

# **A Minor Research Project**

**On**

## **“Political Awareness And Participation Of The Rural Women In The Socio- Political Affairs Of Nagaon District”**

**(UGC letter no. F. 5-314/2013-14/MRP/NERO/17951 dated 28-03-2014)**



***Submitted by***

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***Submitted to***

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उच्च शिक्षण आयोग

U 854



सत्यमेव जयते

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग,  
University Grants Commission,  
(मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)  
(Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India)  
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Dated:

No.F.5-314/2013-14(MRP/NERO)

Date: 27 SEP 2016

To  
The Accounts Officer  
University Grants Commission  
North Eastern Regional Office, Guwahati - 781 006

Subject: Release of Grants to Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi Girls' College, P.O.: Ketekibari, Sonitpur - 784 154, Assam for the year 2016-17 under Plan in respect of Minor Research Project entitled Political awareness ..... Nagaon District awarded to Ashim Hazarika, Department of Political Science

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to convey the sanction of the Commission for payment of grant of Rs. 13,500/- (Rupees Thirteen Thousand Five Hundred) only as Final Installment for the year 2016-17 towards the scheme of Minor Research Project to the Principal Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi Girls' College, P.O.: Ketekibari, Sonitpur - 784 154, Assam for the year 2016-17 (Plan / Non-Plan) expenditure to be incurred during 2016-17 as per details given below:

1.

Name of the Item	Allocation (Rs.)	BE/RE (Rs.)	Grant already sanctioned (Rs.)	Grant now being sanctioned (Rs.)	Unspent balance if any / adj. (Rs.)	Balance grant (Rs.)
Minor Research Project	2,55,000/-		2,41,500/-	13,500/-	-	Nil

- The sanctioned amount is debit to Head of Account 3(D)50 [2552.00.131.02.01.31 & 35] and is valid for payment during the financial year 2016-17 only.
- The amount of the grant shall be drawn by the Education Officer (Drawing and Disbursing Officer), University Grants Commission on the Grant-in-Aid bill and shall be disbursed to and credited to grantee as above through Electronic mode as per the following details:

Details (Name & Address) of Account Holder:	
a. Principal:	Principal, Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi Girls' College, P.O.: Ketekibari, Sonitpur - 784 154, Assam
b. Account No:	1867010020396
c. Name & Address of Branch:	United Bank of India, Mission Chariali, C/O - Maruti Traders, Near SBI Tezpur, PIN - 784 001, Dist. - Sonitpur, Assam
d. MICR Code of Branch	784027003
e. IFSC Code	UTBI0MCH189
f. Type of Account: SB/Current/Cash Credit	SB

- The grant is subject to the adjustment on the basis of Utilization Certificate in the prescribed Proforma submitted by the University / College / Institution.
- The University / College shall maintain proper accounts of the expenditure out of the grant which shall be utilised only on approved items of expenditure.
- The University / Institution may follow the General Financial Rules, 2005 and take necessary action to amend their manuals of financial procedures may adopt the provisions of GFRs, 2005 and those don't have their own approved manuals on financial procedures may adopt the provisions of GFRs, 2005 and instructions / Guidelines there under from time to time.

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
21/9/16

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am indebted to each and every individual who helped me in many ways in the preparation of this Minor Research Project titled **“Political Awareness And Participation Of The Rural Women In The Socio- Political Affairs Of Nagaon District”**

I express my gratitude to the authorities of University Grants Commission, North Eastern Regional Office, Guwahati, Assam for providing me an opportunity to do the Minor Research Project.

I am grateful to the Governing Body, Principal, Teaching and Non-teaching Staff of our College –L.G.B.Girls’ College, Tezpur for the support, encouragement and guidance extended to me.

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**ASHIM HAZARIKA**

# **PERFACE**

The Project report entitled “Political Awareness and Participation of the Rural Women in the Socio- Political Affairs of Nagaon District” is presented for the fulfillment of UGC sponsored Minor Research Project, Vide UGC letter no. F. 5-314/2013-14/MRP/NERO/17951 dated 28-03-2014.

The report has been presented in Five Chapters, each Chapter dealing with certain topics.

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: social status and constitutional provision
- Chapter 3: The profile of the area and Method of Study
- Chapter 4: Growth and Development of rural women
- Chapter 5: Conclusion and suggestions

At the end, Bibliography and Appendices are presented in a systematic manner.

**ASHIM HAZARIKA**

Place: L.G.B. Girls’ College, Tezpur

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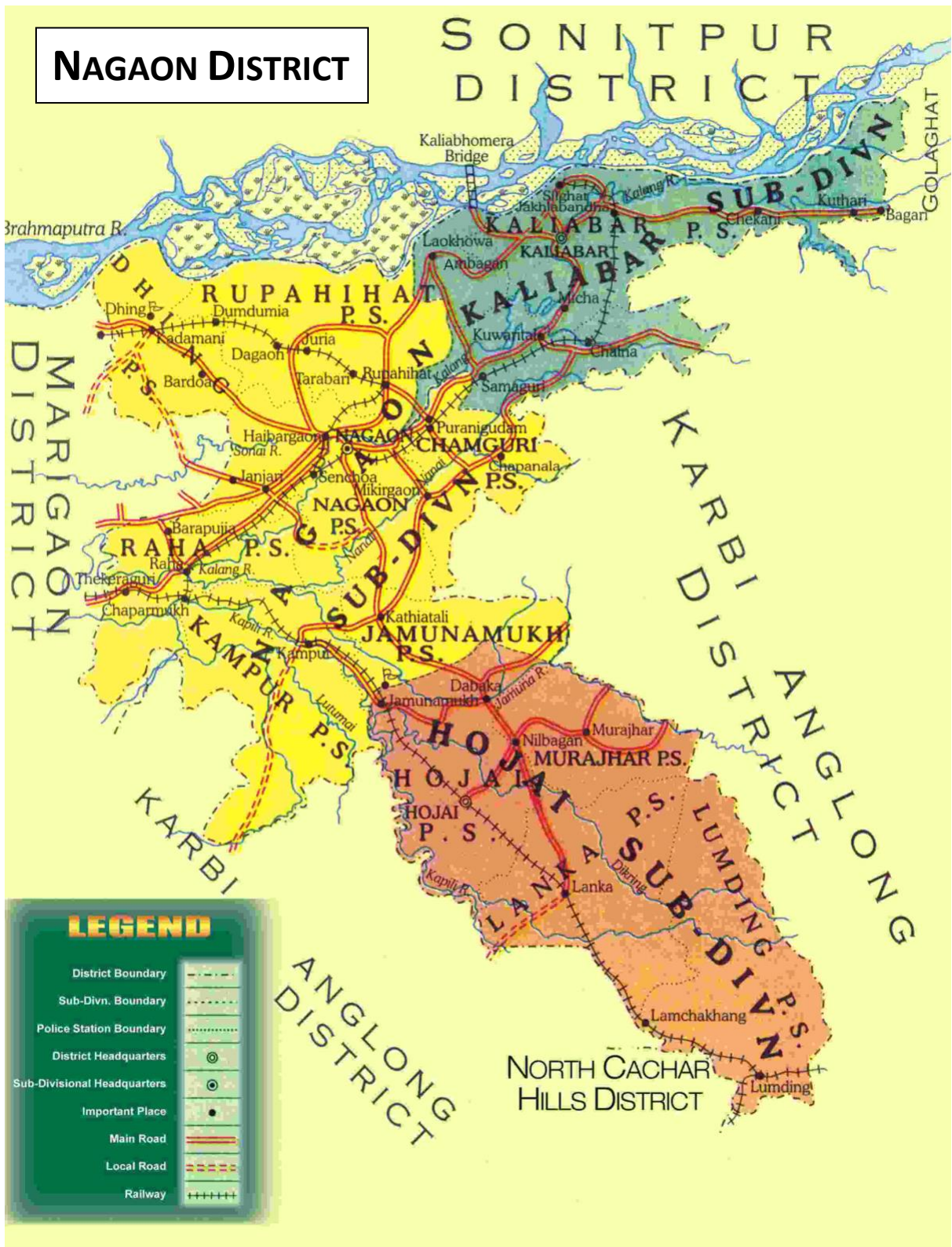
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### Outline Map of the Study Area





# **CHAPTER-I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

In the world women constitute about half of the total population. In India also half of the populations are women. India is land of villages where almost 70 per cent people lived in villages and half of them are women. The constitution guarantees socio-economic and political equality and the provision of equal rights for availing different opportunities to all social groups of population, especially women. Our Indian constitution provide equal status for both men and women but till they are deprived in many aspect I.e. social, political and economic. Since independence, various initiatives have been undertaken for improving the socio-economic conditions and empowering women in India. Increasing emphasis has also been placed on initiating variety

of development schemes and welfare programmes for maximizing the participation of women in different activities. Various legal reforms and resolutions in the form of social Acts have also been introduced to improve the social status and empowerment of women in the Indian social system. Till today they are treated as second class citizen of the state for that patriarchy look of the society is responsible. Due to these underlined problems imposed by our traditional form of society against women their participation in different economic activities like education, employment, political system etc. has remained very poor even after sixty five years of implementation of Indian constitution. All the major decision of the society is taken by their male counterpart. They are not supposed to participate in all major activities of the society. They are involved both in domestic as well as agriculture activities in rural areas. Participation of women work force in the primary sector is more than 60 per cent. They support agriculture as a laborer as well as a non paid worker of her home. Although their contribution is noteworthy, still they are living as an invisible force in the sector. Their role has not been adequately recognized and rewarded. Income earned by rural women is generally utilized for domestic use as well as for the socio-economic development of their family. Restrictions are also imposed on participation of women in certain social and cultural programmed and even in moving outside the households for certain purposes. It is observed that men migrate to the nearby towns in search of higher income oriented employment, leaving the total burden of maintenance of

Households to women and most of them did it very well, but till it was thought that women are not well in the field of politics or political decision making process for the state. Women entering politics often find an uneven or even hostile political, public, cultural and social environment that deters them from winning. A quick glance at the current composition of political decision-makers in any political party provides evidence that women still face numerous obstacles in contemporary political landscape in India. Few women hold decision making positions as a result of the playing field existing in most political parties. This is happening despite well-documented efforts by states and non-state actors to ensure political equality between men and women; the imbalance is more in rural areas. For the improvement of socio economic conditions and political participation of rural women, rural women are to be empowered both in income generating activities and in decision-making. This has become necessary to sustain the living conditions of the family in rural areas. The available literature on the participation and performance of women in rural governance paints both a positive and negative picture. However, there are pronounced apprehensions that disabilities like illiteracy, continued and haunting domestic responsibilities, poverty, lack of experience, poor exposure and communication skills of women as compared to men come in the way of effective participation of women in decentralized planning and governance. Seen in terms of positive outcomes, several micro level studies point out that about 80-90 percent of women attend Panchayat meetings regularly. Given their

Sheer numbers, one might conclude that democracy has become more participatory than before at least at the grassroots level. Study proof that despite facing numerous problems, women's performance on the basis of qualitative and quantitative indicators is in no way inferior to that of males. A sizable segment of society has come to accept the fact that women are perhaps more suitable for running village Panchayats than their male counterparts. Experiences from some states reveal that "The women elected to these bodies (Panchayats) have shown startling results in performance, particularly in the sectors of health, education, access to basic services and in ensuring a significant change in the living conditions of their respective communities. Even in strong patriarchal culture, one-third reservation has encouraged women to demonstrate their leadership". Political participation and awareness is very important for development of the state. India is a land of villages, more than 70% people of India live in villages and half of them are female, but it was seen that most of the rural women are not aware and conscious about their political rights. They usually not interested to participate in politics. . For successful democratic decentralization in country, people's participation is must at the grass root levels. Talking about women empowerment social and economic equality is very important. Women must be economically independent then only they get there share in the society. The economic condition of the rural women in India is not very good. Most of the women are working in non-profitable works like domestic works i.e. preparing foods, as caretaker to her child etc. for which they are not paid. After

Implementing of different govt. welfare scheme for rural areas, the condition of rural women are somehow little developed then past. It was seen that after implementing of Panchayati Raj Act. Women political participation is increased in the grassroots level at least.

