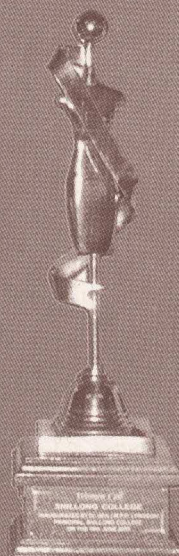




PROCEEDINGS
OF
THE DELIBERATIVE
AND
INTERACTIVE SESSION
ON
WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

19TH JUNE 2009



Organised By
Women's Cell, Shillong College
in Collaboration with
"Ka Lympung ki Seng Kynthei"





Inauguration of Women's Cell
 Shillong College, Shillong

Theme : 'Women and Leadership'

Date : 19th June 2009

Venue : Conference Hall, Shillong College

The Programme is Organised by
Women's Cell, Shillong College

In Collaboration with
 Ka Lympung ki Seng Kynthei, Shillong



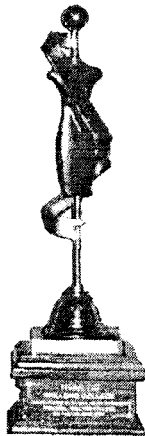


Proceedings of the Deliberative and Interactive Session

On

“Women and Leadership”

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Proceedings of the Deliberative and Interactive Session
On
“Women and Leadership”
Organised by
Women’s Cell, Shillong College
On the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Cell
On
19 June 2009

Organising Committee

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Dr. (Mrs.) M.P.R. Lyngdoh
Principal,
Shillong College

Co-ordinator

Dr. M. Dey
Vice Principal,
Shillong College

Convener:

Dr (Mrs.) E. Kharkongor
Deptt. of Economics
Shillong College

Joint Convener:

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Shillong College

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2. Dr. (Mrs.) A. Nongbri, Deptt. of Khasi, Shillong College
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5. Smt. W.C.K. Sohliya, Deptt. of Commerce & Management, Shillong College
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1. Dr (Mrs.) E. Kharkongor
Deptt. of Economics, Shillong College
2. Dr (Mrs.) D. Bhomick
Deptt. of English, Shillong College

INAUGURAL PROGRAMME

Chairperson : Dr. (Mrs.) M.P.R. Lyngdoh
Principal, Shillong College
Welcome Address : Dr. (Mrs.) E. Kharkongor
Convener, Women's Cell, Shillong College

*Unveiling of Commemorative Souvenir by Dr. (Mrs.) M.P.R. Lyngdoh
Principal, Shillong College*

Short Speech : Padmashree T. Phanbuh
President, Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei
: Prof. K.S. Lyngdoh
President, Governing Body, Shillong College
Address : Dr. (Mrs.) M. Sungoh
Chairperson, Women's Cell, NEHU
Inaugural Address : Smt. M. Iawphñiaw
Post Master General, North-Eastern Circle

*Deliberative and Interactive Session
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm*

1. Lecture by : Smt. W.C.K. Sohliya
Lecturer, Deptt. of Commerce and Management
Shillong College
: Dr. A. K. Nongkynrih
Reader, Deptt. of Sociology, NEHU
: Padmashree, Patricia Mukhim
Editor, The Shillong Times and Social Activist

2. Interactive Session : Participants

3. Chairperson's Remark : Dr. (Mrs.) M.P.R. Lyngdoh
Principal, Shillong College

4. Vote of Thanks : Dr. (Mrs.) S. Pandey
Lecturer, Deptt. of Hindi,
Shillong College

Rapporteurs : Dr. (Ms.) R. Dkhar
Deptt. of Education, Shillong College
: Smt. I. Warjri,
Deptt. of English, Shillong College

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Women's Cell, Shillong College expresses its deep appreciation and gratitude to the following persons for their unstinted support, guidance and participation.

1. Dr. (Mrs.) M.P.R. Lyngdoh, Principal, Shillong College
2. Dr. M. Dey, Vice Principal & Co-ordinator.
3. Shri. K.D. Roy, Vice-Principal, Professional Courses.
4. Ka 'Lympung ki Seng Kynthei'.
5. Resource Persons.
6. Shri. Macdonald S. Mawrie, Deptt. of Computer Science
And Applications.
7. Teaching & Non-Teaching Staff, Shillong College.

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Deliberative and Interactive Sessions

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

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Foreword



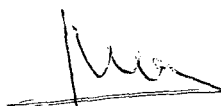
I am happy to learn that the Women Cell, Shillong College is bringing out the report of the programme, "Women and Leadership" organized in the College on 19 June 2009. The programme coincided with the inauguration of the Women Cell of the College. Shillong College is one of the few Colleges in the state, which has set up a Women Cell, and this, I believe is a great milestone towards empowering of the girl students and women staff of the College. The Women Cell has certain aims and objectives in building self-confidence and creating awareness on various issues pertaining to women and the society at large. Women need greater participation in the political, social and economic spheres. We cannot claim to be fully democratic if women do not get opportunities or do not participate in the decision-making bodies at all levels. Greater participation of women will enable them to see their problems through women's eyes, and I am sure, that will lead to progress and development of our country. Although the Women Cell in the College is at an infant stage, yet I have no doubt that it will grow from strength to strength in the years to come. My deep appreciation to all the learned speakers, invitees, teachers and students who have participated in the programme and shared their ideas.

To all the office bearers of the Women Cell, teachers, staff and students who had helped in organizing the programme, I would like to say Thank You.

My best wishes to the Women Cell, Shillong College.

May God bless you all.

*Dated: Shillong
The 10th May 2010*


*Dr (Mrs.) M.P.R. Lyndoh
Principal, Shillong College*

FROM THE CO – ORDINATOR'S DESK



*Dr. M. Dey
Vice – Principal,
Shillong College*

It gives me a great pleasure to pen down a few words in this first ever publication of 'Women's Cell', Shillong College. The topic "Women and Leadership" was most aptly chosen to discuss the urgent need for women to embark onto the leadership platform. Generations of inequity, including low investment in women's education and health, restricted access and regulatory restraints have all marginalized and undermined women's position in society. All of these have limited women's opportunities for participation in decision-making, thus contributing to growing gender gaps. The prevailing situation must change to install a healthy, happy, prosperous and progressive society. But how and who will bring in the change? I presume, before going for such change it must be realized that women's empowerment should not be the issue concerning women alone. The status of women characterizes the society as a whole and so the society has to change its mind-set. The society has to accept and encourage women to be the leader. There is no denying that the dilemmas faced by women in terms of assuming leadership roles and contributing to decision-making processes, are anchored in the socio-cultural prejudice inherited since time immemorial. The greater Indian society is faced with the menace of female foeticide, trafficking of women and girls and even cross-sections of affluent societies dogmatically correlate the birth of girl child to dowry. Crime against women is rampant and the accused get shielded by vested interest.

Thus, it is high time that things change and create opportunities for women to take over and share the responsibility of leadership in every sphere of life, right from the bottom to the highest hierarchy of the society. It is time that we learn from past experiences and place women onto the pedestal of dignity. To achieve the goal with the abolition of all evils against women the nation needs recruitment of women not only in *panchayats* and parliament but also in other work places including corporate sector and civil administration. The change is inevitable and I am sure Women's Cell of the College will concentrate more on educating women about their rights and emphasize on organizing programmes aimed at empowerment of the society through women.

*Dated: Shillong
The 10th May 2010*

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'M. Dey'.

*Dr. M. Dey
Vice - Principal, Shillong College*

Welcome Address

Dr. E. Kharkongor,

Convener,

Deptt. of Economics, Shillong College.



