



The Importance and Role of Women in Decision Making Forums

Peace and Development in Manipur and Northeast India



Organised by

Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI),
Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network (MWGSN)
North East India Initiative for Peace (NEIWIP)

Date & time: 3 May 2014, 10 am to 4 pm

Venue: The Classic Regency, The Classic Hotel, Imphal, Manipur

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The Importance and Role of Women in Decision Making Forums
Peace and Development in Manipur and Northeast India

Date:3 May 2014

Time: 10am to 4pm

Venue: The Classic Regency, The Classic Hotel, Imphal

Timing	Program
9.30 am	Registration

Timing	Session I: The Importance and Role of Women in Decision Making Forums Peace and Development in Manipur and Northeast India
10.00 am	Welcome address to the meeting by Ms Reena Mutum, State Cordinator Manipur Women Gun Survivor Network and Ms Hazarimayum Jubita, Executive Director of Gender and Development Initiative and Convener of Peace Core Team, Manipur
10.10 am	Introductory speech by Ima Rose Mangsi, President, Kuki Women Union, Manipur
10.20 am	Self-introduction by all the participants (2 minute each)
11. 30 am	Tea Break
11.45 am	Presentation on UNSCR 1325 and the participation of women in decision making forums for peace and development in Northeast India and the importance of strengthening of women network to be facilitated by Ms Hazarimayum Jubita, Executive Director of Gender and Development Initiative and Convener of Peace Core Team, Manipur
12.45 pm	What are the problems/challenges for women in decision making? What are the strategies to that can be taken up for future in decision making? Session to be facilitated by Ms Hazarimayum Jubita, Executive Director, Gender and Development Initiative and Convener of Peace Core Team, Manipur, Ima Nganbi, President, Apunba Nupi Lup (ANUL) Ms Mumtaz, Women Survivor
1.20 pm -2 pm	Lunch
Timing	Session II: UNSCR 1325 and Formation of Manipur Women Group formation on UNSCR 1325
2 pm	Screening of the film "Women War and Peace"
3 pm	Recommendations and strategies that can be taken up for future in decision making and involvement of more women in decision and Manipur Women Group formation on UNSCR 1325 to be facilitated by Ms Hazarimayum Jubita, Executive Director, Gender and Development Initiative and Convener of Peace Core Team, Manipur, Ima Nganbi, President, Apunba Nupi Lup (ANUL) Ms Mumtaz, Women Survivor .

4 pm	Vote of thanks by Ms Omita Sharungbam, Project Assistant, Control arms Foundation of India/ Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network and Tea
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Program Report

Northeast India comprises the contiguous *Eight States*—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The region has been facing the onslaught of multiple armed conflicts for many decades. The issues aggravated after the introduction of the Armed Forces Special Power Act. More than 50,000 lives have been lost in the violence. The total population of North Eastern Region of India is 38,857,769, of which 19.1% are living below the poverty line. North East India deals with complex social political issues such as struggle over natural resources, ethnic conflicts, illegal migration, displacement and social exclusion. In Assam, there have been 14 bomb blasts since January to March, this year and 30 cases of bomb blasts between January and March 23 in Manipur. The conflict in Manipur turns 300 women into widows annually.

Status of women in Northeast India

According to UNICEF, Assam has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in India, 407/100,000 live births. Total of 13,308 incidence of crime against women had been reported according to the National Crime Records Bureau 2011 with 11503 cases in Assam, 269 cases in Meghalaya, 1358 cases in Tripura, 167 cases in Mizoram, 247 cases in Manipur, 38 cases in Nagaland, 171 cases in Arunachal Pradesh and 55 cases reported in Sikkim. Manipur has the second highest rate in domestic violence in the country. There were 269 cases of violence against women in Manipur during the period between January and October of 2012 include 21 rape cases, two rape and murder cases, 16 suicide cases, 7 molestation cases, 4 kidnapping cases, 56 missing cases and 78 trafficking cases.

On 3 May 2014 Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI), Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network (MWGSN) and North East Women Initiative for Peace (NEWIP) successfully organized an event of women leaders network meeting under the theme *“The Importance and Role of Women in Decision Making Forums: Peace and Development in Manipur and Northeast India”* at The Classic Regency Hall, The Classic Hotel, Imphal, Manipur.

The training workshop commenced with a welcome speech by **Ms Reena Mutum**, State Coordinator (MWGSW) stating that participation of womenfolk is the need of the hour. Women from all age groups have been suffering in different ways in the society. Manipur has recorded as the 2nd highest rate in domestic violence against women and the state witness around 300 widows per year. This was followed by lightening up of the candle by Ms Ima Ramani, President, All Manipur Women’s Reformation & Development Society, Ms. Sitara Begum, Muslim Women Leader Imphal East along with Ms Valley Rose.