## **1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

The study of the political participation and social status of rural women of Nagaon District has great significance in terms of understanding the socio-economic condition of rural women, the problems which are faced by them and also there consciousness and awareness towards the politics of the state. It's the need of the time to know the problems and to find out the solution, that how we may create a society where women's are equally participating in all aspects, it's necessary for the greater interest of the society. It also helps us to know the real position of women empowerment in rural areas of Nagaon District and how to we developed it for the benefit of them. This research is also profitable for implementation of different govt. policies towards the development of the rural women in different areas of India. This study is also helpful for the agencies who are working in the field of rural women development to review the policies which are already implemented by them for the development of the women. Most of the people agreed that women are lacking behind then men in socio-political aspects. There are lot of reason which are responsible for that type of

Thought. It's very essential to find out the problems because without which, it's not possible to eradicate the problems which are facing by the rural women. There are lot of obstacles in front of rural women to participate in the decision making process of the state these study help us to find out the barrier which are standing in front of women participation in socio-political activities.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

Now a day it is a very big problem in front of the state about inequality in between men and women in the society in terms of social, economic and political. It's a very serious concern that till twentieth first century half of the population which is women is not getting same treatment as like men. There are constitutional safeguards for women but till today the discrimination, deprivation, exploitation is going on against the women and especially against the rural women. India is known as the land of villages and even now majority of her population live in the villages. In India, women have been deprived of various kinds of opportunities and advantages by our traditional society for the past several centuries. Discrimination against women is commonly observed in providing opportunities of socio-economic development, participation in different activities and development programmed and availing then opportunities of various facilities, which are directly or indirectly linked with

Bringing improvements in the life style and the quality of life, because of prevailing several social and cultural backwardness. Besides this, women are also denied the rights in the decision making process of their family affairs on account of several social and cultural constraints imposed by their family and the continuation of traditional system of the society. In that case Nagaon District is not exceptional. There are reservations for women in Panchayat body and due to that the number of women representatives is increased but it's debatable whether they really possess those powers or not. Recognizing the unsatisfactory progress that has been achieved in improving the socio-economic status of women in the past it has increasingly been felt desirable that involving rural women in the political system and ensuring their participation in the activities of its institutions, including in matters related to decision making process would be instrumental in improving the socio-economic status and political empowerment of women. In view of these assumptions, the introduction of reservation policy in favor of women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions has therefore, been an important government intervention for maximizing the participation of women in different activities at Gram Panchayat levels and thereby to improve their socioeconomic status. Gender inequality which the society has inherited as an age-old malpractice is not likely to vanish only by enacting a law or issuing a whip. Sexual inequality has much deeper roots traditionally, socio-economically, The socio-economic conditions of women in rural areas have been found to be even more serious and Unsatisfactory in urban areas on

account of the social and cultural backwardness of the society. Another important point is that in the grassroots level it's somehow good about the number of women participation in the decision making body but not in the case of state and central legislature in there women participation is very less in number.

#### **1.4 REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Undoubtedly, there has been a good account of theoretical literature on political awareness and participation of rural women in the politics of the state is available. Research has been also done on political participation of rural women in politics by different researcher but still there is a gap which has to be filled up. There is a need for such a research which proposed us to undertake the study.

Most of the study finds that women in the rural area are politically not very aware about their political rights which are provided by our constitution. But it was wrong to say that all women are equally unaware about their political rights, some are doing well in this field. Some women wanted to participate in the politics but due to some reason they are not taking part in politics. Study shows that patriotically look of our society is somehow responsible for less participation of women in politics. Study also tells that women are also socially



Deprived from their rights. Women are not equally treated by the society. The social status of women in villages is not equal with her male counterpart. Study proofs that rural women are, still silently accepted the dominance of the men. A review of the previous studies on this topic is quite essential to understand what the other research scholars have already explored through their research studies, books and articles.

Against this background regarding the political awareness and participation of the rural women in the socio-political affairs, in Nagaon district is studied with the following objectives.

### **1.5 OBJECTIVES:**

The following are the specific objectives of the present study:

- (1) To find out women participation in the political process of the grass root level.
- (2) To find out different govt. schemes about the development of rural women.
- (3) To find out social status of rural women.
- (4) To find out girl's educational scenario.
- (5) To find out health status of rural women.

(6) To find out the obstacle in front of women to protection her rights and dignity.

(7) To find out the status of “Women Empowerment”.

(8) To find out the role of the SHGs for the development of the economic condition of rural women.

### **1.6 HYPOTHESIS:**

With a view to examine the above objectives the following hypothesis are tested in the present study.

(1) Rural women are not aware about politics.

(2) Govt. schemes are not totally benefitted for the development of the condition of the rural women.

(3) Educational and health facilities are not well provided.

(4) Women are not getting equal status in the society.

(5) There are some obstacles in front of the women participation in social and political activities.

### **1.7 Relevance of the study:**

The present study related with the development of rural women in the socio-political sector. We all know that our women are not getting equal status

with men and especially in the case of village women it's very much true and one more thing is that they are not lived with their dignity. Women are deprived not only their political rights but also from the other rights which are granted by the constitution of India. Since independence, various initiatives have been undertaken for improving the socio-economic conditions and empowering women in India. In this context, the Constitution guarantees socio-economic, cultural and political equality and the provision of providing equal rights for availing different opportunities to all social groups of population, especially women. Increasing emphasis has also been provided for initiating variety of development schemes and welfare programmers with maximizing the participation of women in different activities during the past plans. Men are dominated over women not only inside the home but also outside the home. The conditions of the rural women are very pathetic. Most of the villages of Nagaon District are not well connected with main stream as well as the educational and health scenario is also in a very bad condition. Women are facing lot of problems in the rural area to survive. Govt. formulated lot of scheme for the development of rural women but in real practice most of the scheme only touched a tinny section of them only, still rural women are struggling in different aspect of life. Social inequality are also seen in the rural area, traditional conservative look or so called social norms of the society barred women to participate in different activities of the society. This study helps us to know about some of the problems which are facing by the rural women of the

Nagaon district of Assam. We hope that this will also help the govt., also to making policy and examining its some of the ongoing project in the rural area. Through my research I also tried to find out about the status of the word “women empowerment” in the rural areas of Nagaon. We all know that women are capable to do anything as like her male counterpart but there is something which debarred women to do as like men. In my study I shall try to find out the obstacles which are coming in front of the women success. At last I hope that this study help about to understand the real status, problems, obstacles, scenario in different aspect of the life of the rural women in Nagaon District.

## **1.8 CHAPTER SCHEME AND BRIEF OUT LINE OF THE STUDY:**

The present study is organized into five chapters as mentioned below:

### **CHAPTER-I: introduction:**

Introduction, significance of the study, statement of the problem, review of literature, objectives, hypothesis and relevance of the study, Chapter Scheme and Brief outline of the study are explained in the introductory chapter.

### **CHAPTER- II: social status and constitutional provision:**

The second chapter has discussed about the social status of women in India and the constitutional provision for the women in Indian politics.

### **CHAPTER-III: The profile of the area and method of study:**

In the third chapter, the study is concerned with the profile of the district. The third chapter explained about the historical background of the district, geographical features, population, literacy, livelihood and health condition of the rural women. In this chapter the method and tools of the study is also explained.

#### **CHAPTER-IV: Growth and development of the rural women in social and political affairs:**

The fourth chapter discussed about the women participation in politics and socio-economic status of the rural women of Nagaon district.

#### **CHAPTER-V: conclusion and suggestions:**

The last chapter deals about the conclusion of the study and also some of the suggestions are forwarded for the development of the condition of rural women in Nagaon district.

#### **Summing up:**

Through there are adequate literature are found about the political participation and social status of the rural women but lack of adequate support from the public and attention of the govt. the problems are rising day by day. Especially the women of Nagaon district facing lot of problems so, they need

Special attention from the govt. as well as other organization which are involving in the development of the women and also it needs some kind of special study. The rural women of the district played a very important role in socio-economic development and selection of the representatives. A modest attempt has been made here to throw light on the issues connected with the rural women of Nagaon district for solving the existing problem.

## **CHAPTER-2**

### **Social status and constitutional provision**

#### **2.1 Social status of Indian women:**

The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. From equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. India is a multifaceted society where no generalization could apply to the nation's various regional, religious, social and economic groups. In India, the history speaks that the women are considered as a divine force but the multi-cultured Indian society placed the women at different positions. Thus, there is no uniform status of women in the Indian society. Nevertheless certain broad circumstances in which Indian women live affect the way they participate in the economy and politics. A common denominator in their lives is that they are generally confined to home, with restricted mobility, and in seclusion. Other, unwritten, hierarchical practices place further constraints on women. Throughout history, women have generally been restricted to the role of a home-maker; that of a mother who act

As a caretaker to her child and a wife who need to serve her husband without questioning. Despite major changes that have occurred in the status of women in some parts of the world in recent decades, norms that restrict women to the home are still powerful in India, defining activities that are deemed appropriate for women. They are, by and large, excluded from political and social life, which by its very nature takes place in a public forum. When we are talking about women status we must look back to history. The early Vedic period was great for women; at this stage women are getting highest respect from the society. One of the several factors that justify the greatness of India's ancient culture is the honorable place granted to women. According to "*Pattanjali*", at this stage women are getting higher education also. "*Rig Vedas*" tell us that in this period women are free to select their life partner. In this period the husband also gave very good respect to his wife as well society. No religious rite can be performed with perfection by a man without the participation of his wife. Wives are thus befittingly called better half. Scriptures such as the "*Rig Veda*" and "*Upanishad*" mention several women sages and seers, notably "*Gargi*" and "*Maitreyi*". But this golden period for women doesn't last long from 500 B.C., women lost their status in society. Medieval India saw many foreign conquests, which resulted in the decline of women's status. Aggression of "*Mughal*", "*Manusmriti*", Child marriage system, "*Parda Portha*", "*Sati System*", Religious system, coming of Christians in India etc. are the responsible for the digression of women status in India. During the Muslim period of history, they



were deprived of their rights of equality with men. Women are compelled to stay indoors, within the four walls of their houses with a long veil on their face. history tell us that Islamic period (rulers) time women lost their equal status and importance in society but in spite of the hard and fast rules some women left there foot marks in the society like, *Razia Sultana, Chand Bibi, Nurjahan, Jahnara, Jijabai* etc. some of the social evils were also present in mediaeval Indian society associated with Hindu. As compared to Hindu society, other societies of other religions such as Buddhism, Jainism and Christians women enjoyed far more freedom.

With the advent of the British, the status of women saw many changes. Women were not given equal matrimonial rights to property, rights to widows to Remarriage, adoption and divorce rights. This situation was severely criticized by the colonial authorities. In return, Indian cultural nationalism argued in favors of Indian tradition. Therefore, the 19th century is often termed as the century of social reform. With the help of some Indian reformers like *Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra vidyasagar, Swami Vivekananda, swami dayananda saraswati, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru,* and many others, who were in the forefront of the struggle for women emancipation. Gandhi's efforts led to the elevation of the women's status, involving them in the struggle for social progress and political independence. In mahatma's own words "to call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to women."