Madam Chairperson, Dr.(Mrs.) M.P.R. Lyngdoh, Hon'ble Chief Guest, Smt. M. Iawphniaw, Chief Post Master General, North Eastern Circle, Prof. K.S. Lyngdoh, President, Governing Body, Shillong College, Prof. S.M. Sungoh, Deptt. Of Education and Chairperson, Women Cell, NEHU, Padmashree Theilin Phanbuh, President, Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei, Padmashree Patricia Mukhim, Editor, Shillong Times and Social Activist, Dr. A.K. Nongkynrih, Reader, Deptt. Of Sociology, NEHU, Members of the Governing Body, Shillong College, Dr. M. Dey, Vice Principal and Co-ordinator, Women Cell, Shillong College, Shri K.D. Roy, Vice Principal, Professional Courses, distinguished guests and representatives of various social organizations, principals and teachers of different institutions, retired teachers of Shillong College, Members of the media and press, the teaching and non-teaching staff and students.

On behalf of the Women's Cell, Shillong College I take this opportunity to accord a warm welcome to all of you present here today for the formal inauguration of the Women's Cell which marks another milestone in the various achievements of the college. The Women Cell was created on 3rd April, 2009 under the able and dynamic leadership of our Principal Dr. (Mrs.) M.P.R. Lyngdoh and will endeavor to equip women students with the capacity to become leaders of the future. The main objectives of the cell are to adopt programmes and activities for the women students that will enhance their self-esteem and self-confidence, to develop their critical thinking ability to make informed choices in areas like education, employment and health especially reproductive health and to foster decision-making ability and action.

The concerns that women have to be equipped with the capacity to act and impact have been recognized not only in India but in the rest of the world. The UGC also have emphasized the setting up of Women's Study Centers/Women's Cell to promote women's development since the 80's. More importantly, it is reflected for the first time in the planning process wherein the objective of the Eleventh Plan **"towards faster and more inclusive growth"** recognizes the differential needs of all women and attempts have been made to guarantee their rights and entitlements to ensure their capacity building. This can only happen when women are granted autonomy in decision making and recognizing them as agents of sustained economic growth and change. Hence, the setting up of the Women's Cell in the college and the adoption of the inaugural theme **'Women and Leadership'** reflect the challenges in shaping and building up leadership qualities of the students in the educational process.

Your presence here today will strengthen and encourage us as we move forwards to ensure that the needs, rights and contribution of women are reflected in the correct perspective. Once again, I sincerely welcome each one of you. Thank you.

TEXT OF SPEECH



*Prof. K.S. Lyngdoh
President G.B. Shillong College*

Smti M. Iawphniaw, Post Master General, North Eastern Circle, Chief Guest in this function, Dr. M.P.R. Lyngdoh, Principal Shillong College, Prof S. M. Sungoh, Chairperson Women Cell (NEHU), Padmashree T. Phanbuh and Dr. (Mrs.) E. Kharkongor, students, teachers, ladies and gentlemen.

I count it a privilege to be at this inauguration of the Women's Cell and Study Centre at the Shillong College and to have the opportunity of saying a few words on the occasion. As you are aware, India is today a nation on the move and the country is engaged in a race to empower its citizenry and improve their standard of living in as short a period of time as possible. The President of India, Smt. Pratibha Patil in her recent address to Parliament spoke of a "New Deal" for the country as a whole and, in particular, for its "young population (which) is naturally restless and wants to see change quickly." The empowerment of women and raising India's institutions of higher education to international standard rank high among the key initiatives set out by the government for attaining this stated mission.

As part of an agenda to fulfill the objectives set out by the government in higher education, the Universities Grants Commission (UGC) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NACC) have launched various initiatives, which include the setting up of cells concerned with Internal Quality Assurance, Placement, Guidance and Counseling, and Grievance Redressal in colleges and universities throughout the country. Another step suggested by UGC is the launching of Women's Cell to cater to the particular needs of women enrolled in courses of higher education.

The function and purpose of the Women's cell and study centre is to:

- Facilitate the full, free and equal participation of women in professions of their choosing.
- Provide an environment for active leadership by women and encourage their active involvement in matters pertaining to their welfare, academic growth and needs.
- Deal with any incidence of harassment, to consider the impact of attitudes on modes of interaction between men and women.

TEXT OF SPEECH



*Padmashree Theilin Phanbuh
President, Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei*

As I stand here today, on behalf of *Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei* and Shillong College, I would like to welcome you all once again. It is really a privilege for us to get this opportunity to collaborate this programme today and I would like therefore to express my gratitude to the Principal and Staff of Shillong College. We are gathered here today to witness the inauguration of the Women Cell of this College and later on, we will have a deliberative and interactive session on Women and Leadership. As an ex student of this College I do feel honored and consider this day as a red-letter day for the College. With the setting up of the Women Cell, many activities can be taken up to motivate and encourage women students to take up studies on women's issues, such as women's empowerment, assignments and creative writings in the classes, debates, paper presentations on women's rights, quality leadership and many other issues concerning women development.

As you are all aware that *Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei* is a coordination body comprising of different local women's organizations is a voluntary social organization working in the field of social development particularly the women, children and the society in general. *Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei*, came into existence in 1992 with Dr. M.P.R. Lyngdoh as the founder general secretary and held this post until 1996. During these 16 years of its existence *Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei* has taken some initiatives on various issues concerning the need of the society such as environment, rural health and sanitation, gender sensitization, education, women's empowerment, violence against women etc. In fact it may be noted that *Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei* was the first organization to demand from the Government in 1997 for setting up of The Meghalaya State Commission for women and which was finally constituted in 2004. In 2006 *Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei* also submitted a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor, N.E.H.U. demanding the need to set up the Women's Study Centre to cater to the needs of women issues. *Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei* had also taken up cases of rape-abuse, murder from time to time. The case of late Corphillia Nongkynrih, which I am sure all of you are aware that the young girl was murdered by her boy friend in 2002 during her pregnancy. *Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei* along with Riatsamthiah Women's Social Welfare Organization followed up the case patiently and finally in 2008 the Court of

Law convicted the accused Shri Tenderly Hynniewta to life imprisonment. The credit for this case of course goes to the Special Public Prosecutor, Shri W.H.D. Syngkon who was at that time the Additional Advocate General, Government of Meghalaya who took up the case after *Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei* requested the then Chief Minister to provide the Public Prosecutor for this case. It may be noted that by his wisdom he has pleaded the case successfully in spite of the fake presentation by the accused.

When we talk about women and leadership, we cannot deny the fact that women over the years have been discriminated in spite of the provision in the Constitution that men and women are equal. However, those days have gone when women were restricted to live within the four walls of their homes and could perform only household activities. Many things have changed during the 20th and 21st Century and women have come out successfully in various fields, for instance look at the progress of this College, which has been under the leadership of a woman. However, at the grass root level, we still need a lot of efforts to educate and train our womenfolk on leadership, policy making, to be economically self-reliant and to help them to emerge as powerful partners in development activities and in making the society more gender sensitive. If with the 33% women reservation bill in place, I am hopeful that this will give better opportunity for women to take part in governance. Nevertheless, I do strongly believe that mere legislation cannot bring any change in social perceptions. The need of the hour is to change our mindsets and in the process, it will be easier to tackle issues affecting women from welfare to development and to empowerment. The government of India has also ratified various International Conventions committing to secure equal rights to women. In keeping with this commitment, the Indian Government declared the year 2001 as the Women's Empowerment year. Despite positive changes among women in terms of their education, it has been found that their rights have been overlooked and have not been given recognition by Society in general and State agencies in particular.

When we talk about making women aware of their rights, we must be careful not to inflame their minds against the rights and responsibilities of men. We have to concentrate our attention on providing opportunities to women in various sectors such as education, healthcare etc. to achieve economic self-reliance. We also have to work dedicatedly to ensure that women are accorded dignity in Society. By simply demanding equality of the sexes, we may be creating a confrontationist situation between the sexes. Women are a distinct gender with their own role and destiny on this earth. We must not attempt to transform women into men, because this will create a conflict in the society. Therefore, the most important thing is that we should respect each other and work together so that we will be able to root out the problems faced by women. But, however, the most crucial and the most vital issue of concern to us is that gender discrimination against women and girls, high infant and maternal mortality rates and gross violence against women, adolescents and children's rights will continue to be the challenges of the 21st Century.

