

**GENDER AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
IN MANIPUR, 1980-2001**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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### CERTIFICATE


This is to certify that the dissertation entitled '**Gender and Human Development in Manipur, 1980-2001**' submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.

  
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**For**  
**Grandma**

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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	iv
<i>List of Tables</i>	vii
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Gender and Employment</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Agriculture	
2.2 Handloom Industry	
2.3 Marketing	
2.4 Work Participation of Women and their Status	
2.5 Labour Force Participation	
2.6 Work Participation Rate	
2.7 Manipur Women in Aquaculture	
2.7.1 Role in Fisheries	
<b>3. Gender and Education</b>	<b>26</b>
3.1 Trends of Literacy in Manipur	
3.2 Enrolment and Dropout Rates	
3.3 Mass Media	
3.4 Age at First Marriages	
3.5 Level of Education and Land Possessed	
3.6 Level of Education and Household Type	
<b>4. Gender and Health</b>	<b>42</b>
4.1 Sex Ratio	
4.2 Infant Mortality Rate	
4.3 Nutrition	
4.4 HIV/AIDS Virus- a serious concern in Manipur	
4.5 Reproductive Health Problems- both Genealogical and Obstetric	
4.6 Safe Child Bearing- accesses to appropriate Health Care Services	
4.7 Malaria and Tuberculosis- a common disease among the rural women	
4.8 Cholera and other water borne diseases	
4.9 Health Services in Manipur	
<b>5. Gender and Social Indicators</b>	<b>58</b>
5.1 Women's Autonomy	
5.2 Domestic Violence: Attitudes and Experience	
5.3 Incidence of Crimes against Women	
5.4 Political Participation of Women	
5.4.1 Women's Participation in Social Movements	

- 5.4.2 Women's Participation in Electoral Politics
- 5.4.3 Participation of Women as Voters
- 5.4.4 Participation of Women in Parliamentary Election
- 5.4.5 Participation of Women in State Assembly
- 5.4.6 Panchayati Raj
- 5.4.7 Village Authority in the Hill District
- 5.5 Violence Against Women
  - 5.5.1 The Feared of Raped
  - 5.5.2 Gender Violence as a result of Armed Conflict and Armed Special Forces Power Act
  - 5.5.3 Polygamy is a common Practice in the valley of Manipur
  - 5.5.4 Drug is a menace for Women and Girls in Manipur
  - 5.5.5 Wife beating is common Practice in Manipur
- 5.6 Property Rights

**6. Conclusion** **78**

**References** **82**

## **List of Tables**

**Table 1.1 Poverty ratio of Manipur (per cent)**

**Table 1.2 Number of Persons below Poverty Line (lakh persons)**

**Table 2.1 Details of Workforce in Manipur (Number)**

**Table 2.2 Details of Workforce Activity-wise (Number)**

**Table 2.3 Details of Workforce (in percent)**

**Table 2.4 Details of Workforce Activity-wise (in percent)**

**Table 2.5 Employment in Organized Sector**

**Table 2.6 Employment of women in the Organized Sector by Zones. (Employment as on 31<sup>st</sup> march, 2000)**

**Table 2.7 Work participation by women in rural areas and urban areas**

**Table 2.8 Distribution of female work participation rate by educational status**

**Table 2.9 Percent distribution of ever-married women age 15-49 by work status for Manipur and India, 1998-99**

**Table 2.10 Labour force participation rates by sex and sector**

**Table 2.11. Female Work-Participation Rate**

**Table 2.12 Capture fisheries production in Manipur**

**Table 2.13 Details of Staff of Manipur State DoF.**

**Table 3.1 Literacy Rate in Manipur, 1951-2001**

**Table 3.2 District Wise Literate number of Population and Literacy Rate in Manipur, 2001 Census.**

**Table 3.3 Population of Manipur by rural and urban and by sex (In number)**

**Table 3.4 Literate population of Manipur by sex and by sector (in number)**

**Table 3.5 Literate population of Manipur by sex and by sector. (In percent)**

**Table 3.6 Number of Students by type of Institutions**

**Table 3.7 Percentage of female students to total students**

**Table 3.8 Percent of female students to total students in professional and other education**

**Table 3.9 Enrollments According to Faculty and Stage, 2000-2001. Gross Enrollment in Schools/ College by Standard, 2000-2001**