It is this message that he wanted to convey to the masses in his efforts to uplift the status of women in India. He saw women as equal partners in the development of the society as well as encouraged them to participate in the freedom struggle of India. Prominent among them were *Sarojini Naidu, Kasturba Gandhi, Kamala Nehru, Sucheta Kiplani and Aruna Asaf Ali*, who participated in the political arena. Women played an important part in India's independence struggle. Some famous freedom fighters include *Bhikaji Cama, Dr. Annie Besant, Pritilata Waddedar, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kriplani and Kasturba Gandhi*. Other notable names include *Muthulakshmi Reddy and Durgabai Deshmukh*. The *Rani of Jhansi* Regiment of *Subhas Chandra Bose's* Indian National Army consisted entirely of women, including *Captain Lakshmi, Sarojini Naidu*, a poet and freedom fighter, was the first Indian woman to become President of the Indian National Congress and the first woman to become the governor of a state in India. So, in this stage women's status is somehow developed and they come out from their home to participate in different activities of the society.

After independence the status of Indian women's are developed to compare the past now women are became educated and they actively participate in different social activities of the society. Women in modern times have achieved a lot but in reality, they have to still travel a long way. Their contribution towards the development of the society is very much but till in

Some parts of the India especially in rural area the condition of women is not as good as compare to urban area. Women in India now participate fully in areas such as education, sports, politics, media, art and culture, service sectors, science and technology, etc. in different aspect women are progressing equally with men but till the discrimination, exploitation, deprivation, dominance, mistreatment is going on against women. The condition of the rural women is very pathetic. The status of the rural women is in pathetic condition, due to lack of education and consciousness among the rural women they are deprived and dominated and also not getting the equal status in the society. Govt. is trying to provide equal status to women through formulating different legal provision to safeguard women's rights. Independence of India heralded the introduction of laws relating to women. The Constitution provided equality to men and women and also gave special protection to women to realize their interests effectively. Special laws were enacted to prevent indecent representation of women in the media and sexual harassment in workplaces. The law also gives women equal rights in the matter of adoption, maternity benefits, equal pay, good working conditions etc. Different NGOs and social organization are also involving in the development of rural women.

In Nagaon district also women's status in society is not equal with men in most of the areas and especially in the rural area of the district. The some of the rural areas of Nagaon is very much back warded due to lack of proper

Educational, communication and transportation system in that parts women's are dominated and exploited by her male partner as well as society. Evil practices like witch hunting are very common in some interior parts of the rural area of the district. One of the major causes which were responsible for that was illiteracy, rigid social norms and lack of proper awareness about her rights. In spite of these problems and difficulties, when I personally visited in different areas I feel that in some parts women are treated respectfully and now they are aware and actively participated in different activities of the society.

## **2.2 Constitutional provision for political participation:**

Women are struggling to get political rights in all the countries of the world. One of the best ways to understand the spirit of a civilization and to appreciate its excellence and realize its limitation is to study the position and status of women. Civilization without women is structure of the family impossible. Considerable progress has taken place in women's political participation, particularly towards the end of this century. Despite this progress, however, the 21<sup>st</sup> century begins with enormous unfinished business in this realm. The struggle to achieve equal rights for women is often thought to have begun, in the English-speaking world, with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). During the 19th

Century, as male suffrage was gradually extended in many countries, women became increasingly active in the quest for their own suffrage. Not until 1893, however, in New Zealand, did women achieve suffrage on the national level. Australia followed in 1902; the women suffrage movement in U.K. and U.S.A. was started to help women to establish their political rights. Women over 30 in the U.K. got the vote in 1918, and women over 21 in 1928, U.S.A. in 1920. In that case Indian women are lucky because they got voting power without any such type of struggle but till they are very lacking behind men in direct participation of the political affairs of the state in spite of constitutional provision of equal political rights. . Most countries in the world have failed to give due space and representation to women in their political life. Women are moving in the direction of near equal participation in only a handful of countries, such as Bahamas, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. In these societies women have begun to seriously alter the very nature of politics, making enduring, and substantial gains in every field. However, in all other countries, including the supposedly advanced democracies of western Europe and North America, where women exercise certain freedoms and have acquired the wherewithal for economic independence, female presence in legislatures remains small and relatively insignificant. In India the problem for women is more serious for several reasons: In India, as in many other countries in the world, women are underrepresented in all political positions, even if they form approximately one half of the population. The women's movement in

India started giving priority to the issue of women's participation in electoral politics only in few years back. At the 1990 national women's conference held at Kozhikode in Kerala, this issue was discussed. Many NGOs and networks have been formed, subsequently, around the issue of women's political participation. While the proportion of women who went to vote increased during the 1990s, women are still not well represented in political life. In a representative democracy all sectors of the society should have a voice in policy making.

The Constitution of India, 1950 has certain provisions relating to women. It makes special provisions for the betterment, treatment and development of women in every sphere of life. The Preamble – The Preamble is the key to the Constitution. It does not discriminate men and women but it treats them alike. The framers of the Constitution were well aware of in equal treatment meted out to the fair sex, from the time immemorial. In India, the history of suppression of women is very old and long which is responsible including general and special provisions for upliftment and development of the status of women. Certain provisions are specifically designed for the benefit of women. Undoubtedly, the preamble appended to the constitution of India, 1950 contains various objectives including, “the equality of status and opportunity” to all the citizens. This objective has been inserted with the view to give equal status to men and women in terms of the opportunity. Fundamental Rights Part III of the

Constitution of India, 1950 deals with the fundamental rights. The provisions regarding fundamental rights have been enshrined in Articles 12 to 35, which are applicable to all the citizens irrespective of sex. Part IV Article 36 to 51, which contains about directive principle of state policy are guidelines to the government to be considered while framing laws and policies, This policy directs towards securing all citizens without discriminating between men and women. Article 51(e) imposes on every citizen by way of fundamental duty the responsibility to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. An important area where women have been inadequately represented is in the political sphere. Article 243D and 243T provides that the state makes provisions for reservation of seats for women from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Panchayats and municipalities respectively. Article 325 and 326 of the Constitution of India guarantee political equality, equal right to participation in political activities and right to vote respectively. In simple any women above 18<sup>th</sup> years are eligible to vote and if she is 25<sup>th</sup> years then she may contest in Panchyats, State Assembly and General election in India. In September 1996, the Indian Government introduced a Bill in Parliament, proposing the reservation of one third of the seats for women in the *Lok Sabha* (Central Government) and the State Assemblies. Since then, this proposal has been widely discussed in several parliamentary sessions, without an agreement being reached. It needs support from all sides irrespective of political ideology. Panchayati Raj the formal system of local self-government came into being only

In 1959. In 1976 the committee on the status of women in India recommended the establishment of women Panchayats at village level, with autonomy and resources of their own for the management and administration of welfare, development programmes for women and children, as a transitional measure. The mandatory creation of space for women at Panchayat level came about with passing of the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment act in 1993. The 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment created 50% space structurally for women and the impact of this can be measured in terms of the number of women who have contested the elections all over country including among the women of Nagaon district. Now when I visited different rural area of Nagaon district I found that village women are more conscious and aware about politics than before. Reservation seats in grass root politics give them an opportunity to make place for them in decision making process of the govt. most women have mentioned the increased access to knowledge, information and awareness as a major gain for themselves.

Our Indian constitution is very liberal to provide equal status to women in all aspects of life. In social, political and economic rights our constitution given equal rights both men and women, for that it use the word “citizens” not men or women and in some aspects the farmers of Indian constitution understand that women are deprived and dominated in past so to get equal status, women in some aspect need some special attention for that women are giving some privileges in our constitution.



## Chapter-III

### *The profile of the area and Method of Study:*

#### **3.1 The profile of the area:**

Nagaon formerly Nowgong is one of the most important district of Assam. Located in Central Assam, the eastern, western and southern segments of the newly organized district were once ruled by different small-time feudal kings or their agents. The residual effects of the rule of the “*Bar Bhuyans*” were imaginatively utilized and reorganized by “*Momai Tamuli Barphukana*”, an intrepid officer of the “*Ahom king Pratap Singha*” in the first half of the seventeenth century. This area, until then, was more of strategic than administrative concern. Newly organized village system-hence called "Nagaon", 'Na' means new. Nagaon was passed in to British hands in 1826 and was declared as a separate district administrative unit in 1832, the head quarter of the district was established in Nagaon in 1839. At one time, a large chunk of the *Naga Hills*, the *Mikir Hills* and *North Cachar Hills* were part of the district. With the passage of time they were sliced away to form separate districts.

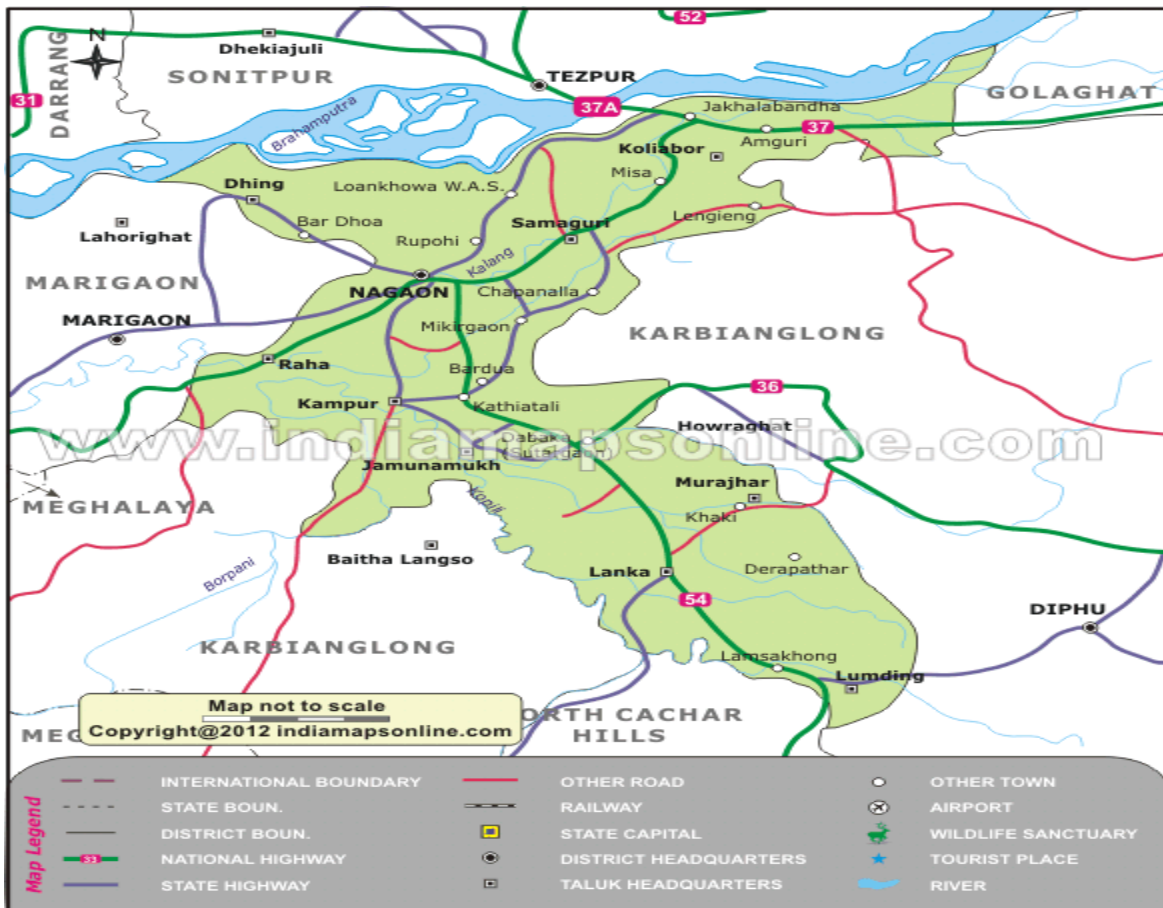
Nagaon District comprised the present Nagaon and Morigaon district until 1989, when the Morigaon district was separated as a distinct district, which was a subdivision till then Nagaon District had three subdivisions; Nagaon, Morigaon, Hojai. Later the present Nagaon District was again divided into three subdivisions Nagaon, Kaliabor and Hojai. Nagaon district occupies an area of 3,831 square kilometers (1,479 sq mi). Nagaon extends from 250-45' to 260-45' North Latitude and 920-33'-6" East Longitude. The district is bounded by Sonitpur district and the river Brahmaputra in the north, West Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills in the south and East Karbi Anglong and Golaghat district in the east. The mighty river Brahmaputra flows along the northern periphery of the district. Other major tributaries meandering through the district such as *Kolong*, *Kopili* drain into the *Brahmaputra*.