TEXT OF SPEECH



*Prof. K.S. Lyngdoh
President G.B. Shillong College*

Smti M. Iawphniaw, Post Master General, North Eastern Circle, Chief Guest in this function, Dr. M.P.R. Lyngdoh, Principal Shillong College, Prof S. M. Sungoh, Chairperson Women Cell (NEHU), Padmashree T. Phanbuh and Dr. (Mrs.) E. Kharkongor, students, teachers, ladies and gentlemen.

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- Deal with any incidence of harassment, to consider the impact of attitudes on modes of interaction between men and women.

Given the Government's continuing emphasis on the education of girls as a means of empowering the women population, female enrolment in colleges and universities is poised to increase markedly. The assistance that the Women's Cell could render to the new female students and professionals in institutions of higher learning may turn out to be important indeed.

Let us face it, even in a day that calls itself modern and in times that are considered civilized; women continue to encounter gender discrimination at every level throughout the country. The problems faced by women thereby continue to merit special focus and addressing.

There are two principles the recognition of which is crucial for the removal of gender discrimination, one, that women are created and have roles, functions, needs, qualities and properties that mark them as distinct; two, that regardless or because of their differences, women are neither superior nor inferior to the men folk, but equal to them in status as fellow human beings, women, it must be recognized, have a unique and indispensable contribution to make towards enriching the fabric of human living, and indeed in making human life possible at all, but it is only in an atmosphere where their uniqueness is valued and their equality assured that women are able to contribute their best to society.

These principles of equal rights for men and women, equality of opportunity, and the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex are enshrined in the articles of the Indian Constitution and emphatically affirmed by the United Nations by way of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Women's Cell of Shillong College can draw inspiration from these legal and international pronouncements as it goes about the task of ensuring the fullest development of the individual personalities and capacities of the young and educated girl's students passing through the portals of the college.

I wholeheartedly congratulate those at Shillong College and elsewhere concerned with instituting this Women's Cell and Study Centre. I wish the Cell and Study Centre every success.

THE RELEVANCE OF SETTING UP WOMEN'S CELL IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



*Prof S.M Sungoh,
Chairperson,
Women's (NEHU)*

Introduction

The year 2001 was declared as the Women's Empowerment Year. India, with over a billion people, accounts for nearly 17 percent of the present world population of six thousand million people. Since 1900, the population has increased more than three times and if growth continues at the present rate, the world population is likely to reach 8.5 billion by the year 2020. Women, as an independent target group, account for 495.74 million and represent 48.3 per cent of country's total population as per 2001 census.

Even though legislation and policy changes were important to consider women as the equal partner for upliftment of the nation, certain other factors like equal participation in policy making decision, providing equal opportunities in holding high positions in universities, industry, civil services or other important organizations in nation building, appointment of female teachers, empowerment of women in true sense of the term, creation of proper infrastructure and facilities oriented towards women, minimizing economic constraints by upliftment of distressed group of families in various sectors particularly in rural and interior villages of the country are still to be achieved to fulfill the objectives and goals.

Steps are essential in universities/colleges for introducing the contents of Women's Studies for greater involvement of the women/girls in related areas and subject disciplines, if necessary, by amalgamating and involving teachers from various colleges and universities within the ambit of the State within the areas of common concern.

Importance of Women's Cells

Women's cell should create awareness among women regarding their existing status-good and bad. The women's cell should constitute a core committee, members consisting of women teachers and students from various other departments who come together to form one voice that speaks aloud honoring women's rights. Women's cell is an association that acts towards creating this awareness about women's problems among

the students who would be the future citizens of India. Therefore, women's cell should speak it all through its very name.

Women's cell should encourage all the students to do something for themselves as well as for the women who are suffering around them. "Superiority we've always had all we ask is equality." The women cell should create awareness among women, encouraging and motivating them to be independent. They can educate the students about the fundamental rights of women and will make them realize the challenging avenues available for deciding their career and higher education. Students will be exposed to specific health issues and will be guided to maintain good health profile.

In order to promote women in Higher Educational Institutions, women's cell can act as catalysts for promoting and strengthening women's issues through teaching, research, curriculum, field and extension work, training and continuing education etc. The cells should not only carry out their work in the above areas, but also in the areas of gender equity, economic and self reliance, girls education, population education, issues of women rights, laws, social exploitation, awareness activities, etc. They must be instrumental in incorporation of women's studies in various courses of teaching as well as facilitated research on socially relevant areas. They can also provide consultation to students, teachers, scholars, evaluators for development projects, generate resource materials and documentation of the regions of their locations, counseling, collaborating and networking both within and outside the college and university system.

Thus these cells can activate themselves in several directions and goals such as:

- a. Incorporate women's studies in various courses in teaching;
- b. Promote research to certain fields in the area concerned;
- c. Create, develop and evaluate projects;
- d. Generate resource and documentation materials;
- e. Active counseling in women as well socially/politically relevant issues.
- f. Networking and multidisciplinary collaborating activities; and
- g. Supplementing into the development plans of the State/Central Government etc.

With the advancement of global and international women issues including women liberation, human rights and laws involved therewith and in view of recent growth in population, exposure of media and multinationals, changes in village economy, the scope of development needs special attention.

Objectives of Women's Cells

The objective of the Cell is to maintain congenial working environment for women employees and students of the institutions in accordance with the guidelines provided by

the Supreme Court of India. In the context of having laid down by the National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001), the objectives of women's cell are as follows:

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for the development of women to enable them to realize their full potential;
- Allowing the de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women at par with men in all spheres--- political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
- Providing equal access to participation and decision-making for women in social, political and economic life of the nation;
- Ensuring equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.
- Strengthening legal systems aimed at the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- Eliminating discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations, corporate and private sector agencies.
- To critically study problems, aspirations and needs of the women learners.
- To encourage research on socially relevant areas directly linked with women's development, and status.
- To generate source material by building documentation on women's specific issues in the region.
- To provide counseling on various aspects of working and non-working women's life.
- To provide information, knowledge and skills for economic independence of women,
- To enhance access to legal literacy and information on women's rights and entitlements in the society,
- To organize extension activity in the areas of literacy, health, nutrition, environment, entrepreneurship. etc.
- To sensitize our women teachers and administrators and students to become agents of women's empowerment,
- To establish strong networking within and outside the college/university.

Thus, the strategies will be to have a well-defined action plan of activities and programs in all such identified areas to fulfill the objectives and national goals accordingly applicable to a cell.

Major Target and Groups

Women- teachers and students are the major target group and beneficiaries in a women's cell. In addition, there will be interlinked with affected women of the Community and the Society including the educationally backward, economically backward, minorities and disadvantaged and downtrodden groups and related others.

Major Functions and Roles of Women's Cell

The major functions of the women's cell may be as follows

- i. Women's Cell may identify well-defined objectives and goals in areas of prime and potential interests.
- ii. The cell can play a vital role in academic upliftment including creating regular, short term and basic foundation courses to incorporate new gender perspective in all faculties. It can act to develop, update and restructure curricula, syllabi and special paper etc.
- iii. The Cell will look to greater participation of women teachers and women students of various sub disciplines concerning emerging areas of global and national interests.
- iv. Important issues in media and national dailies, which require active and immediate intervention as a result of contradiction, the issues affecting the social upliftment and rather promoting social degradation of the status of Women need to be contested preferably by writing to them.
- v. Make use of the medical facilities in the form of medical unit / medical center already available in the concerned University or college.
- vi. The Women's cell may have differences in their location, ages, strength, skills, university's/college's own priorities and leadership etc. but the women's cell with identification of their priorities will perform their roles and functions so as to assimilate and transmit knowledge through teaching, research, complementary roles for the academic communities and society as a whole, field action, documentation and thereby supplement and strengthen the national goals and contribute to the policy making and implementing actions

