Nagaland Violence

Why in news?

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The tribal traditional bodies exclusively run by men, are opposed to 33% reservation for women in elections to civic bodies.

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What is their justification?

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- The Nagaland government announced civic bodies' elections in December 2016 and a 33% reservation of seats for women.
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- The 74th Constitutional Amendments added **Article 234(T)**, which provides for 33% reservation for women in Urban Local bodies.
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- The tribal traditional bodies in Nagaland argue that it is an infringement upon Naga tradition and customs as protected under **Article 371(A)** of the Constitution.
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- One group of tribal leaders has also claimed that women anyway enjoyed equal rights in Naga society and hence, providing reservation was meaningless.
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- The ruling NPF government maintains that towns and municipalities are new concepts and have nothing to do with tradition and customary practices of the Nagas.
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- Tribal bodies have always taken resort to Article 317(A), the civic elections in the state have not been held since Article 243(T) of the Constitution came into force in 1993.
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What is the situation of women in Nagaland?

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- Women **do not find political space** in Nagaland is evident from the fact that no woman has ever made it to the State Legislative Assembly.
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- Barely a dozen women have contested Assembly elections in these five decades.
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- Only one woman, Rano M Shaiza, managed to win from the lone Lok Sabha constituency of the state in 1971.
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- In the 2013 Assembly polls, the female voter turn-out in the state stood at 91.22% as against 89.82% for men.
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- Its **sex ratio is 931**, which is below the national average of 940.
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- Naga culture and customs **debar women from land ownership** hence our Customary Laws preclude women from inheriting land.
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What is the current situation?

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- Various tribal bodies including Naga Hoho, the apex organisation of all major tribes, have been opposing the civic elections.
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- Eventually the opposition reached a violent stage in Kohima.
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- But a local newspaper says that the reservation is not the reason why these protests were happening.
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- It says the protests were against the government for not fulfilling its promise of deferring the elections to give two months' time to the government, the women, and the tribal organisations to reach an agreement.
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- The core of the issue is also considered to be ownership of land and related resources.
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- **The elections have now been called off**.

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- For now, the Naga Mothers' Association (NMA), which has been spearheading the women's movement in the state, has adopted a wait-and-watch policy.
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- It had filed a special leave petition (SLP) in the Supreme Court a few years ago seeking reservation under 243(T).
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Source: The Indian Express

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