### **3.2 communications:**

Lying at a distance of 126 kilometers by road from *Guwahati*, the District is also connected by Railway network, the nearest airport is *Borjhar* (LGBIA) about 140k.m. from Nagaon. Important railway junctions are *Chapormukh* and *Lumding*. Nagaon town constitutes a vital corridor linking the Upper Assam districts of *Golaghat*, *Jorhat*, *Sivasagar*, *Dibrugarh*, *Tinsukia* and the North Assam districts of *Sonitpur* and *North Lakhimpur*. Nagaon district is well connected by National Highway 36, 37, 37A and state roads; out of total in

Habitat village almost 578 (till 2012) are linked with motorized black top roads, now the district is also connected with four lane bypass.

### Road map of Nagaon District



### 3.3 Demographic profile:

The district has been the meeting ground of diverse ethnic groups i.e. *Tiwa, kachari, Bodo, karbi* etc., cultural streams since time immemorial. Throughout the history, people of different stocks have been migrating into this

Land and merged into a common harmonious whole in a process of assimilation and fraternization. Major spoken language is *Assamese, Bengali* and *Hindi*. According to the 2011 census of India, Nagaon district has a population of 2,823,768, roughly equal to the nation of Jamaica or the US state of Kansas. Among total population 1,43,9112 are male and 1,38,4656 are female. This gives it a ranking of 135th in India (out of a total of 640). The district has a population density of 711 inhabitants per square kilometer (1,840 /sq mi). Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 22.09%. Nagaon has a sex ratio of 962 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 74%. Muslims 1,180,267 (50.99%), Hindus 1,106,354 (2001). Nagaon presents a mix of cultures of *Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism*. Now (2011) Muslims constitute more than 60% of the total population. According to 2011 census, NAGAON city is considered to be the fourth largest city in Assam after *Guwahati, Silchar and Dibrugarh* with a population of 147,231.

Table 3.1 **Demographic characteristics of Nagaon**

year	population	Density per sq.k.m	Sex ratio	Literacy rate
1991	1893171	494	929	54.74%
2001	2314629	582	944	61.73%
2011	2823768	711	962	72.37%

Source: census report 2011

Out of total population of the District 86.91%, around 24, 54, 234 people lived in villages among them 12, 03,249 are female. The sex ratio in villages is 962 and the literacy rate among female is quite lower than the urban is only 65.52%.

### **3.4: Climate:**

Climate of the district is wet and humid. The absence of a dry, hot summer and plentiful rainfall climate is good for living and also for cultivation. The winter period started from December to February. It is followed by the pre monsoon season of thunderstorms. The south-west monsoon lasts from June to October. January is the coldest month with temperature varying from 10 to 24 degree Celsius. April and may are the warmest with 30 to 38 degree Celsius. The average temperature in summer is 30.4 degree and in winter 19.8 degrees Celsius.

### **3.5 Administrative Division:**

On the administrative front, Nagaon is the District headquarters of Nagaon district and it has 3 civil sub divisions namely Nagaon, Kaliabor, Hojai with 10 revenue circles and 18 development blocks. 7 Towns of the district, Nagaon

town tops the list with highest population of 1 26,115. District has 240 gram Panchayats, 20 Anchalik Panchayat one Zila Parishod in 1375 inhabited villages. There are 18 community information centers and number of police station is 21. (Till 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015)

### **3.6 Agriculture:**

Agriculture is the backbone of the entire economy of this district of Assam. It is providing livelihood to almost 78 percent of the total population. Rice is the staple food of the inhabitants and paddy is the principal crop cultivated in the district. Floods and Draught however, are major obstruction in the development of this sector. However, measures for the development of this prime sector of economy have been taken. The total geographical area for cultivation, according to professional survey is about 411030 hector. According to statistical handbook of Assam 2012, there are total 103930 hector field are provided with irrigation facilities. This sector has remained largely undeveloped unlike other parts of India where new technology was used to cultivate till our farmers cultivate with age old way. Flood and soil erosion is one of the major problems for the farmers, every year Brahmaputra and its sub river destroyed the crops of the poor farmers of the District but till the govt. cannot make such full proof plan for floods and soil erosion. The major food grains are rice, oil seeds, sugar-cane etc. rural women of the District are also engaged in the

cultivation, they are helping their male member in the different stage of Cultivation. Without the help of the female partner it's not possible to grain crops in the field, they are essential part of the cultivation but they are not recognized.

### **3.7: Economy:**

The economy of the District depends upon the agriculture because around 70% to 80% villagers engaged directly or indirectly in farming but we all know that the condition of the farmers of Nagaon District is not good at well. The district of Nagaon is practically dependent on agriculture and has not yet assumed a dominant role in industry. Tea manufacturing is the predominant industry in the district. In addition to the tea industry, there are three large scale industries, two medium scale industries in the co-operative sector. In the private sector, one medium scale industry is presently in operation. Industries can play one of the important roles in the development of the rural area of the district but due to infrastructural lack industry cannot grow. The women's of the rural area of the district also plays a very important role in the progress of the economy of the state as well as their family. Sericulture and handloom is one of the important livelihoods for the most of the rural women. Around 1185 villages of the district are involved in the production of handloom and textile products. Govt. also provides financial help to this sector but these are not enough. There

are 8 handloom training center, one production center and 7 weaver's extension Service are operating from govt. side but the condition of these centers are very pathetic, govt. needs to take steps to revive and make them center of production because these industries plays a very important role in the development of the economic condition and empowering of rural women in the district.

Table 3.2 types of industries and engagement

Types of industries	No	Workers engaged (approx.)
Agro	45	243
Forest	05	37
Textile	20	96
Chemical	09	40
engineering	35	257
Electronic	11	19
Leather	01	03
Rubber	01	04
Paper products	06	63
Food products	105	335

Source: primary survey

Table 3.3 workers registered MSME unit under commissioner of industry and commerce

	2010-11				2011-12			
	micro	small	medium	total	micro	small	medium	total
Assam	7581	2718	159	10458	10067	2825	311	13203
Nagaon	722	216	0	938	380	206	0	586

Source: statistical handbook of Assam 2012



Table 3.4 Registered MSME units under commissioner of industry and commerce

2010-11					2011-12			
	micro	small	medium	total	micro	small	medium	total
Assam	1341	162	3	1506	1073	132	13	1218
Nagaon	152	12	0	164	63	7	0	70

Source: statistical handbook of Assam 2012

Banks have an important role to play in stimulating economic development of an economy. In Assam the networks of schedule commercial banks have widened the Horizon of social banking policies and programmed, which support all the vital sectors of the economy. In Nagaon district the banking facilities is not as expected especially in the rural area. The handloom industry is the most important cottage industry in Assam and it is also a major part of the economy of Nagaon District. It is closely associated with art and culture of the society. Weaving of fabrics is a way of livelihood of large number of rural families and artisans. However, this important sector is yet to be exploited commercially. Economy of Nagaon District comprises several industries like tea industry, jute industry, sugar mills, etc. Tea manufacturing is the predominant industry in the district. In Nagaon District, there is good scope for agro-based industries including pisciculture and sericulture. But several factors like power shortage, seasonal floods, shortage of industrial labour, etc. hinder the development of the various economic activities in this district. One of the important initiatives taken by the govt. for the development of the economic

condition of the rural women was motivating and helping them to open self-help group and now around 14554 SHGs are operating in the district and now most of the rural women are benefited and make them economically independent somehow.

### **3.8 Health:**

The pursuit of health and longevity are among the fundamental pillars of development of the society. This is particularly useful for the rural areas of our state. Although government has employed various schemes aiming at rural folk of the state, lot has to be done. In Nagaon district there are 01 civil hospital, 66 primary health center, 124 mini health center, 210 community health center and almost 590 bed capacities in the hospitals. It's interesting that huge number of rural people of the district coming from different interior places of the district depends upon only one civil hospital and in most of the rural area the PHE and the sub centers are not in well condition. Maternity home facility for rural women is also pathetic and most of the pregnant women of the rural area till depend upon the locally available 'dhal' (locally available nurse).

### **3.9 Education:**

Literacy and level of education are basic indicators of the level of development achieved by a society. Higher levels of education lead to a greater awareness and also contributes in improvement of economic and social state of affairs. It acts as a social catalyst for enhancing the returns on investment made in almost every aspect of development effort, be it population control, health, hygiene, environmental degradation control, employment of the weaker sections of the society. The literacy rate for the rural women population of the district, as reported by census 2011, is 69.21 per cent. Lower literacy rate among the rural women in rural areas may be attributable to various factors, which include lesser schools, distance to schools, and engagement of their wards in agricultural activities, among others. I observe from the survey in different villages that educational and schooling facilities for girls are much less compared to that of the boys in the sample villages. There are lesser schooling facilities from primary to higher for girls' compare to boys in the rural area of Nagaon. Almost 2379 lower primary schools (Govt. /Provincialised), among them 31 are in tea garden area and total girl enrolment is around 190077(approx.) only. There are 437 upper primary schools and 379 are recognized U.P. schools but interestingly the girls' enrolment is drop to 94088(approx.) only. There are 355 high schools in the district and total girls' enrolment is 34022 (approx.) only. In higher secondary level there are 79 in number and total girls' enrolment is 7842 (approx.) only. These facts prove that the drop out among the girls' student is higher than boys'. Some of the factors according to the survey I found that lack

of proper communication, no separate educational institution for girls', poverty of the guardian, conservative look like, early marriage etc. are responsible.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The present survey has been confined to rural areas. The research design And methodology devised in this paper is being presented which has been designed keeping in mind the focused objectives and with the aim of acquiring accurate and authentic data. To complete the research both historical and empirical methods have been adopted. All the analysis is done on the basis of primary and secondary data. For collection of data, the main source will be "Field study". Both forms of data will be tries to be collected i.e., primary as well as secondary.

For the collection of primary data, mainly the techniques of 'Questionnaire' will be filled up by me. The main instrument for collection of primary data is the questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed keeping in view the objective of the study. An unstructured questionnaire had been administered by way of interview to the rural women of eighteen development block and also from twenty Anchalik Panchyats areas in Nagaon District. The data thus gathered through this interview technique has been analyzed. Besides, Observation of the Gram Panchayat meetings, face to face meeting with the rural women and discussions with officers and elected women representatives at

various levels have been made along with collection of data from Primary Sources. The women representatives were interviewed to understand their motivation in entering politics, participation, role in the decision making and constraints faced by them as representatives of Gram Panchayat.

