



Department of English Kohima College, Kohima

International Webinar on Violence Against Women & Women's Writings in English in Nagaland



Keynote Speaker

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Valedictory Speaker

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MAY 19 & 20, 2021 @ 10 AM (IST)

FREE REGISTRATION

Last Date : May 18



Registration Link

<https://forms.gle/afLNZiLjwVSEEQw48>



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Concept Note

Violence against women is not new to Naga society. Contrary to popular local media narratives and contemporary folklore, this is not a modern phenomenon. By its very nature, patriarchy is a system that feeds off structures and practices that wreak violence upon women. The place of women in Naga patriarchal society is, in the words of Temsula Ao, one of "benevolent subordination", justified by narratives that present women as physically weaker and therefore in need of the protection of men. Narratives the writer herself endorses and reinforces when she cites the dangers of life in the past in the form of wild animals, raiding warriors as well as physically demanding work of village life. Yet the enticement of male 'protection' did not develop into the prohibition of killing women and children in war as in many other patriarchal cultures. Rather oral narratives confirm how the hair and therefore the heads of women, in particular women of great beauty or purity were coveted and sought after by warriors as battle trophies that were used to adorn their attire.

The military invasion of the Indian state conveniently presented another location for the perpetration of violence against women. In the horrifying rampage of violence unleashed on the Nagas by the Indian army, women were at once the most vulnerable and most devastating targets. For what better way to seize power from men in a patriarchal society than to render them powerless to protect their women from sexual violation. The shocking spectacle of violence inflicted on Naga women simply allowed one intersectionality of perpetrators to take time away from the

spotlight and amplified race as the category most threatening to 'our' women. To the extent that contemporary discussions on violence against women in the public sphere and social media often deploy the rhetoric of racism and xenophobia. Leaving one to wonder, as one 'blogger' did, in the aftermath of the 2015 mob lynching of an alleged rapist in Dimapur, if he would have met the same fate had he been a Naga.

This webinar is a response to a recent spate of creative writings in English by Naga women writers that broaden the scope of the spotlight on violence against women in our society exposing a greater range of intersectionalities of both victim/survivor and perpetrator underscoring the unspoken reality that the violence women endure is as intimate and interior as it is public and open. The webinar aims to situate these writings within Slavoj Žižek's framework of violence as a "triumvirate of subjective, systematic and symbolic violence". Our focus is on his challenge to "resist the fascination of subjective violence" and to move away from merely protesting visible acts of violence to "the analysis of ... the complex interaction of the three modes of violence : subjective, systematic and symbolic". To this end, we bring together women working, writing, advocating in political and public spaces in the areas of violence/conflict in general and violence against women in particular, with those in literature to take stock of the overlaps and gaps in our collective interventions as well as to initiate conversations about new strategies as we move forward.