Thus, the major roles may take place in many directions including:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ✓ Teaching & Training | ✓ Documentation, Publication, |
| ✓ Research | Dissemination and |
| ✓ Extension | Transmission |
| ✓ Advocacy | ✓ Networking & Coordinating |
| ✓ Seminars & Workshops | with other Agencies |
| | ✓ Monitoring & Review |



Some information that Women Cells Can Keep in Mind

i. To Work without Harassment is a Women's Fundamental Right

On 13 August 1997, the Supreme Court of India held that sexual harassment of women is a violation of the fundamental right of women to work in a 'safe environment'. The Supreme Court guidelines define sexual harassment to include:

- Physical contact and advances
- Demand or request for sexual favors
- Sexually colored remarks
- Display of pornography
- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

Often such behavior goes unpunished mostly because of hesitation on the part of women to report such behavior out of a sense of shame or fear or both. It is important for women to protest against any behavior that they feel is unwanted and unacceptable. The Women's Cell at any Educational Institution has to be set up with the aim of providing women a platform to complain about any unwelcome behavior.

ii. *If women are being harassed, this is what the Women's cell should tell the victim to do:*

- Not to feel a sense of shame. The woman should tell the harasser very clearly that she finds his behavior offensive.
- The woman should not ignore the harassment in the hope that it will stop on its own. She should come forward and complain.
- The victim can talk to somebody she trust about the harassment. It will not only give her strength but also help others in similar situations to come forward and complain.
- Keep a record of all incidents of sexual harassment in a notebook. If she feels the need to register a formal complaint later, this record will be helpful.

iii. *What action can be taken against the offender?*

After it has been proven that the offender has indulged in sexual harassment in the work place, an appropriate punitive action would be taken against him irrespective of his status in the Institute (staff, faculty, and student). Where such conduct amounts to a specific offence under the Indian Penal Code or under any other law, a complaint will be made to the appropriate action in accordance with the law can be taken.

iv. ***The Role of the Women's Cell***

- To ensure that appropriate action is taken against the offender.
- To ensure that victims and witnesses are not victimized or discriminated because of their complaint.
- To take proactive measures towards sensitization of the college and university community on gender issues so that colleges and universities are an excellent work place for all.

Conclusion

In conclusion, what is now required is a common vision of social and human development shared by men and women alike. This vision is based on social justice and accords women their rightful place.

"The essential task of the 21st century may well be to forge a new partnership between men and women in dealing with the present and in shaping the future of our personal and public agendas". (A Blueprint to Leadership 19)

According to this vision, all leaders - whether male or female-become key agents of change for the creation of a new society. Therefore, they are no longer adversaries but full and equal partners in this important endeavour.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS: "WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP"



*Smt. M. Iawphniaw
PMG NE Circle, Shillong -793001
Hqr. of Postal Networks of Arunachal,
Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram,
Meghalaya & Tripura.*

Before I can say anything on this topic I must say that I am greatly honored and grateful to the Respected Principal and her team for this warm invitation to me to be associated with the setting up and Inauguration of the Women's Cell in Shillong College. I am proud to say that I passed my TDC from this very same College with the personal guidance of great personalities, then Professor Bhattacharjee (then Principal), Prof. Madam Choudhry, Prof. Sarkar, Prof. Mukherjee. They all helped me to get the whole year's final course completed in just few weeks of special classes as I was then teaching in Hooghly District in West Bengal and could not attend regular classes. Imagine with Honors I was well equipped by them to face the challenge. What I am today is a Tribute to their Sacrifice and Dedication to help an aspiring student. Coming here today is an **Act of gratitude** to say a Big Thank You, my dear Madam Choudhry, and Sir Bhattacharjee though you are no more, to Sir Mukherjee and Sir Sarkar and to the present faculty members.

The old adage 'women the weaker sex' is a misconception! It is a contradiction to the other famous quote 'the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world'. The position of women in the past and the present generation is a reflection of what the individual and society at large perceive and feel about the **essence and importance of women**, in their own personal and social life. In the era before Christ many women have proved their power and influence in the political field. Queen Eyleuka of Ethiopia ruled 45 years during the great flood, as Queen Sheba ruled during the time of King Solomon. Other Biblical figures like Queen Esther etc. adorned the bygone eras.

Close to our time, we have many women after the First World War who became the members of revolutionary governments in Hungary, Ireland, and Ukraine etc. Nina Bang was the first democratically elected Minister of Education of Denmark in 1924-26. Very close to our homeland, we have Sirivamo Banadaranaiké 1st Woman Prime Minister of Sri Lanka in 1960, followed by Isabella Peron of Argentina in 1974. Monaco was the

last country to have Women Members in the Government, while small countries like Finland have more than 60 % and Austria 40% of Women in the Government. Kuwait a Muslim country also has a Woman in the Ministry.

Strong and upright women brings in strong leadership in political circles, which in turns brings about a strong society. In Australia, the government has set up an **Office for Women Policy** to properly reflect and represent the unique needs of women, their views in government and community as well to impress the gender balance of leadership opportunities in public life. In India, we have the **National Commission for Women**. The inclusion of more women in the New Ministry and choosing the First Woman as the Lok Sabha Speaker are right approaches and wise steps towards gender parity. In a Democratic country without the full participation of women would mean the massacre and acting in contradiction of the term and very Spirit of Democracy.

The global scene and perhaps in our country the present overall position of women is not encouraging. Two thirds of women in the world do not know to read and write, yet every country invest heavily on education of girls and women. When a woman is educated the benefits goes beyond the class room, they go to stronger family , better health, better nutrition, better wages and better levels of political participation. **Thus, investing in quality education for girls and women brings transformation to the entire society.**

Empowering women is now a catchword the world over. Traditionally and logically, parents (Mother in particular) are the best teachers ... at home, where every child is tutored in 'common wisdom of man accrued over the ages' and develop into a matured human being. In school and college, the child learns to tread like a man with the combined guiding help of his Parents and School/College Teachers /Educators. Apart from individual endeavor, it must be a joint commitment of Government organizations and NGOs (church) to reinforce in the society the **Sanctity of Parenthood** and ensure the participative role of Parents and Teachers in the proper upbringing of every child born into this world.

Raising children now in the face of Mass Media and a Consumer culture is a challenge for every parent, more so for mothers, but we can still put a balance if all of us can make a collective effort to give our individual and joint support within the confines of our homes and beyond.

Role of women: Women were made to make man a perfect being; hence, women should exercise their role actively. As women, we must be a role model for others, to honestly feel the helplessness of others and offer an option to overcome the problem .A woman can be a good listener and as she understands the situation of others, she is always in a position to help. She can **be a leader at home first**: showing the right way, right approach and right behaviors and attitude towards each and every member of the family. With a healthy and positive mind formed at home, children will learn to relate better not only among siblings, but also with any one they come in contact with.

In the process of empowering women, politically one may ask, **“will the patriarchal society give Woman her due? Why Meghalaya matrilineal society should have just a lone woman in the Assembly?”** We, as Women can all collectively give a positive answer that better government and transparency in administration at all levels can be made possible only by Women! The Women Reservation Bill is still hanging at mid air now, but if we all unite, we can mobilize a strong National force to ensure the implementation of the Women Reservation Bill.

Women on the whole have made their mark! We see them in many fields, which once were the male bastion. Women are now occupying high position in technology, administration, literature, art, business, banking, insurance, pharmaceuticals, aviation and even in the army and ministerial levels. Education and Health care have always had Women as the best performers!

Shillong claimed the limelight recently with the good performance of ICSE run schools most headed by Women. Two great Ladies of Meghalaya were given the Nightingale Award for their great services and dedication in the field of nursing and health care. All proved that Women are leaders and achievers in their own rights.