The selection of respondents was through simple random sampling. All recorded data relevant to the study were collected. The Panchayat office records, the development block records, the Nagaon Zila Parishod records, district administration records, different organization records have supplied information on the socio-political status of rural women of the district are collected. Data's are collected during September 2014 to July 2015.

After the data collection work will be completed it will be tabulated and presented in the form of analysis. Cross tabulation technique is also adopted for analysis.

## **Chapter-IV**

### ***Growth and Development of rural women***

#### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROFILE:**

Socio-economic and political status of women depend much upon their basic background, characteristics pertaining to their own personality and the society in which they live. The Socio-economic profile is vital to any study as it helps in building a comprehensive and complete picture of the respondents. Several socio-economic factors have been taken into account, in this study that gives a good idea about the background and the profile of the women of the Nagaon District under study. For drawing up a coherent picture of the participation of women in political activities, a sample of 540 women members of rural area of the district was randomly drawn from the villages of 20 Anchalik Panchyats and 18 blocks (30 samples from each block). Another sample of 100 male members (five from each A.P.) to study the attitude of men towards women participation in politics and socio-economic activities, and 36

Officials (two from each block) was also randomly drawn from the concerned govt. offices to understand about the govt. policy and role of the women in politics and women status in the society. Individual profile is derived by looking at factors such as age, caste, religion, marital status, type of the family, educational level, occupation and annual income of the respondents. The education and occupation level of the respondent's husband is also taken into account to gauge the economic status of the family.

### **Participation in the Socio-political Affairs:**

People's participation in the socio-political affairs is a major factor determining the level of awareness and participation. Democratic decentralization of political power in the form of local governance has been one of the significant post-independence political developments of India. The essence of such decentralization process essentially needs active public participation with clarity of political ideology. For successful democratic decentralization in the country, peoples' participation is must at the grass root levels. The survey shows that the level of participation is quite high among the sample households at all levels. The 2014 Parliamentary election under Nagaon Parliamentary Constituency 80.74% of female it means that 589454 female voter cast their voting rights. More than 97% of the total households reported to cast their votes in the Panchayat, Assembly and Parliamentary elections.

Religion wise distribution indicates that Muslim is more active in casting their votes as compared to the other religions. So far as membership to various socio-economic organizations is concerned; membership to SHGs was found more prominent.

### **Results and Discussion:**

In this chapter an attempt has been made to highlights the results and discussion of the data that have been collected through questionnaire and schedule from the selected area of the study. The responses of the respondents of the study were measured and presented in below.

Table: 4.1 Age-wise Distributions of the Respondents:

Age Group	Number	Percentage
<25	85	26.57%
26-35	90	28.12%
36-45	75	23.43%
46-55	45	14.06%
56>	25	07.82%
Total	320	100%

An analysis of the present age of sample women as presented in table 4.1 reveals that 26.57 per cent women are under 25 age group, 28.12 per cent



women are come in between 26 to 35 ages. 23.43 per cent respondents are in Between 36 to 45 ages. 14.06 per cent women are in between 46 to 55 ages and remaining 7.82 per cent respondents are above 56 years of ages.

Table 4.2 Educational qualification

Educational qualification	Number	Percentage
Illiterate	96	17.78%
Primary	134	24.82%
H.S.L.C. pass	152	28.14%
Graduate	69	12.77%
Post- Graduate	26	04.81%
Vocational	63	11.68%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.2 explains about the educational qualification of the respondents. Majority 28.14 per cent respondents are passed out from the board exam. 24.82 per cent women respondents are only primary passed. These women told that due to several reason like poverty, long distance of school etc. they are unable to continue. 12.77 per cent women respondents are graduate in different stream. 04.81 per cent women are highly qualified; they are completed post graduate from the University. Most of them are recently completed their post-graduation. 11.68 per cent respondents are vocationally trained. 17.78 per cent women

respondents are illiterate. These type of diversification in terms of educational qualification helps to understand the problems and issues related with political and social awareness among the rural women.

Table 4.3 Caste wise classification of the respondents

Caste	Number	Percentage
General	200	37.03%
S.C.	97	17.97%
S.T.	70	12.97%
O.B.C.	120	22.22%
Others	53	9.81%
Total	540	100%

Caste structure of respondents has been depicted in Table No. 4.3 It shows that about 37.03 per cent respondents are belonging from general or forward caste. Around 17.97 per cent women respondents are belonging from schedule caste and 12.97 per cent are from schedule Tribe including plain and Hills. Total 22.22 per cent respondents are from other backward caste community and 9.81 per cent are belonging from others category which includes Tea tribe and those who does not believe in caste system and also who does not disclose their caste.

Table 4.4 Occupational wise classification of the respondents

Occupation	Number	Percentage
House wife	298	55.18%
Agriculture	120	22.22%
Industrials	09	01.67%
Service	32	05.92%
Labour	47	08.71%
Self-employed	34	06.30%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.4 shows about the occupational wise classification of the rural women respondents. The table it shows that around 55.18 per cent respondents are engaging in household activity, it means that more than half of the rural women are involving in unproductive work for which they are not paid. 22.22 per cent women respondents are in agricultural field. Most of them who are in agricultural field are helping there husband in agricultural activity and they are not totally independent to take decision related about field. It's interesting that 1.67 per cent rural women are engaging in industries which are established in villages like "*Agrabati*" industry, "Bricks" industry and "*Supari*" (battle nut) industry etc. around 6.30 per cent rural women are engaging themselves in some self-employment like as a shop keeper, handloom etc. most of them doing their business without help from the govt. side. Around 5.92 per cent women are working in different govt. service sector. Some of the women engaging themselves as a labour and there percentage is around 8.71 per cent.

Table 4.5 Annual Income of the respondents

Annual Income	Number	Percentage
< 20,000	167	30.92%
21000- 40000	142	26.30%
41000-60000	105	19.45%
61000-80000	76	14.07%
81000-100000	31	05.74%
100000 >	19	03.52%
Total	540	100%

Table No. 4.5 presents income distribution across members. The majority 30.92 per cent of the respondents has annual income of less than Rs. 20,000/- This is due to the higher number of respondents engaged as agricultural labourers and House Wives. Income groups Rs.21,000/- to Rs. 40,000/- covered 26.30 per cent and Rs.41,000/- to Rs. 60,000/- covered 19.45 per cent and Rs. 61,000 to 80,000/- covered 14.7 per cent and Rs. 81,000/- to 1,00,000/- covered 5.74 per cent and remaining 3.52 per cent families had income above Rs. 1,00,000/-. This is because many seem to be engaged in service and home-based occupations. It was found that large number of respondents fell in the low income group. It was also shown that rural women are not economically sound for which the govt. must provide them some kind of economic help to developed their condition and potentiality.

Table 4.6 Type of the family of the respondents

Types of family	Number	Percentage
Nuclear	185	34.26%
Joint	355	65.74%
Total	540	100%

Classification of respondents according to the type of family has been shown in Table No. 4.6. It is observed that 65.74 per cent of families were joint families, while remaining 34.26 per cent were nuclear families. It was seen that the percentage of the nuclear family is increasing day by day but an overwhelming majority of the respondents is from Joint family system. Therefore it can be concluded that respondents have other members in the family to look after the members in the family and other affairs of the family such as education, welfare of children etc.

Table 4.7 The nature of involvement in the process of the decision making by the respondents

Involvement in decision making	Number	Percentage
Actively involvement	107	19.81%
Moderately	97	17.97%

Less involvement	187	34.62%
No involvement	149	27.60%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.7 shows that how the rural women participated in the decision making process. Decision making process includes decision taken in the grass root level and in Panchayats. Almost 19.81 per cent rural women of the district actively participated in the decision making process including political decision i.e. whom she cast vote etc. not only in the home but also in the meetings of the Panchayats they actively participated and forwarded their view points. 17.97 per cent rural women of the district moderately participated in the decision making process, they are interested but due to some factor like pressure of domestic works, children's responsibility etc. they cannot openly participated. 34.62 per Cent women does not actively nor moderately participated their involvement is less in the decision making process. The main reason behind that less involvement is family and social binding. 27.60 per cent women of the rural area of the District has no involvement in the decision making process. Due to lack of proper knowledge and traditional outlook thinking they are totally not involved in the decision making process whether it was at home or outside.

Table 4.8 Interest of the respondents in politics

Opinion	Number	Percentage
Yes	390	72.22%
No	150	27.78%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.8 proves that the rural women of the district have interest in politics. Around 72.22 per cent women say that they have interest in politics and they want to participate in the different aspect of the politics of the district if they get opportunity to do that. In the last parliamentary election 2014 more than 75 percent women casting their votes with almost equal with men. Around 27.78 per cent women say that they are not interested in politics. Most of them dislike politics because they are dissatisfied with the system and their representatives as well as some say are that they dislike because of the criminalization of politics and corruption.

Table 4.9 Do you want to participate in politics

Views	Number	Percentage
Yes	250	46.29%
No	85	15.74%
Cannot say	205	37.97%
Total	540	100%

Above table shows a very interesting figure that 46.29 per cent respondents are wants to participate in politics. It means that they are interested in politics and if they get chance they can prove themselves. Only 15.74 per cent women are not like to involve in politics. They are not interested because they thought that this may hamper their family life. 37.97 per cent women cannot say anything about participation in politics. In concluding we can say that a majority of women are interested in politics which is good for the state and also for women.

Table 4.10 who inspired you to enter in politics

Inspiration	Number	Percentage
Family members	89	16.48%
Husband	43	07.96%
Political party	67	12.41%
Friends'	98	18.15%
Self	71	13.14%
No one	172	31.86%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.10 shows about who inspired women to enter in politics. From the table 16.48 per cent women say's that there family members inspired them to involve in the politics. 7.96 per cent rural women say's that there husband



inspired them to enter in politics. Interestingly it's the lowest percentage of all. Its shows that only a minimum number of husband ready to accept that her life partner can participate in the decision making process of the state. The political party whether National or Regional only 12.41 per cent women say's that they are inspired by them. It shows that all the political parties are yet not motivated them well to participate in politics. Political party must try to encourage rural women to actively participate in politics. Due to reservation of seats in Panchayats now the parties are encouraging women to contest in the election from their side. 18.15 per cent rural women say's that they are encouraged by their friends. 13.14 per cent women say's that they themselves try to enter politics. These women love to participate in politics without inspiration from others. 31.86 per cent rural women say's that no one inspired them to participate in politics and interestingly it's the highest percentage. Till the society and also women thought that they are not made for participate in politics. We need to change that attitude.

Table 4.11 Do you attend any political meeting

Opinion	Number	Percentage
Yes	376	69.63%
No	164	30.37%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.11 proves that the respondents are politically aware and they are interested to attend in different political meeting organized by different political party. Majority of the respondents told that they usually attended political meeting held in their locality. 69.63 per cent respondents attended political meeting in their life. 30.37 per cent does not attend any political meeting organized by any political party. They told that they does not believe the words of the leaders so, they are not interested to listen their lecture.

Table 4.12 Do you ever exercise your franchise

Opinion	Number	Percentage
Yes	456	84.44%
No	84	15.56%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.12 shows that rural women are aware about her political rights. Majority of women exercise her voting rights in General, Assembly or in Panchyats election. 84.44 per cent women say's that they always caste her votes in election. Only 15.56 per cent yet not exercise their voting rights. Some of them told that due to not include their names in voter list they could not exercise their franchise. In conclude, it was proves that the rural women are aware about

her voting rights. So, in the last general election women voting percentage in rural area of the district is almost same with the men voters.

