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Topic:

**“Politics of Gender Representation in Manipur  
With Special Reference to Meitei Women”**

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The contribution of women folks in the making of political history of the Meitei community and Manipur as a whole is accepted throughout the ages and across various political communities. However, mere idolism or symbolism of womanhood while wrapping and restricting women under patriarchy rules make little sense unless they are made parallel partnership of political responsibility and ownership alongside their male folks. Numbers of unfavorable and discouraging family and social norms restrict Meitei women to mere and mute voters in the state. In fact, keeping aside the political obligations their political rights and shares are unheard and unseen; Meitei women still remain incapable to escape from the same old political walls like other communities at par. The truth is explicitly manifested by the fact that only four women could become MLA's in the State Assembly from 1972 to 2007. And none of the four women could see a woman colleague in the same term. These women members were either widows of powerful political leaders or heir of particularly rich and powerful families. The first woman MLA was elected in 1990 followed by another one in the 1991 by election and one each in the 2002 and 2007 State Assembly elections. No wonder, the state never had a woman member of the Parliament since its inception. But, the story of the voting turnouts of women folks in all the assembly elections was different. Women outnumbered the male folks and indeed identified their franchise power well ahead of their male folks. For example, in the 2002 general election the ratio of male and female voters were 48.7% and 51.3% respectively. However, a positive signal had emerged since the Union Cabinet's amendment in favour of thirty three percent reservation policy for women in the grassroots political participation. The thesis is an attempt to find out a close answer to the problem of marginalization of Meitei women while trying to analyze and examine the underlying socio-economic, cultural and political problems of the tormented state. The study had tried and linked all the possible angles that directly or indirectly connected to the concept of gender politics and the problem of equality of gender representation. As modern democracy foresees gender equality as par to the greatest cause of freedom, each political problem of existence, growth and inheritance of women folks must be dealt under the modern democratic paradigm.