Women and Success: Women can always excel given the same chances and opportunities. With Chitra Sood, Staff Director, Microsoft Development Centre, we can all agree that **Women see success not only just for the promotion, achieving targets and increase earnings, but also by the sense of fulfillment that one gets when a job is well accomplished.** We, as women must work in any area that excites us and where there is a strong desire to excel. There must be a strong commitment to give our best in any profession we choose. The path to achievement of True Success is that we always must be on the right track with our work and constantly updating our required skills and knowledge levels. Merit and experience are the main criteria for any job or promotion for any one. For me individually, and my Lady Friends in Service: **Success is all about being passionate about the work we do and being committed to it. Loving one's job is rewarding and healing.**

Success and Awareness: All women are made for very special functions and purposes. Diverse talents have been imprinted in our very being, these are to be brought out by proper education and training. A modern woman to be successful must be able to balance between home and work. Fortunately, every employer (Govt. & NGO organizations) now ensures that the policies and benefits must help the employees to be productive and not tied down to their work place. Paternity Leave is now granted to working fathers at the birth of a child! As Probationers, we fought for it.

India's future **‘Vision 2020’** depends on men and women who will play equal role at home and at work, to bring about a Balanced Society, where there is no religious, caste/creed conflict at home and in the social setting as a whole, but where there is social harmony and peace. We can all strive to eradicate Poverty, which is our greatest enemy. The biggest weapon to fight this enemy is through hard work and sincerity.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS



*Dr (Mrs) M.P.R. Lyngdoh
Principal, Shillong College.*

We are very happy that the Women Cell, Shillong College has been formally inaugurated today 19 June 2009 amidst a distinguished gathering of teachers, academicians, representatives of Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei, other Women organizations, Staff and Students of Shillong College and other invitees. As the last speaker at the function I have nothing much to say, except few comments to make, since much has been said by the previous learned speakers. Dr (Mrs.) E. Kharkongor Convener of the Women Cell in her welcome address gave brief information on the need of setting up the Women Cell in the College and its aims and objectives. Smt. Theilin Phanbuh, President, Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei briefly highlighted the activities of Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei. She said that mere legislation cannot bring much changes, the important thing is to change the mindset of the people, to work with dedication and zeal to fight any discrimination against women. She is concerned about the reproductive health, maternal and child mortality rate in the country in general and the state in particular. She further said that Ka Lympung ki Seng Kynthei had submitted representation to the Vice Chancellor, NEHU, for setting up a Women Study Centre in the University. This I feel, has to be followed up with other women organizations. Prof K.S. Lyngdoh, President, Governing Body, Shillong College said that India is a nation on the move to improve the standard of living. She referred to President Pratibha D. S. Patil's speech of a new deal for empowerment of women in the country. She said that the UGC and NAAC, Bangalore have launched various initiatives for promoting quality education in the country including the setting up of Women Cell in higher educational institutions in the country. Women Cell will cater to the needs of women, ensure full participation of women in welfare activities, equal rights and opportunities as per the Constitution of India and the Declaration of Human Rights. She further said that the Women Cell can draw inspiration from the national and international bodies. Prof. S. M. Sungoh, Department of Education, NEHU and Chairperson, Women Cell, NEHU spoke on the relevance of setting up of Women Cell in higher educational institution, to promote and strengthen women in all fields and to provide access for decision making.

The Cell must have well defined roles and objectives, well defined plans in all identified areas, and a common vision of social and human development. Smt. M Jawphniaw, Post Master General, North Eastern Circle, who was the Chief Guest on the occasion and an alumni of the College, said that she remembered all the teachers of the College who have made it possible for her, and her coming to Shillong College on this

occasion is like coming home. She said that a woman is a born leader, and women always stand for transparent administration wherever they are, and are equipped with good qualities. She also said that there is no perfect man without a woman. In her official capacity, she is very much concerned about the rural women and empowering people with financial stability. She wished to see that the Women Cell of the College will be the light of the society.

Smt. W. C. K. Sohliya Lecturer, Department of Commerce and Management, Shillong College in her presentation on Women and Leadership, spoke on the issues that act as barriers for women reaching the top. She said that women constituted half of the labour force, whereas women executive leaders ranked very low, and there is only a small percentage of women in top position. She analysed the twists and turns that highly stopped women to reach the top position. Dr. A. K. Nongkynrih, Reader, Department of Sociology, NEHU, gave a scholarly talk on women at the grass root level. He said that our political thinking is that men are active participants and women are passive, who support from outside. He referred to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, which is a modern political institution guided by the provisions of the Constitution. The institution has given more space for women at the political leadership. He posted certain question on whether we can change the language of decision, start talking on individual rights and that Women Cell can take new discourse to communicate in the new language, and whether we can change the customs, beliefs and practices and treat everybody as individuals with equal rights. Smt. Patricia Mukhim, noted journalist and Editor Shillong Times said the women reservation could not see the light of the day because men did not want their space to be occupied, if women could become President, and Speaker, it was because men agree them to be there. Politics is not simply contesting in an election; rather it is how we do things in a democracy. She advocated policy changes for gender sensitization.

I strongly feel that women must be recognized, they must have equal entitlement to fundamental freedom in all spheres, political, economic, social and cultural. The Constitution of India has provided complete equality for both men and women, equal rights and privileges for both sexes, equality for all citizens irrespective of caste, creed, gender and religion. Women must be ensured of equality in power sharing and participation in decision making including political decision making at all levels. However, although there are constitutional provisions to safeguard women, but many women particularly in rural areas are not aware of the constitutional rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The Constitution must be translated into different local languages, and each and every home should have a copy of the Constitution. I would like to request all the members present, to kindly give your comments and suggestions to the Women Cell of the College.

I congratulate Dr M. Dey Coordinator, Dr (Mrs.) E. Kharkongor Convener and other members of the Women Cell, and all those who were involved in their different ways for their great effort to make the programme successful. My appreciation to all the speakers for their valuable deliberations and some of the issues and suggestions can be considered by the Women Cell. On behalf of the College I would like to thank each and everyone.

VOTE OF THANKS



*Dr. (Mrs.) S. Pandey,
Deptt. of Hindi, Shillong College.*


Madam Principal and Chairperson, Dr. (Mrs.) M.P.R Lyngdoh, Honorable Chief Guest Smt. M. Iawphniaw, Post Master General, North Eastern Council, Dr. (Mrs.) S.M. Sungoh, Chairperson, Women Cell, NEHU, Prof. K.S. Lyngdoh, President, Governing Body, Shillong College, Padmashree T. Phanbuh, President, Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei, Padmashree Patricia Mukhim, Editor, Shillong Times, Dr. A.K. Nongkynrih, Reader, Department of Sociology, NEHU, Prof. M. Dey, Vice-Principal and Co-ordinator of the Women's Cell, Prof. K.D. Roy, Vice-Principal, Professional Courses, distinguished guests, principals and teachers from various institutions, members of Shillong College governing body, representatives of various social organization, learned participants, members of the media and press, teaching and non-teaching staff of the college and students.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the organizers of this inaugural function of the Women's Cell, I offer my sincere vote of thanks. It is my proud privilege to thank you all for your kind presence; patronage and co-operation for making this programme a success.

We are extremely grateful to our honorable chief guest Smt. M. Iawphniaw for gracing today's function in spite of her busy schedule. We are very grateful to Dr. (Mrs.) M. Sungoh, Chairperson, Women's Cell, NEHU, for her thought provoking speech. Madam, you have inspired us with your valuable suggestions and guidance.

We wish to convey our heartfelt thanks to Prof. K.S. Lyngdoh, President, Governing Body, Shillong College for providing us with constant support in our various endeavours. We are thankful to you Madam.

We are grateful to Padmashree T. Phanbuh, President, Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei for sharing her views with us. Madam, your inspiring speech has geared up the entire exercise. We owe our gratitude to Padmashree Patricia Mukhim, Educationist, Activist and Editor, Shillong Times, for gracing this occasion. You have inspired us madam with your versatility and commitment towards the cause of women empowerment and addressing their various needs. We are very thankful to Dr. A.K. Nongkynrih for



always standing by us in any meaningful endeavour. Sir, we have been immensely benefited from your speech.

