down on as impure and detrimental to the purity of the menfolk. How long will this perception of male chauvinism continue? Can the festivals of the Angamis be deconstructed to construct a feminist perspective of festivals?