Women leaders from different ethnic groups lightening the candle

As a continuation of the programme, an introductory speech was given by **Ms Hazarimayum Jubita**, Executive Director of Gender Development Initiative and Convener of Peace Core Team, Manipur. Reena Mutum and Hazarimayum Jubita, after giving the brief introductory part regarding the concept, clearly explained the UNSCR 1325 and the participation of women in decision making forums for peace and development in North East India and the importance of strengthening of women network. They focused more on the role of women in decision making. Ms. Jubita added that Education System should be changed according to today's situation or scenario.



Ms Hazarimayum Jubita, Executive Director of Gender Development Initiative and Convener of Peace Core Team, Manipur (Right) and Ms Reena Mutum, State Co-coordinator, Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network, Manipur (Left)

Ms Sitara Begum, Muslim Woman Leader Imphal East, stated that, “there is no role of women in the decision making processes. In Manipur, during crime women were the first to handle the situation but on the other hand when there is the time of decision making they were been kept aside”.

Ms. Valley Rose, Editor, Aza Daily, said according to her own experience that “husbands and wives relationship must give more importance”, as decision making processes starts from family itself. She explained that women must feel responsible to help other women who are the victims of violence. Women should not tolerate crime against other women. She also shared her experience of the effect of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and became refugee, quoting ‘I am refugee in my own land’.



Ms Valley Rose, Editor, Aza Daily, presenting during the event on 3 May 2014 in Manipur

Ms Arambam (O) Memchoubi, Poetess & Scholar of Manipuri literature and Mythology, kept her attention on the misinterpretation of the traditional practices in Manipur in terms of marriage and other rituals. According to her some of the practices during ritual function should be changed with the time.

With the continuation of the session **Ima Ramani**, President, All Manipur Women's Reformation & Development Society, mentioned about the understanding of 'Rajnity, Arthanity, and Dharmanity'. She also shared her personal experience of work and challenges that she faced from the society. She further stated that women should be given equal distribution of property and she used to apply that rule practically.



Ms Arambam (O) Memchoubi, Poetess and Scholar of Manipur Literature and Mythology (Right) and Ima Ramani, President, All Manipur Women's Reformation & Development Society (Left)

The first session of the meeting covered with the discussion on the problems of women and the challenges in decision making and the strategies in it. In addition with the topic there were different comments and suggestions given by different participants from different state organizations.



Ms Kakomlunglu Kamei, Kabui Mother's Association, a sharing her opinion (Right) and Ms. Sitara Begum, Muslim Women leader sharing her opinion (Left)

The second half of the session kept the attention on women's role in the family environment and the social environment.

Ms. Lourembem Nganbi, Meira Paibi Leader, Bishnupur District, focused on the education of women and girl child. She stated that education is the basic and initial stage for the development of women in respect with decision making. She gave importance to the moral character of women, knowing their own rights, transparency in working, unity, economy and most importantly she concluded with the concept of 'research', which gives sharing, participation, and helps to enhance the knowledge. And with some of the spokespersons, they talked about the 'patriarchy society' in the Indian context which highly needs the changes.



Ima Nganbi, Meira Paibi Leader Bishnupur Distt, Addressing the strategies for women participation in decision making

Ms Aheibam Chanthoisana, Project Assistant, MWGSN, added the need of change in the parenting mode and modified customary laws in the favor of women for instance, allowing the crematory service of parents by daughters too. Many participants also suggested to include men in the session of the same concern as both are needed together for the change.

The meeting concluded with the brief discussion on violence against women, status of women in northeast India and drafting of 21 points for future strategies in decision making and screening of the film *“Women, War and Peace”*. Finally “Manipur Women Alliance on UNSCR 1325” was formed to initiate women’s participation in decision making.

Note: United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 is an international law unanimously adopted by the Security Council on 31 October 2000 that mandates UN Member States to engage women in all aspects of peace building including ensuring women’s participation on all levels of decision-making on peace and security issues.



Discussion during the meeting by Women leaders

Ms. Omita Sharungbam, Project Assistant, MWGSN concluded the gathering with vote of thanks.



Group photo of Women Leaders after the event on 3 May 2014 in Manipur

Recommendation and strategies that can be taken up in future in decision making processes and the involvement of more women in decision making:

1. Women should not keep aside while making decision.
2. Women should not be blame for violence against women.
3. Education should be emphasized and education system should also change according to the situation.
4. Tribal women should involve in decision making is very require.
5. Research should be done to upgrade the knowledge and experience.
6. Upliftment of economy for women.
7. Transparency of work among different organisations.
8. Change in patriarchal system.
9. Set up of child care at meeting place so that women mother can participate the meeting.
10. Women should understand women folk very thoroughly.
11. Women should understand their voting rights and political rights.
12. Mobilization of awareness at all local levels.
13. Equal distribution of property among men and women.
14. Involvement of both men and women in understanding the issues and strengthen in decision making.
15. Customary laws have to be discussed elaborately and should change if required.
16. Men should understand the value of women.
17. Sharing of knowledge to one another.
18. Unity among women folk to change the current status of women and society.
19. Parenting system should enhance with appropriate mechanism.
20. Legal action should be taken up against the practice of marriage below age.
21. Inclusion of women empowerment in all aspects in the academic syllabus as a long term process.

For more information, please contact:

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