**Table 3.10 Exposure to Mass Media (1998-99)**

**Table 3.11 Age at first marriage for Manipur and India, 1998-99**

**Table 3.12** Per 1000 distribution of persons aged 7 & above by level of education, separately by sex and land possessed, 1999-2000. Manipur (Rural)

**Table 3.13** Per 1000 distribution of persons aged 7 & above by level of education, separately by sex and household type, 1999-2000. Manipur (Rural)

**Table 3.14** Per 1000 distribution of persons aged 7 & above by level of education, separately by sex and household type, 1999-2000. Manipur (Urban)

**Table 4.1** Population of Manipur by sex (in Number)

**Table 4.2** Population of Manipur by sex (percent)

**Table 4.3** Sex ratio and Rate of Change in the Sex Ratio in India and Manipur (1901-2001)

**Table 4.4** District Wise Sex Ratio in Manipur (1961-2001)

**Table 4.5** Number of Registered Death in Manipur classified by sex in Rural and Urban areas

**Table 4.6** Sex ratio Registered at birth in Manipur (Female per 1000 males)

**Table 4.7** Infant deaths registered by age and sex in Manipur, 2000

**Table 4.8** Infant Mortality Rate

**Table 4.9** Estimated Infant Mortality Rate by Sex and Rural-Urban Status, 1999

**Table 4.10** Per 1000 break-up of households and persons by MPCE class and number per 1000 households of adults and children by sex in different MPCE classes and sex-ratio for Manipur (Rural)

**Table 4.11** Per 1000 break-up of households and persons by MPCE class and number per 1000 households of adults and children by sex in different MPCE classes and sex-ratio for Manipur (Urban)

**Table 4.12** Distribution of Nutritional Status of Children (1-5years) according to Weight-for-Age, (in percentage), (Gomez Classification), 1998. Manipur

**Table 4.13** Distribution of Nutritional Status of Children (5-18 years) According to Weight-for-Age, (in percentage), (Gomez Classification), 1998 Manipur

**Table 4.14** Age-Sex Proportion of HIV Positive Cases (Sero-Surveillance)

**Table 4.15** Break-up of HIV Positive Cases by Risk Category: (Sero-Surveillance)

**Table 5.1** Percentage of ever-married women involved in household decision making, percentage with freedom of movement, and percentage with access to money for Manipur, India, 1998-99

**Table 5.2** Percentage of ever-married women who have been beaten or physically mistreated by their husband, in-laws, or other persons since age 15 and percentage beaten or physically mistreated in the past 12 months for Manipur, India, 1998-99.

**Table 5.3** Percentage Distribution of Male and Female Voter from 1972-2002 Assembly Elections

**Table 5.4** Women Candidates in the Assembly Election, 1980

**Table 5.5** Women Candidates in 2000 Assembly Election

**Table 5.6** Women Candidates in 2002 Assembly Election.



**Table 5.7 Manipur Panchayat Election 2002**

**Table 5.8 Manipur Zilla Parishads Election 2002**

**Table 5.9 Statistics on Crimes against Women**

**Table 5.10 Total Number of Cases Filed at Family Counselling Centre  
From July 1998 to December 2001**

**Table 5.11 No. of Reported cases on Daily newspapers from January to November 2004**

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

Manipur is a hilly state on the North-Eastern border of India. It extends between 23° 85' and 25° 86' latitudes north and between 93° 03' and 94° 78' longitudes east. It covers an area of 23,327 square kilometers and is bounded on the north by Nagaland, on the west by Cachar of Assam, on the east by Burma (Myanmar) and on the south by Mizoram and Chin state of Burma. The territory which constitutes the present state of Manipur consists of a valley and a chain of hills which encircles the former on all sides.

Manipur is characterized by wide differences in terms of development between the valley and the hills. The hills constitute about 90 percent of the total area of Manipur while the valley constitutes the remaining area. The majority of the population in the hills is scheduled tribes, while the Meiteis and Muslims mostly inhabit the valley. There are 33 different scheduled tribes belonging to different ethnic groups of the state. Manipur has nine districts, of which five are in the hills, viz, Senapati, Tamenglong, Churachandpur, Chandel and Ukhrul, and the remaining districts are in the valley, namely, Imphal West, Imphal East, Bishnupur and Thoubal.<sup>1</sup> The population of Manipur was about 23 lakh in 2001 with a density of 107 per square km<sup>2</sup>.