Table 4.13 Handling issues independently

opinion	Number	Percentage
Yes	189	35%
No	351	65%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.13 indicates the handling issues independently by women. From the above table it is prove that women are not totally independent to take decision inside and outside at home because 65 per cent women say's that they are totally not free to take decision. Husband and family member especially the elder member interfere in the decision making. 35 per cent rural women of the district say's that they take their decision independently without the interference of her husband and family members and some of them say's that there family inspired her to take decision.

Tables 4.14 Do you a member of local organization

Agencies/ Name	Number	Percentage
Panchayats	43	07.96%

SHGs	221	40.93%
Club	12	02.22%
School body	28	05.19%
Any other	23	04.26%
No	213	39.44%
Total	540	100%

The above table indicates that a huge number of women in the district are member in any organization functioning in the local area. 40.93 per cent rural women are working as a member of SHGs. They say that after joining SHGs there economic condition was developed and sound as well as their social status was also upgrade then previous. They get more respect than previous. So, becoming member in SHG is great benefited to them. 7.96 per cent women are the member of Panchayat body. Some are member of Gram and Anchalik Panchayat. These women are involving in the political process of their local area. They told that they are happy to become a part of the system as well as their family members. Further they say's that they take decision without interference from her male partner and family. 2.22 per cent women are member of some local based club. Among them some are working in social and educational development of the area. 5.19 per cent rural women respondents are serving as a member in different school body. Some are in the management committee and some are in different body of the school. 4.26 per cent women are engaging themselves in some local based organization like cultural, "Gaon

*unnayan samiti*”, “*Mahila samiti*” etc. interestingly 39.44 per cent respondents are not themselves engaging in any organization. They told that they could not get time from domestic function to work with such type of organization. Some of the women are interested to engage with such organization but due to family, children’s responsibility they are unable to become member. The participation of respondents in various social organizations shows that women Representatives are very active in most of these organizations. This enhances the empowerment of rural women of the district in social, political and economic field.

Table 4.15 Do you think that economic independent is essential for women empowerment

Views	Number	Percentage
Yes	246	45.56%
No	131	24.25%
Cannot comment	163	30.19%
Total	540	100%

Above table explain the views and experience of the respondents about whether economic independent is essential for women empowerment or not. 45.56 per cent of the respondents told that economic independent is essential for empowerment. Some of them told that when they start to earn it automatically

upgrade their status in family as well as in society. 24.25 per cent does not believe that economic independent is essential for women empowerment. 30.19 per cent respondents cannot say anything about economic independent is essential or not. In concluding it was established that economic independent is the key to women empowerment. The majority respondents accepted the importance of economic self-sufficient is the root factor for the women empowerment.

Table 4.16 Do you avail any Govt. Schemes?

Your Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	147	27.23%
No	206	38.14%
Cannot disclose	187	34.63%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.16 indicates the number who avail the govt. any type of govt. schemes including IAY, BPL card, MGNREGA, Old age pension, different schemes for women welfare etc. 27.23 per cent respondents say's that they are availing such type of govt. schemes. 38.14 per cent respondent's say's that till they does not avail any govt. facilities. According to them due to corruption and anomalies in selection in the beneficiaries list they are unable to received govt. facilities provided by the govt. 34.63 per cent respondent's does not want to disclose about whether they received or not any facilities provided by the govt.

this table explain that till majority of rural women are out of govt. schemes. To develop the living condition of the rural women the govt. facilities is essential but to incorporate all needy people it is required that the process must be easy and less corruption involvement. Many respondents complain that, to include their names in the beneficiaries list they need to offer bribe. So, govt. must take step to eradicate corruption in the selection process of the list.

Table 4.17 Are Govt. health facility is sufficient

Opinion	Number	Percentage
Sufficient	68	12.60%
Not sufficient	192	35.55%
Need to be improvement	217	40.18%
Cannot say	63	11.67%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.17 shows about the health facilities provided by the govt. towards the rural area of the district. This table explains about people satisfaction towards the govt. health facilities. 40.18 per cent respondents told that the govt. health service needs to be improved; they are not totally satisfied with the health services. 35.55 per cent respondents are told that govt. health facilities are not sufficient or it can not cover all people. They told that the condition of the govt.

PHCs, Sub-Centers condition is pathetic and in many health institutions are facing shortage of Doctors as well as medicine. So, many respondents are not happy with the govt. health facilities. Only 12.60 per cent respondents are told that they are happy with the govt. health facilities. These people told that some of the govt. initiative started under NRHM, is benefited the rural people. 11.67 per cent respondents does not say anything about the health facilities provided by the govt. in conclusion we can explain that majority of the respondents say's that the health facilities as provided by the govt. needs to be improved for the benefit of the poor rural people and especially for women.

Table 4.18 Do you send your Girls' to school?

Your Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	408	75.56%
NO	43	07.97%
No answer	89	16.47%
Total	540	100%

The above table explains about the scenario of consciousness among the guardians about education of their girl's. 75.56 per cent respondents told that they send their girl's to school. 7.97 per cent respondents told that due to different problems like poverty, long distance of school from home etc. for which they are unable to send their girl to school. Someone does not send their girl's due to conservative nature. 16.47 per cent respondents are silent; they do



not give any answer to the question. But it was good to see that majority of the parents are conscious and they send their girl's to school. If govt. provides more facilities towards the development of girl's education then the scenario must better.

Tables 4.19 Do you satisfied with the village level educational facilities

Level of satisfaction	Number	Percentage
Excellent	59	10.93%
Very good	71	13.14%
Good	87	16.11%
Neither good nor bad	203	37.60%
Bad	120	22.22%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.19 shows that the educational facilities in the rural area of the district are not at all satisfactory, especially in the remote areas. People's satisfaction level is low about the educational facilities provided by the govt. at their locality. Majority 37.60 per cent respondents say's that they are totally not satisfied nor dissatisfied with the educational facilities provided by the govt. some say that they are happy with the teacher but not with the infrastructure provided by the govt. etc. according to 22.22 per cent respondents educational facilities are not good in their area. 16.11 per cent respondents say's that the educational facilities are somehow good as compare to past. 13.14 per cent say's that the educational facilities in their locality are very good. 10.93 per cent

respondents are highly satisfied with the govt. facilities in conclude it was seen that the educational facilities provided by the govt. in village level is not at all satisfactory level. Govt. needs to look the matter seriously and try to develop the condition of the education. Most of the school are facing lot of problems like lack of proper building, lack of separate toilet for girl's, lack of sufficient desk and bench, black board, drop out and most of the school is running with one or two teacher who need to control whole classes and also school administration etc. we know that education is the key to success so, govt. must provide better schooling facilities to the rural people and especially for the girl's.

Table 4.20 Enhancement of status in society after educated

Opinion	Number	Percentage
Enhanced a lot	180	33.34%
Moderately a lot	135	25%
Some what	90	16.67%
Neither increased nor decreased	85	15.74%
Decreased	50	09.25%
total	540	100%

Above table explains about the importance of education in life. 33.34 per cent of the respondents say that after becoming educated there life is change a

lot. Due to their education they are getting respect from her family and society. The people are coming to them and told there problems and they aspect that we can give some solution to their problems. Most of the women told that now they are also invited in different meetings of the village where previously it was totally male dominated. 25 per cent women respondent's say's that a little change was seen by them after becoming educated. They told that the members of the family and society are now given some kind of good respect towards them. 16.67 per cent respondent's say's that they think somewhat their status in society increased. These respondents are told that in some respect they think that they are benefitted with education but not in all aspect. According to them still the traditional norms, dress code, position of sitting in different occasion etc. are not change and till it was decided by her family and society. 15.74 per cent rural women respondents are thought that education does not increased or Decreased their status in society and family; according to them it was same as previous. 9.25 per cent respondents thought negatively. According to these 9.25 per cent, feel that after getting education their status in society and family decreased. The main reason behind this type of thought is, still their family and locality believes that women are under men and when one woman becomes educated she is crossing her male member. So, in this, women thought that education is a burden for her. In concluding, it is great to see that a majority of respondents believes the importance of education in their life and society. It's found that educated women are getting more importance and respect then

uneducated women. Now a day's educated women are also invited to attend different meetings of the village and their views are also given respect. It was also found that an educated mother is more conscious towards her children education and as well as health of herself and her family.

Table 4.21 According to you which are the major social problems

Problems	Number	Percentage
Dowry	83	15.37%
Witch hunting	30	05.55%
Poverty	176	32.60%
Caste	69	12.77%
Illiteracy	144	26.68%
Any other	38	07.03%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.21 explains that according to the respondents 32.60 per cent women thought that poverty is the main social problem in our society. They say's that due to poverty they are unable to get good education as well as their children, they forced to engage themselves and their children in different labour based works and due to that they cannot think about participate in politics. 26.68 per cent respondent's say's that illiteracy is the main social problem. They told that due to lack of knowledge they are deprived and discriminated by the society and

authority. 15.37 per cent respondents feel that dowry is one of the important social problems practicing in our society. 12.77 per cent respondent's say's that caste is major social problem in our society. 5.55 per cent respondents told that witch hunting is major social problem faced by our society. 7.03 per cent respondents views is different according to them corruption, unemployment, youth unrest etc. are the major social problems. In conclude majority believes that poverty is the main social problem, it's the root cause of all social problems. According to the respondents Illiteracy is the second major social problem in our society.

Table 4.22 Specific problems faced by women in politics

Specific problems	Number	Percentage
Gender discrimination	102	18.89%
Family life and work life balancing	163	30.18%
Male members dominance attitude	78	14.45%
Lack of previous political experience	59	10.92%
Lack of educational knowledge	73	13.52%
Inferiority complex/lack of knowledge	65	12.04%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.22 shows the specific problems faced by women when they involved in politics. It was asked that what type of problems faced by a women when she involved in politics like at the time of attending political discussion, political party meetings, whom party they support, village level political

decision, Panchayat meetings working as a member of a political party etc. Majority respondents, 30.18 per cent say's that they faced difficulties to balanced family life and political life. Due to pressure and responsibility of their family they are unable to perform actively their political duty. They can involve politics only after completing their domestic task so; it's very difficult for them to balancing in between political and family task. 18.89 per cent women respondents told that due to gender discrimination they are not getting equal opportunity in politics, till males are getting importance in all political activities. Women are thought that they are not made for politics; their activities are ended within the boundary of their husband home. 14.45 per cent women thought that male member are still dominating the politics and they do not want to give space for women. 13.52 per cent women respondents say's that they are exploited because of lack of educational knowledge. 12.04 per cent women say's that due lack of political knowledge they feel inferiority. 10.92 per cent women faced problems because of lack of previous experience about politics or they told that no women from their family previously involved in politics. In concluding it was seen that still rural women faced lot of problems when it Comes about their political involvement. We need to eradicate all these problems and make path for their political involvement.

Table 4.23 Do you think as a women you faced problems in politics, if you join

Views	Number	Percentage
Yes	172	31.85%
No	231	42.78%
Cannot say	137	25.37%
total	540	100%

The above table explains about women thinking about politics after joining. It was asked that according to you, do you think that if you join politics then whether you faced problems or not. 42.78 per cent respondents say's that no, if they join politics they think that they can overtake all such types of problems which are creating problems in front of them. 31.85 per cent women say's that yes, they think that if they join politics they faced problems. They think that, joining politics may hamper her family and children's responsibility and some of them told that there male partner also do not like it. 25.37 per cent respondents are confused, they cannot say anything whether it was creating problems or not. In concluding we can say that most of them think that it does not creating any problem to them when they join politics and most of them say yes they are happy to join politics, if they get chance to participate politics actively.