It is my proud privilege to thank our Chairperson Dr. (Mrs.) M.P.R. Lyngdoh, Principal Shillong College without whose unstinted support and guidance the Women's Cell would not have seen the light of the day. I would like to extend my thanks to Prof. M. Dey, Vice Principal and Coordinator of the Women's Cell, Prof. K.D. Roy, Vice Principal, Professional Courses and also members of the teaching and non-teaching staff for their unstinted support in organizing this function and smooth conduct of the same. I wish to convey our heartfelt thanks to the distinguished guests, representatives of various social organizations, principals and teachers from various institutions for their valuable presence and co-operation. I would like to thank our teachers who retired from service but are still very much a part of this college and taking some time off to grace this function. I would also like to thank Smt. WCK Sohliya for her innovative speech. Special thanks are due to the members of the print and electronic media for giving wide coverage of the programme.

Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all those who have lent a helping hand and whom I have not mentioned by name or designation. I also apologize for any omission, which was purely unintentional.

Once again I thank you all.

**DELIBERATIVE
AND
INTERACTIVE SESSIONS**

WOMEN AND GRASSROOTS INSTITUTIONS: A GENERALIST'S VIEW



*Dr. A.K. Nongkynrih
Associate Professor,
Deptt. of Sociology, NEHU.*

Introduction

This lecture focuses on women and grassroots level institutions and the ideas presented here are general in nature and rooted in the discipline of sociology; and the issue is placed in the context of the social world. The social world is a composition of diverse societies; and societies have their own social beliefs and practices; and such belief and practice is the rule of descent. On the basis of the rule of descent, societies can be broadly segregated into matrilineal and patrilineal. Whether the society is matrilineal or patrilineal, the birth of a child is considered as an important social event in the family. However, in matrilineal societies the birth of female child is seen as the continuity of the lineage by the family and by the clan while in the case of patrilineal societies the birth of male child has the same significance. This does not mean that the male child in the case of the former and the female child in the case of the latter does not receive parental care and attention. The point is how the rule of descent of the society can be one of the social factors towards the social construction of social role of males and females; and such factors influence and shape the life of members (both males and females) of the society over-generations.

Secondly, the physiological aspect of the human body (i.e., distinction based on sex) is another dimension that separates males and females; and how the social world socially constructed and converted the physiological aspect of males and females into gender differentiation (i.e., men and women). In my view, the gender differentiation is the subject matter that defines the social boundaries of men and women. It is interesting when we observe how families socialize their children at an early age about gender differentiation. Let me illustrate by an example from everyday life: while playing in the verandah of a house male child falls down and cries. The mother sitting in the kitchen comes over and says 'get-up and do not cry'; the child does not get up and continues to

cry. At this point the father also comes out and along with his wife goes over and consoles the child and says, 'boys do not cry; only girls do'. There are many examples of how gender socialization takes place at the level of family. Another example that can be cited is about the social role where the society defines the roles of men and women. According to M.M. Marini (1990), 'research on tribal societies indicates that men have tended to be the warriors, hunters, and processors of hard raw materials used for weaponry and tools, whereas women have tended to cooking and preparation of foods.... As a result of this gender differentiation in the division of labor, men have been in a better position to acquire and control the valuable resources of their societies. Power, privilege, and status have rarely, if ever, been shared by women and men on an equal basis'.

Women and Political Institution

Beyond the boundaries of the rule of descent, societies have other values, norms, conduct, beliefs and practices that govern social relations and social interactions among members in their daily lives. In sociology, we say that the individual and the collective (i.e., society) are governed by institutions. Institutions such as: (i) polity (it deals with access and distribution of power and authority); (ii) economic (refers to access, use and control of resources); (iii) religion (the inter connectedness of religious beliefs and practices and other institutions); and (iv) kinship (descent, marriage, family and socialization of the young) (Abercrombie et. al. 1984; Beteille 2002). Thus, one can say that the social world is a world of institutions; and roles, positions, status and actions of social actors (i.e. members of society) are guided by such institutions.

Among the social actors, we can separate them into two groups: women and men; and in the context of this paper women and 'grassroots institutions' is the focus. The reason is because it is the theme selected for discussions; and to understand the status and position of women at the local-level. It should be noted that there are more than one institution at the grassroots level. The paper selects the political institution as the subject for discussion. Political institution provides an entry point of understanding gender differentiation with regard to the political status and position of women. Political institution deals with 'the distribution of power in political communities' (Beteille 2002:159). Political communities broadly include classes, status groups and parties; and the distribution of power between parties, between classes, between castes and between communities based on race, language and religion (Ibid). In this paper the concern is about women and the distribution of power in caste society or tribal society or the modern state. What is power? Max Weber defines power (Macht) 'as the chance, within a social relationship, of enforcing one's will against resistance, whatever this chance might be based on' (in Whimster 2004). How does one derive power in society? In the case of political power, one can enjoy political power on the basis of occupying a political position. In chieftainship the power of the chief is based on the customary beliefs and practices. In the modern political system of India the power of the Chief Minister of Meghalaya is based on Constitution of the country; and in the case of military dictatorships it is by coercion or force. To have a better understanding of the subject-matter two examples are discussed: the custom-based political institution; and the modern state which is based on rationality, rules and law.

The custom-based political institution at the grassroots level is the village council and it considers men as active participants and women as passive participants (i.e., supporting the men folk from the outside). The separation of men and women in the context of political power has been socially constructed and accepted by social actors over-generations as part of their customs and traditions. Today, the issue of unequal distribution of power between men and women is contested or questioned. There is another aspect that one observes, that is, the demands that men should facilitate and change the customary practices so as to convert the political status of women from passive participants to active participants. However, there is one missing element in such arguments, that is, the issue of transforming the custom-based political institution is not vested in men alone because men as political actors of the society derived their actions from the customary beliefs and practices. It is the belief and practices of the society that separates men and women in two different categories of political position. Lastly, if we take the case of the tribal societies of North-East India, the issue is more complex. The complexity is not because of the continuity of such practices but because of the Constitutional framework. One of the examples is taken from the Constitution of India and according to Article 371 A - Special provision with respect to the State of Nagaland - no Act of Parliament in respect of (ii) Naga customary law and procedure shall apply to the State of Nagaland unless the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland by a resolution so decides. The issue of transforming the passive social actors (women) to active social actors is subjected to the acceptance by the society and the Legislature of the State.

The modern state as a political institution is guided by the principles of equality and social justice. Law is an instrument of the modern state to govern or to bring about changes in society. In India, the 73 Amendment Act of 1992 on the Panchayati Raj institution is a political action of the modern state with the intention of decentralising of power in rural areas. The instrument of legal action by the modern state was also to ensure that women of the country were active participants at various levels of the Panchayati Raj institution. The right of women to participate in the Panchayat elections is an equal right but the right of women to be elected had to be specified as 'reservation of seats for women'. If the rights of reservation of seats for women in the Panchayat system had not been legally defined by law would the society elect women as 'Sarpanch' or 'Pradhan'? The point to be noted is that the modern state recognizes the challenges confronting the political rights of women at the level of the society and it had to use the law to ensure that women can occupy the positions of authority.

To be able to grasp the effectiveness of the Panchayat system and reservation for women the case of Arunachal Pradesh is an interesting example. At the level of the village, there are two types of institutions: the custom-based political authority where men are the active participants; and the Gram Panchayat (i.e., a modern political authority for the purpose of implementing developmental programmes). According to the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1997, one third of the seats are reserved for women. Sanjay Dubey (2005) observed that, hardly one finds women as elected members and according to the author the factors are: (i) tribal people cannot easily think of a woman being a member of the village council; (ii) women lack political training and socialization; and (iii) very low literacy rate among women.

The political action of modern state has paved the path for women as an equal and active partner at the level of the Panchayat system. However, the persistence of customary beliefs and practices seems to hinder the voluntary acceptance of women as active political participants; and added is the internal problem and where women themselves are yet to actively participate and engaged in the new political roles. The one reason that can explain this problem is the sudden shift and as if they are caught unprepared and the modern state did not take cognizance of such aspects. However, the modern state has created and provided political rights to women in general and in particular the rural women under the Panchayati Raj institution.

