

The Women's Studies Centre, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus organized the Consultation on Naga Women: Issues and Challenges – The Way Forward, on December 8, 2014 at the Ladies' Common Room, Nagaland University Campus, Meriema. The program was co-sponsored by the State Resource Centre for Women and the Human Rights Law Network, Nagaland.

This program brought together women and men from various fields of expertise to discuss issues pertaining to Naga women. The program opened with a welcome note by Ms. Petekhrienuo Sorhie, Research Officer, Women's Studies Centre, Nagaland University. She welcomed each of the participants that had gathered from various organizations and institutions, namely, the Naga Mothers' Association, the Nagaland State Commission for Women, Nagaland State AIDS Control Society, Naga Hoho, Research Scholars' Forum, the State Resource Centre for Women, Department of Higher and Technical Education, the FPAI and from Nagaland University; she expressed hope that the discussions would be interactive, interesting and fruitful.

The pro Vice Chancellor of Nagaland University, Dr. Lanunungsang took some time to share a few words. He expressed that this is the time to discuss many issues, Naga women being one of them. He said that it should not, however, be only about Naga women, but also include Manipuri women, mainland Indian women, etc., so that we get a better understanding of what is actually happening and where we stand. He touched upon issues of human rights violations, domestic violence, etc., but emphasized on the fact that one of the most serious threats in the Northeast, which affects not only women, but men also, is the massive inflow of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. Citing some studies, Dr. Lanunungsang also informed that 1 Muslim woman has 8.1 children, and that she can marry at the young age of 15.

He also spoke about the Supreme Court's directive to include the third gender in all educational institutions. With all these information, he reiterated the importance of knowing who we are and where we stand, and that Naga women have numerous challenges before them; he hoped that through education and discussions like this, positive changes will be brought about.

The Keynote Address was delivered by Dr. Rosemary Dzüvichü, Director i/c Women's Studies Centre, NU. Dr. Dzüvichü shared on certain pertinent issues affecting Naga women; she pointed out that the way people in mainland India perceive Naga women as being educated, liberal, dressed well and speaking good English, is often only the surface and that Naga women's real experiences are quite the contrary.

Speaking on Article 371A of the Indian Constitution, Dzüvichü called attention to the fact that it is often misinterpreted as people do selective reading of the Article. She further informed that there is now a new form of debate or discourse, namely, the psychological trauma as a result of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, and other inhumane Acts which have kept Nagas under subjugation for a long time. She further informed that with the wide range of subjects to be covered in the consultation, it is hoped that the gaps, challenges, loopholes can be determined, and success stories can be emulated. Dzüvichü identified the Naga Hoho as a "man's organization," given the fact that it only has male members, and no female representatives in this Assembly. There were some responses to her address, which will be looked at later. The Keynote Address was followed by the various presentations touching upon various issues of concern pertaining to Naga women.