Table 4.24 Do your male member creating problems you to participate in Politics

Creating problems	Number	Percentage
Greater extent	91	16.86%
Moderate	147	27.22%
Minimum	140	25.92%
No	162	30%
total	540	100%

Table 4.24 indicates that maximum rural women say's that their male member does not create any problem to them in participating political activities. 30 per cent women are happy that their male member does not interference them in political decision like in the time of casting vote, joining political party, going to attending any political meeting etc. 25.92 per cent rural women say's that at minimum level their male member interference them in their political decision making like dictating them not to attend political meeting, at the time of casting vote etc. Further they told that it's not forcefully but they politely told them that do not go or do not cast vote to that candidates. 27.22 per cent women told that their male member moderately interference them in their political decision making. Interestingly only 16.86 per cent women say's that their male member interference them in greater extent in the political decision making time like at the time of casting vote, attending in political meeting or joining in a political party etc. the male member forcefully tried to established their dominance over them and most of them are accept the decision of their Male member without



voicing against them. The main reason behind this was fear and traditional outlook towards male partner. But concluding it's great to see that most of the rural women of the district are freely taken their political decision which is great for a democratic country like India.

Table 4.25 Opinion Expressed by the Respondents on the women's Political Reservation Bill.

Opinion on Women's political Reservation Bill	Number	Percentage
Absolutely essential	121	22.40%
Essential	286	52.97%
Not essential	82	15.18%
Not at all essential	51	09.45%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.25 explains about the awareness of respondents on the women's political Reservation Bill. Among them 52.97 per cent of respondents say that it is essential, 22.40 per cent of respondents are of the opinion that it is absolutely essential, 15.18 percent of women expressed the opinion that it is not essential and a meager proportion of 9.45 percent argued that it is not at all essential. It can be concluded that an overwhelming majority of the respondents are in favour of the bill, because, this has enabled a large number of women to enter into politics.

Table 4.26 Do you hard about women reservation bill

Opinion	Number	Percentage
Yes	160	29.63%
No	380	70.37%
total	540	100%

Above table indicates that almost 70.37 per cent rural women don't know about women reservation bill and only 29.63 per cent women hard about the women reservation bill. It shows that the communication system is not so strong in rural area. Due to lack of education women are not know about the bill. It's important that we are talking about women empowerment and we spend lots of money to campaigning the term but till we are very lacking behind. Without giving them opportunity to participate in higher level decision making body all the efforts are valueless. It's the responsibility of the govt. and non govt. body to make them aware about her rights.

Table 4.27 Do you aware about 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendments act.

Views	Number	Percentage
Yes	177	32.78%
No	363	67.22%
Total	540	100%

The 73rd constitutional amendment has created a space for women in political participation and decision-making at the grass-root level. By providing Reservation seats reserving for women in the political institutions will, provide them an opportunity to raise their grievances and other related social and economic problem in a formal forum, a political process necessary to ensure the improvement for all women in all sphere of life. The above table shows that only 32.78 per cent rural women of the district hard about the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment. 67.22 per cent till not hard about 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment and the provision which are related with the amendment. Most of them do not know all but somehow they knew that reservation of seats has been made for women as per the Amendment Act. So, it's very essential to create awareness among the rural women of the district about the provision which are provided by 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment and how much it was important for them.

Table 4.28 Empowerment through 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment

Opinion	Number	Percentage
Yes	197	36.48%
No	98	18.15%
Cannot say	245	45.37%
Total	540	100%

Table 4.28 explains about the thinking of the rural respondents towards 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment through which was related with the rural local self-government or “Panchayati Raj”. It was asked them what they think about the act. most of them are unaware about the development relating 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional Amendment so, majority 45.37 per cent respondents does not want to answer whether it was help them to become empower or not. 36.48 per cent respondents are very positive they told that this amendment is very helpful to rural women to become empower. They say’s that through the provision like seats reservation policy they are able to enter at least the grass root political process. This helps them to become politically empower. 18.15 per cent respondents are negative about the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment. They thought that this could not help rural women to become empower. In concluding it was seen that majority of the women are think that the amendment help them to fight for political equality and benefited them to become empower in all aspects. But due to unaware about the recent development relating with 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment some respondents are could not express their views so; it’s the responsibility of the concerned govt. authority as well as us also to provide knowledge about the relating development, we need to create consciousness and awareness among the rural women.

Table’s 4.29 Motivational training is essential to motivate women in politics

Views	Number	Percentage
Yes	359	66.48%
No	60	11.12%
Cannot say	121	22.40%
Total	540	100%

Data on the above table indicate that majority of the rural women of the district thought that they need motivational training to participate in the politics. 66.48 per cent women in favour of the training. Motivational training is very essential to motivate the rural women towards politics. 11.12 per cent women say's that motivational training is not essential. 22.40 per cent women did not say anything about essential or not. Actually they are confused whether, motivational training is good for them or not but concluding we found that this type of training is very essential for the rural women to motivate them towards politics. Through it they can understand about their rights and constitutional provision which are provided by our constitution to women and at last it can generate the interest of the women towards politics.

### **Male Member's Perception:**

The study would be incomplete if one were not aware of the perception of men and officials associated with respondents about the empowerment process.

Therefore, the study explored the views and opinion of male members, officials and public about rural women. A separate questionnaire is prepared for that. It's encouraging that the views expressed by the male were quite positive. Most of the male respondents are happy if his wife joins in politics, further they told that they never banned their wife to participate in different political activities. Officials also told that now a day's women are becoming more aware about her political rights and they become more conscious day by day. They told that rural women are now actively participated in different programme organized by the district administration of Nagaon. Further the officials told that they are happy to work with the women representative in Panchayats. Overall their views on women empowerment have been quite encouraging.

- Many male respondents do acknowledge the dual burden of women in carrying out their household responsibilities as well as official functions. Many women need to perform their day to day function at home and also they come out to participate in political and social activities. Many male respondents told that they also help their partner in different household activities to release the burden over the head of her.
- An overwhelmingly large number of male respondents in Panchayats View women as less corrupt. Most of the male thought that women are Less corrupted then men.

- A majority of men perceive the reservation policy as beneficial to women. They feel that it has improved their status and respect within the family And society, increased awareness about the community.
- A large number of men told that they never creating problems to their lady partner if they want to participate in politics. Majority of male say's that women are free to take all political decision independently, they Never interfere in the political decision i.e. whom she vote, which political party she like or joining in any political party.
- A huge number told that they give their partner total independence to handling issues independently.
- Majority of male member send their girl's to school and they believe that education and economic independence is essential for women empowerment all round development. They accepted that women are still neglecting, depriving and discriminated by the male counterpart and the society. According to the perception of the men gender discrimination is still prevailing in our society. Most of the men ready to fight with women against such type of discrimination.

**To sum up:**

Women are the greatest gift of the god. They are capable to do everything which is done by a man. Women have used the opportunity which she gets to

develop herself. It was great to see about the male perception towards female. Male member of the society also believes the discrimination which is going on against women. Gender sensitization for both men and women to bring about change in mindsets and behavior is crucial for the empowerment process.

The study states that rural women of the district now coming out to participate in politics. They have interest in politics but due to pressure from her Home and traditional outlook of the society it's very difficult for them to actively participate in politics. Due to 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment majority of women entered in politics because of the mandatory reservation policy. It's found that most of the women representatives are coming from the non-political background, if we briefly examined the reason behind women participation then mainly it was due to pressure from the political party and from self-interest. In the study it was found that women are not aware about the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment and women reservation policy. Most of the respondents also do not believe that 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment act can make them empower because most of the respondents are not totally informed about the provision of the amendment. The study also found that most of the rural women are not well known about the women reservation bill but they feel that this reservation bill is essential for women because it gives them an opportunity to participate in politics of the state. The study also found that rural women are aware about their voting rights. Maximum women exercise their voting rights in different election. Most of the respondents told that they usually attend different meetings organized by the



different political party. Majority of the respondent's opinion is that access to information, socio-economic status and literacy rate vital in enabling effective decision making. Involvement of women in decision-making role is an important tool for empowerment. It is found that majority of respondents have interest to continue in politics. These are good for a huge democratic country like India. The study states that the importance of economic independence for Women empowerment. Majority of the rural women are now members of the small help group and through it they try to contribute in the economic development of her family. SHGs play a very important role in the economic development of the rural women of the district. In availing different govt. schemes till most of respondents are not happy, they told that due to official difficulties and corruption they are unable to get govt. facilities. Interestingly a huge number of the respondents does not clearly say's anything about the availing govt. facilities, they did not want to disclose. The health facilities provided by the govt. need to be developed. The village level health facilities are not sufficient. Most of the respondents complaining that the hospitals are not well equipped to treat different women related problems, its need to be improved.

When awareness levels are compared with the socio-economic profile of the respondents, it is found that age, education, caste and economic status might have a bearing on the awareness levels. Education is the key to empowerment and it has a definite bearing on the awareness levels. Most of the respondents

are not totally happy with the govt. schooling facilities but they say's that it was improved in now a day's. It was good to see that now they send their children to school. The study also reveals that the respondents understand about the importance of the education. According to them poverty and illiteracy are the major social problem in our society.

The major limitations or constraints for women towards the path of achieving empowerment are lack of self-confidence, lack of knowledge and household responsibilities. Maximum respondents told that it is difficult to balance in between family life and work life. The study also found that generally the male member does not create problems when she wants to participate in politics. In a majority of cases it is found that women get lot of encouragement from their family members to join politics. Women are also feels that if they join politics they can sort out all the difficulties. To sum up this study states that the rural women of the district are politically and socially aware. The ongoing experiment and experiences suggest that they just need motivational training and orientation, which can help the rural women to perform better.

## **CHAPTER-V**

### **Conclusion and suggestions**

In the light of the objective set for the study following conclusion can be drawn on the basis of empirical analysis.

- Most of the respondents at least knew that reservation of seats had been made for women from the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and they were in favour of the Bill. This shows that the awareness level of women in rural area is quite high.
- An overwhelming majority of the respondents come from joint-family Background.
- Most of the respondents are comparatively young age group.
- The occupational status of the respondents' shows that, majority of them were housewives engaged in the household related activities.
- A majority of the respondents belonged to low income groups.
- Majority of the respondents are belonging from the general caste.

- A over whelming majority of the respondents franchise their voting rights.
- Most of the women are from non-political background and entered politics due to the pressure of political parties, husband and family members.
- Social status of the family tends to bear a strong influence in determining women empowerment in politics than the economic status of the family.
- A majority of the women thought that economic independence is essential for empowerment.
- The majority respondents believe that poverty and illiteracy is the main social problem.
- The nature of participation by the respondents in Panchayat proceedings and the village level meetings are quite encouraging.
- Involvement of women in the public activity is important for empowerment of women.
- Majority of the respondents have strong consciousness of their role in Panchayats and grass root level politics and they are capable of handling Issues independently. They can proves that they are capable to take right Decision independently.
- Dominance by male members still exists in the grass root level. The respondents think that only illiterate and ignorant are dominated by male.

- A majority of respondents have shown interest in continuation in politics.
- Majority respondents have interest in politics. Most of them attend different political meeting.
- Most of the women confidence that when they enter politics they can sort out all difficulties.
- A majority respondents told that they are not encourage by anyone to participate in politics.
- Most of the respondents are of the opinion that training and orientation should be imparted.
- The problems faced by majority of the women in politics are balancing Family life and professional career, lack of previous political experience, Lack of knowledge of the Panchayat Act, lack of awareness, inferiority Complex and lack of self-confidence.
- SHGs play an important role in the economic development of the rural women. Majority of the respondents are the member of different SHGs and after becoming member their economic condition improved.
- Govt. schemes may also help them to develop but due to some reason all rural women especially the low income group women are still not benefited.
- The health condition of the rural area is not all at satisfactory level its need to be developed.