Conclusion

The political status and position of women in the context of grassroots political institution is defined by two factors: the customary belief and practices; and the rational-legal. Under the former type of political institution women are socially restricted to be part of it; and under the latter type of political institution women enjoy equal rights as men. However, the customary beliefs and practices seem to influence the social actors (include both men and women) towards women and their political participation even in the case of the political institution that is based on the principles of rational-legal or Constitutional provisions. Lastly, the social acceptance of women as an equal partner in the area of power and authority is one of the challenges and the subject-matter is located in the institutions of the society.

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WOMEN AND POLITICS*



*Padmashree P. Mukhim,
Editor, The Shillong Times
and Social Activist.*

Society is much conditioned by patriarchy and this is apparent in the traditional institution of our state. Matriliney does not automatically empower women and this explains the need for a 'space' for women, it is indeed a form of "retributive justice". Our society is often "gender blind" rather than "gender sensitive" and the women in such a society are restricted to conventional roles. Yet, because of this very fact, women do have a potential to excel in politics, for politics is only "house keeping on a grand scale"

Politics is also about understanding our social roles, it demands activism. In a democracy, citizens cannot afford to be passive and voices need to be raised to advocate policy changes. Yet, political issues are often either gender blind or patriarchal and this is also the scenario in our state; issues concerning women are not very popular in the State Assembly - a sad but true fact!

Women therefore need to work together and voice social as well as political issues; for politics is not about assuming power but it is about engagement.

* *A Rapporteurs' Report on the lecture*

WOMEN IN THE “LABYRINTH OF LEADERSHIP”



*Smt. W.C.K. Sohliya,
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Shillong College.*

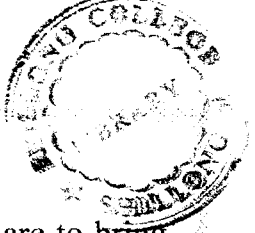
Objective:

This paper discusses the various issues that act as barriers to “women reaching the top”. The objective of which is to equip ourselves with a map of the barriers that will confront us on the path to professional achievement and guide us in making more informed choices. “When the eye can take in the whole of the puzzle- the starting position, the goal, and the maze of walls, solutions begin to suggests themselves”.(Eagly, Alice H. and Carli, Linda L.,2007)

Introduction:

The scarcity of women in top leadership has long been attributed to the “glass-ceiling,” the notion that women successfully climb the hierarchy until they’re blocked just below the summit. The “glass-ceiling” metaphor describes (i) an absolute barrier at a specific high level in organizations (ii) the image of a transparent obstruction also suggests that women are being misled about their opportunities, because the impediment is not easy for them to see from a distance (iii) Worst of all, by depicting a single, unvarying obstacle, the glass ceiling fails to incorporate the complexity and variety of challenges that women can face in their leadership journeys. In truth, women are not turned away only as they reach the penultimate stage of a distinguished career. They disappear in various numbers at many points leading up to that stage. (Eagly, Alice H. and Carli, Linda L., 2007)

The probability of finding a cure to such a misdiagnosed problem is highly unlikely. People with their best intentions have often misread the symptoms thus leading to managers and policy makers investing in solutions that are not making enough of a difference.



Women and leadership:

It is necessary to rid ourselves of the metaphor, “glass-ceiling” if we are to bring about a change. A better metaphor for what confronts women in their professional endeavors is the “labyrinth”. As a contemporary symbol, it conveys the idea of a complex journey toward a goal worth striving for. Passage through a labyrinth is not simple or direct, but requires persistence, awareness of one’s progress, and a careful analysis of the puzzles that lie ahead. It is this meaning that we intend to convey. For women who aspire to top leadership, routes exist but are full of twists and turns, both expected and unexpected. Because all labyrinths have a viable route to the center, it is understood that goals are attainable. The metaphor acknowledges obstacles but is not ultimately discouraging. (Eagly, Alice H. and Carli, Linda L, 2007)

If we can understand the various barriers that make up this labyrinth, and how some women find their way around them, we can work more effectively to improve the situation. Catalyst’s women respondents reported the following top five barriers to advancement:

- Lack of significant general management or line experience.
- Exclusion from informal networks
- Stereotyping and preconceptions of women’s roles and abilities
- Failure of senior leadership to assume accountability for women’s advancement
- Commitment to personal/family responsibilities

It is important to recognize that these top barriers to women’s advancement are interrelated. Stereotypes about women can often lead to their exclusion from relationship-building activities, such as mentoring and networking. The more women are excluded from line management roles, the more likely stereotypes will persist in these circles. (Catalysts, 2009)

Barriers to Women’s Leadership:

Some women achieve leadership positions in spite of barriers to their advancement, but these barriers nonetheless shape their developmental and leadership experiences. In this section, we briefly review the research on structural and attitudinal barriers to women leaders’ advancement and speculate about the effects on career patterns.

A. Structural Barriers:

Women in traditionally male-dominated settings often have difficulty breaking into the old boys loop of advice and professional development opportunities (Catalyst, 2003; Hefferman, 2004; O’Brien, 2006; Ragins, 1998).

The problem of exclusion is compounded by organizational structures and practices that tend to reflect and support men’s experiences (Acker, 1990; Bailyn, 2006; Martin 1996; Rapoport et al., 2002). Women are disadvantaged by the convergence of

their biological and professional clocks, and by the escalating time demands of leadership positions. The increasing pace and competitiveness of organizational life, coupled with technological advances, have created a culture of total accessibility and blurred the boundaries of home and work. With Blackberries, cell phones, emails and faxes, leaders remain tethered to their offices. Although such technologies have made it easier for a woman to work from home, they have also made it harder not to. Excessive hours are a major reason why many highly qualified women 'step off the leadership track (Stone & Lovejoy, 2004).

Some evidence suggests that women of colour are particularly likely to face challenges given their greater responsibilities as single parents or caretakers of elderly and extended family members (Catalyst, 2003; Hewlett, Luce, & West, 2005). Excessive workloads also leave limited time for the informal socializing and mentoring that promote professional development. The small number of women in top positions cannot begin to provide adequate support for every subordinate who needs it, and some worry about appearances of favoritism if they focus their effort on other women (Rhode & Kellerman, 2007). Junior women who are scrambling to build careers while raising children have similar difficulty finding time for the social activities that help forge professional relationships. After the workday ends, men are picking up tips over golf and drinks; women are picking up —laundry, dinner, and the house. (Wellington & Catalyst, 2001).

Although men have assumed an increasing share of household responsibilities over the last quarter century, women continue to shoulder the major burden. Women with families also face more constraints on travel and relocation than similarly situated men. Until the home becomes an equal opportunity employer, women will pay the price in the world outside it.

Employment policies reflect and further reinforce gender differences in family roles and responsibilities. The vast majority of workplaces fail to offer the same paid parental leave to fathers as to mothers, and few men take any extended period of time away from their jobs for family reasons (Rhode & Williams, 2007). Work/family policies that disadvantage men also disadvantage women. The effect is to entrench unequal family responsibilities, which perpetuates unequal workplace opportunities.

Related problems stem from the lack of flexible schedules, meaningful part-time positions, and affordable quality childcare. Although women in top managerial and professional positions often are in workplaces that offer reduced or flex-time arrangements, few of these women take advantage of them. Most believe, with reason, that any limitation in hours or availability would jeopardize their career prospects, and that they would end up working more than their status and compensation justified (Crittendon, 2001; Rhode & Williams 2007).

Taken together, these inadequate workplace practices and unequal family responsibilities help account for gender differences in leadership.