- Girl's education scenario is not at all impressive. The respondents usually send their girl to school but they also told that girl's education facilities are not well provided by the authority.
- Decision- making role is important for empowerment. Majority of the Respondents have involved themselves but not actively in decision making process. They have also exhibited potentiality to emerge as decision makers.

### **IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY:**

1. Women are still in the background of the politics because still the politics is dominated by the men. Reservation policy open some seats too exclusively for women but till women cannot exclusively independence to taking decision due to male dominance.

2. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment and the reservation policy for women undoubtedly make them to enter into public sphere. But reservation for women by itself will not empower the women. They require regular orientation, training, educational and awareness building programmes which should be provided by the government and other concerned authority and organization.

3. Reservation policy for women set a positive trend. Now it was noticed that the number of women representative in Panchayat is increasing and for that maximum women can directly participate in the decision making body. So, for the greater benefit of the women community the reservation policy should continue.

4. Men's attitude towards women must be changed. Women are not weak and incapable.

5. Dirty politics and muscle's power in politics should be stopped.

6. For women family is the primary thing then politics.

7. In most of the case maintaining a balance between their family life and political life is very challenging. This appears to be the major impediment for women in not making much headway in politics.

8. The rural health and educational facilities are not well.

9. Govt. schemes must be simplified and it needs good monitoring system. It must be confirmed that needy and poor people get the facilities.

10. Economic self-sufficiency is very essential for women empowerment.

11. Unless socio-economic empowerment of women is not done, then political empowerment of women is almost impossible. Therefore political empowerment of women should be preceded by socio economic empowerment.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

In the light of the above study following specific suggestions can be made for the empowerment and awareness of women through their effective participation in socio political affairs.

1. Education is the key to all success. Illiteracy is the main obstacles in front of the women empowerment. To make rural women politically and socially aware and conscious we need to expand educational facilities as well as developed girl's education.

2. Expansion of information, education and development of communication Skills of women.



3. Economic independence is very essential for women participation in political and social process. If women are economically independent then they can take decision without pressure from her earning male partner. Govt. must provide some facilities to the rural women through which they can become economically self-sufficient, SHGs and rural bank are one of the best examples.

4. Men's hostility, indifferent attitude and domestic responsibilities are the major constraints in empowerment of women. Therefore, political awareness programmes should make women understand their constitutional rights and the benefits provided by our constitution to them. Organized timely orientation and motivational programme in the grass root level is beneficiaries to rural women.

5. A long-term solution to women's participation in political activities rests in greater awareness about their role, responsibilities and entitlements.

6. Participatory approaches need to be adopted by the women and we also provide them the space.

7. There is the need for regular orientation and training programmes that will help to increase the political and management skills of women. Being politically skillful, they will be able to understand and assimilate diverse political opinion,

Participate intelligently in political debates and analyse issues to make useful decisions.

8. It is well known that health is wealth; a good health can only motivate them to participate in different political and social activities. We all know that the health facilities in the rural area especially for women are not adequate, so it's the responsibility of the govt. to provide good health facilities in the rural area.

9. Contribution by women members should be recognized and appreciated in public spheres. Govt. may also declare some type of recognition like awards, certificate and felicities in public meetings etc. which motivate other women to participate in politics. It's the responsibility of the family also to recognize her works.

10. Political empowerment of women need more support from officials, public, society and most importantly her male partner.

11. Minimizes the gap in between the public and govt. and established good communication.

12. Minimizes corruption in Panchayats level.

13. Gender discrimination should be minimized or avoided. Traditional outlook of the society and family towards female should be changed.

14. Reservation for women should be continued to ensure their empowerment through greater participation in political administration and decision making. More reservation for women in Panchayats and in other local body is suggested for the empowerment of women. It's good if parliament of India passes Women Reservation Bill which provides 33 per cent reservation of seats in Parliament and Assembly, may open the door for more women in direct participation of politics.

15. Government should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the particular needs of rural women are met and to ensure rural women have access to health care services, training and employment opportunities and social security schemes.

16. Organized more political awareness programme, seminar and workshop for women.

17. Awareness about right to information (RTI), right to education (RTE), reservation in jobs and educational institution for female etc. that would enable their further empowerment with knowledge and security.

18. Formation of women's associations and groups at different levels to act as Pressure groups on all fronts-community education, better law enforcement and Deterrent punishment for continuing social evils like female feticide, dowry, child marriage, domestic violence and harassments in working places etc.

19. Empowerment as a process requires multi-dimensional efforts and holistic interventions. This requires concerted and sustained efforts by all concerned-policy makers, Governments, NGOs, Training Institutions and by the women and men themselves.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study shows that although Constitutional provisions relating to women in rural areas have done substantial good for their exposure and empowerment, women continue to encounter a number of challenges and constraints in their participation in the social and political spheres. Despite several years of introduction of reservation of seats in their favour, women continue to depend on male relatives and officials to playing their roles and responsibilities. The main reason behind these dependence are lack of knowledge of politics, illiteracy, burden of domestic responsibility, conservative thoughts etc. are responsible. The maximum rural women are exercise their voting rights and someone easily found them in polling station in the voting day but study found that they are not totally aware about their political rights. It's also found that they are not totally free to decide political decision.

Economic independent is very essential for the political and social empowerment. Most of the cases it was found that women are silently accepted the decision of her male partner because they are not self-sufficient. Planned interventions have to be made in areas including the economic, social and political spheres for true empowerment to take place. Therefore, women have to

Be provided access and opportunities to the basic rights such as literacy, legal, Property and ownership rights etc. it was found in the study that SHGs plays a very important role in the process of economic strengthening of rural women. Govt. should provide more importance in the forming of SHGs and try to attract rural women to become member as well as provide more facilities to SHGs. Political empowerment can be better sustained if women have at least a degree of economic independence.

Awareness and training programmes to a large extent have focused on general aspects relating to the functioning of Panchayats, Assembly and Parliament. As seen from the study in a majority of cases the awareness levels of women on these aspects are quite encouraging. Some told that they are benefitted from these types of awareness and training programmes. Women cannot function and play their roles effectively unless they are able to assert themselves. When they get some knowledge about the political system automatically they can prove that they are not negligible in politics. Training and research institutions, concerned state and central departments and NGOs have a role in strengthening the women participation in politics especially in the grass root level i.e. Panchayat, because this is the first step towards direct participation in the decision making process. Decentralization of power is essential tool for the women political participation in the political process of the grass root level of the state.

The 73rd constitutional amendment and the reservation policy for women undoubtedly have set a positive trend towards in the active political participation. Women in large number have been able to create and occupy space in the public sphere. It has given them greater visibility as well as mobility. Women have also been able to enter other sectors and actively participate in local organizations. This has changed the perception and outlook of women and given them greater self-confidence. Women have gained better status both in family and outside. The social status of rural women is also increased. Family members and men in many instances perceive women in a more positive way.

It's also needed some structural changes and reform in the political process is essential through which maximum women can participate in the political process. 33 per cent reservation of seats in Assembly and Parliament is a good step for greater participation of women in direct politics but till this was not passed by our Parliament.

Women need to gain greater role clarity and strike a balance between their household and official responsibilities. Majority women faced problems to participate in politics due to domestic responsibility. While men have to be sensitized to be supportive in this, women need to bring about shifts in their

Attitudes and outlook. If she can maintain both then automatically she get respect from her family and society.

Reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has definitely set a positive trend overall. Despite the many problems and limitations women have proved that given an opportunity they are capable of becoming equal partners in the development process and they are politically aware and conscious. To an extent women have managed to overcome their lack of access and opportunities whether pertaining to literacy, skills, mobility etc. and yet perform their roles and responsibilities as members of Panchayati raj institutions. Despite of male dominance women proves that they can take decision independently. Many women told that they handle issues independently. While reservation has provided a window of opportunity for women to enter the public sphere, much needs to be done to empower women in the true sense. The study found that majority of the rural women is interested in politics it just needs to motivate them. It is important to be aware of the socio-economic and political background of the women who are elected to the decision making body.

At last, empowerment is a process of multi-dimensional. It cannot be confined to a limited sphere. Half of the populations are women so without empowering and giving them equal status in society and politics the democratic system cannot success. To make democracy as successful an integrated



Approach is necessary to make them politically and socially more aware. Unless all these processes take place simultaneously and on a continuing basis empowerment and awareness of women in socio-politics would remain a buzzword without translating into reality. There is a lot of scope and potential for women to emerge as leaders, social reformer and decision makers and play a key role in the social development and good governance of local institutions as well as state and central institutions. It requires dedicated and committed efforts by all concerned.

## APPENDIX: I

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of the village:

2. Name of the respondents:

3. Age:

4. Caste:

5. Educational qualifications:

Illiterate       Primary       H.S.L.C.

Graduate       Post-Graduate       Vocational

6. Occupation:

House-wife       Agriculture       Industry

Labour       Service       self-employed

7. Annual Income:

<20000       21000 to 40000       41000 to 60000

61000 to 80000       81000 to 100000       100000>

8. Type of the family:

Nuclear

joint

9. How much you involve in the process of the decision making:

Actively involvement	
Moderately	
Less involvement	
No involvement	

10. Do you have Interest in politics?

Yes  No

11. Do you want to participate in politics?

Yes  No

12. Who inspired you to enter in politics?

Family members	
Husband	
Political party	
Friends'	
Self	
No one	

13. Do you attend any political meeting?

Yes  No

14. Do you ever exercise your franchise?

Yes  No

15. Do you handle issues independently?

Yes  No

16. Are you a member of any local organization?

Panchayats		Club		Any other	
SHGs		School body		No	

17. Do you think that economic independent is essential for women empowerment?

Yes  No  cannot comment

18. Do you avail any Govt. Schemes?

Yes  No  cannot disclose

19. Are Govt. health facility is sufficient?

Sufficient	
Not sufficient	
Need to be improvement	
Cannot say	

20. Do you send your Girls' to school?

Yes  No  No answer

21. Do you satisfied with the village level educational facilities?

Excellent	
Very good	
Good	
Neither good nor bad	
Bad	

22. Do you think your status in society enhanced after educated?

Enhanced a lot	
Moderately a lot	
Some what	
Neither increased nor decreased	
Decreased	

23. According to you which are major social problems?

Dowry	
Witch hunting	
Poverty	
Caste	
Illiteracy	
Any other	

24. According to you which type of Specific problems faced by women in politics?

Gender discrimination	
Family life and work life balancing	
Male members dominance attitude	
Lack of previous political experience	
Lack of educational knowledge	
Inferiority complex/lack of knowledge	

25. Do you think as a woman you faced problems in politics, if you join?

Yes  No  cannot say

26. Do your male member creating problems you to participate in Politics?

Greater extent	
Moderate	
Minimum	
No	

27. What you think about Women's Reservation Bill?

Absolutely essential	
Essential	
Not essential	
Not at all essential	

28. Do you hard about women reservation bill?

Yes  No

29. Do you aware about 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendments Act.

Yes  No

30. Do you think Empowerment through 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment is possible?

Yes  No  cannot say

31. Do you think Motivational training is essential to motivate women in politics?

Yes  No  cannot say

32. How women can perform better in socio-political activities? Give Suggestions?

33. If any other Suggestions?

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## **APENDIX: II**

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