B. Attitudinal Barriers:

Women are becoming more like men in their career aspirations and achievements, and are more willing to see themselves as having qualities associated with authority (Dennis & Kunkel, 2004; Eagly, 2005: 459-474; Koch, Luft, & Kruse, 2005). So too, recent theories of leadership have stressed the importance of interpersonal qualities commonly attributed to women, such as cooperation and collaboration, and interpersonal sensitivity. An emerging body of scholarship suggests that the most effective style of leadership in today's world is —transformational (Burns, 1978; Eagly & Carli, 2007a). Leaders who take this approach emphasize gaining the trust and confidence of followers and empowering them to develop their own potential. Meta-analyses of studies involving thousands of leaders suggest that women are somewhat more transformational than men, especially in providing support for subordinates (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). Women are also less likely than men to engage in the leadership styles judged least effective: laissez-faire, hands off approaches, and transactional, passive management by exception approaches that call for intervention only when situations become extreme (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Yet despite these trends, the legacy of traditional gender stereotypes remains. Women have long suffered from a double standard and double bind in the exercise of authority. They are thought too aggressive or not aggressive enough, and what appears assertive in a man appears abrasive in a woman (Eagly & Carli 2007b; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Rudman & Glick, 2001)

Women who conform to traditional feminine stereotypes are often liked but not respected: they are judged too soft, emotional, and unassertive to make tough calls and project the necessary presence in positions of authority (Catalyst, 2006; Eagly & Carli, 2007b).

By contrast, women who adopt more masculine traits are often respected but not liked: they are seen as domineering, strident, and cold. Dragon Lady, and Bully Broad are epithets of choice (Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Rhode & Kellerman, 2007). Self-promoting behavior that appears self-confident or entrepreneurial in men often looks pushy and un-feminine in women.

A review of more than a hundred studies found that women are rated lower when they adopt authoritative, masculine styles, particularly when the evaluators are men. In effect, women face a trade off between competence and likeability in circumstances where effective leadership requires both.

Recent research suggests that two coexisting and complementary forms of sexism — one benevolent and the other one hostile, lie at the root of this dilemma. Benevolent sexism is a subjectively favorable, chivalrous ideology that offers protection and affection to women who embrace conventional roles and is used to reward women who conform to **traditional gender role expectations; hostile sexism is antipathy toward women who are**

viewed as usurping men's power and is used to punish women who challenge the status quo (Glick & Fiske, 2001: 109). Taken together, these two forms of prejudice reflect ambivalence about women, promoting polarized responses to them. Women who enact femininity are the objects of benevolent sexism, which disqualifies them for leadership. Women who enact the masculine traits associated with leadership are the objects of hostile sexism, which leads to rejection and ostracism.

Conclusion:

In a country like India, it is no longer surprising or incongruous to see a woman as principal of a public high school, manager of a corporate department, dean of a university college, or anchor on a local newscast. Women have breeched the barriers to such positions in concert with a general relaxation in traditional gender-role attitudes as well as changes in public perceptions of what leadership entails. Yet in contexts (such as military command, high corporate office, the presidency) still defined in the public mind as requiring masculine qualities, women face tough barriers stemming from the difficulty of simultaneously transcending and accommodating to gender stereotypes. Our intellectual understanding of these barriers notwithstanding, the only way to break them down is for the first few clever, determined and thick-skinned women to dance, tip-toe, and kick their way through them.

There are ways for both organizations and individuals to support these women, and thus support progress toward a social structure in which women's leadership is commonplace even in contexts currently defined as masculine. Organizations can strive to avoid isolating women as tokens in male-dominated departments, where their gender becomes the *defacto* explanation for any perceived misstep. Established leaders can endorse and legitimate women who seek or attain leadership roles. Opinion leaders such as journalists can cultivate sensitivity to the possibility that they are setting different standards of likeability and other interpersonal qualities when they publicly critique male and female leaders. As individuals, we can examine our own criticisms of women leaders for telltale signs that we are expecting the impossible—imposing the double-bind of contradictory expectations.

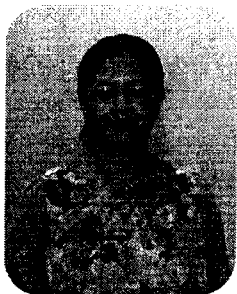
As first one, then a trickle of women overcome the barriers, it should finally become normal to see women holding leadership roles in contexts currently considered masculine. That very "normalcy" will moderate public perceptions of gender and of leadership, gently re-shaping the social structure that has conditioned these perceptions. The significant changes in women's access to leadership roles over the past few decades are a necessary, but still insufficient, prelude to a society in which women and men can claim a fair share of the challenges and opportunities associated with leadership.

If women are to achieve equality, women and men will have to share leadership equally. With a greater understanding of what stands in the way of a gender-balanced leadership, we draw nearer to attaining it in our time.

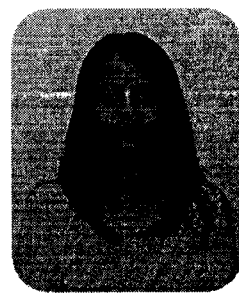
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RAPPORTEURS' REPORT



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The Inaugural function started with a welcome speech by Dr. (Mrs.) E. Kharkongor, Convener. In her welcome address, she briefed that the Women's Cell, Shillong College was created on the 3rd April, 2009. The Cell would seek to promote the 'girl' student in areas concerning the development of the critical faculty, decision making, health and other activities.

A commemorative souvenir was unveiled by the Principal, Shillong College and candles were lit by Prof. K.S. Lyngdoh, President, Governing Body, Shillong College. The guests were then presented with mementos of the souvenir.

First among the speakers at the function was Padmashree T. Pharbuh, President 'Ka Lympung ki Seng Kynthei'. In her speech Smt. Pharbuh referred to gender issues concerning discrimination, infant mortality and violence against women. She also lauded the efforts made by the College in setting up the Women's Cell.

Prof. K.S. Lyngdoh, President Governing Body, Shillong College, in her speech touched on the government's emphasis on the education of girls and female enrollment in institutions of higher education.

The Chairperson, Women's Cell NEHU, Prof. S.M. Sungoh commented on the 'Relevance of Setting up Women's Cell in Higher Educational Institutions'. Such cells strive to highlight the problems faced by women in universities and colleges. In doing so, women's issues are promoted through counseling, networking and collaborating both within and outside the college and university system.

The Chief Guest, Smt. M. Iawphniaw, Post Master General, North Eastern Circle in her address spoke of empowering women through financial stability and creating an awareness about problems faced by women in general. She also state that significant contribution are made by women in varied areas –the home , the work place , and society at large.

After the inaugural function the *Deliberative and Interactive Sessions* started. This session was chaired by Dr. (Mrs.) M.P.R. Lyngdoh, Principal, Shillong College.

Smt. W.C.K. Sohliya from the Department of Commerce and Management, Shillong College, presented a paper titled "*Women in the Labyrinth of leadership*". She focused on issues that act as barriers which prevent women from reaching the top. Ms. Sohliya made reference to the 'glass ceiling' metaphor whereby women seen to successfully climb the ladder of hierarchy yet are unable to reach the penultimate stage.

Dr. A.K. Nongkynrih, Reader, Department of Sociology, NEHU, presented a paper on "*Women and Grass Roots Institution: A Generalist's View*". The paper qualifies itself as 'Generalist' in the sense that it is not gender specialist. Gender differentiation largely depends on the 'rule of descent' of the society. Yet beyond this societies do have other values, norms, beliefs and practices that govern social interaction. The paper which also dealt with women and political Institution pointed out that the political status and the position of women is defined by two factors – the customary beliefs and practices ; and the rational - legal.

Padmashree Patricia Mukhim, Editor, The Shillong Times, deliberated on "*Women and Politics*". She focused on women and society and pointed out that society is much conditioned by patriarchy and this is apparent in the traditional institutions of our state. Yet, women do have the potential to excel in politics, for politics is only 'housekeeping on a grand scale'.

The session concluded with the Chairperson's Remark followed by a Vote of Thanks delivered by Dr. (Mrs.) S. Pandey, Department of Hindi, Shillong College.





*Women's
Cell
19-07-2009*