Most of the economic activities within the state are concentrated in the plain areas. But Manipur remains static as before: the hilly regions practice jhum cultivation and some terrace cultivation with the farmers producing just enough for their subsistence needs with little or no surplus production at all.

The poverty ratio of Manipur increased from 49.96 percent in 1973-74 to 53.72 percent in 1977-78. However, the ratio started decreasing thereafter, except for a marginal increase in 1993-94. This can be seen from table 1.1. Rural poverty, except for an increase in two years, dropped from 52.67 percent in 1973-74 to 40.04 percent in 1999-2000, while urban

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<sup>1</sup> Imphal district was bifurcated into Imphal East and Imphal West in 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Census of India, 2001.

poverty continuously declined from 36.92 percent in 1973-74 to 7.47 percent in 1999-2000. The increase in overall poverty in the year 1993-94 was due to an increase in rural poverty, from 39.35 percent in 1987-88 to 45.01 in 1993-94. The absolute number of persons below poverty line can be observed from Table 1.2. Though there was a decline in poverty ratio, the number of persons below poverty line increased from 5.86 lakhs in 1973-74 to 7.19 lakhs in 1999-2000. Over the same period, the number of rural persons below the poverty line increased from 5.11 lakhs to 6.53 lakhs, while that of urban persons fell from 0.75 lakh to 0.66 lakh.

District wise, figures for Manipur reveal a poverty ratio of more than 50 percent in all the hill districts, except Senapati, in 1988. The highest poverty ratio was in the hill district of Chandel; 64.07 percent.<sup>3</sup> In the valley, poverty ratio was highest in Imphal (48.87 percent) followed by Thoubal (42.02 percent) and Bishnupur (38.01 percent). However, in terms of absolute figures, Imphal had the highest number of persons below poverty line among all the districts (3, 31,462).

**Table 1.1 Poverty ratio of Manipur (per cent)**

Year	Rural	Urban	Combined
1973-74	52.67	36.92	49.96
1977-78	59.82	32.71	53.72
1983-84	42.6	21.73	37.02
1987-88	39.35	9.94	31.35
1993-94	45.01	7.73	33.79
1999-2000	40.04	7.47	28.54

Source: Planning Commission, Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-2007)

<sup>3</sup> Draft Eight Five Year Plan, 1990-95.

**Table 1.2 Number of Persons below Poverty Line (lakh persons)**

Year	No of Persons		
	Rural	Urban	Combined
1973-74	5.11	0.75	5.86
1977-78	6.09	1.11	7.2
1983-84	4.71	1.13	5.84
1987-88	4.68	0.85	5.53
1993-94	6.33	0.47	6.8
1999-2000	6.53	0.66	7.19

Source: Planning Commission, Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-2007)

Historically, despite the wide differences in terms of development between the valley and the hills and a sizeable number of people living in poverty the women in Manipur enjoy high social and economic status. The high social and economic status of women in Meitei society was frequently noted, even by British colonial officers.<sup>4</sup> Despite the dominance of Hinduism in the plains of Manipur, Meitei women suffered none of the humiliating oppression of their sisters elsewhere on the subcontinent. Above all, the women controlled the food supplies and the markets, and were therefore a dominant economic force. Sir Robert Reid (1928), the Governor of Assam, remark, 'Manipuri women are notorious for their independence and their proneness to take direct action to get their own way'. He recalled that when a previous officiating political officer had attempted to introduce stricter regulations on the bazaar it resulted in his 'being surrounded by these women and threatened with a ducking in the river unless he withdrew certain orders'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Among others, by W. McCulloch, *An account of the valley of Munnipore and the Hill Tribes* (Calcutta, 1859); R. Brown, *Annual Report on the Mannipore Political Agency* (Calcutta, 1874); and J. Shakespear, 'The Religion of Manipur', in *folk lore* 24 (1913), pp. 409-55.

<sup>5</sup> IOL (British Library, Oriental and India Office Collection file L/PS/13/1002), Reid to Gimson 16.12.39: the officer involved was C.G. Crawford, who officiated as Political Agent for six months during 1928.

Similarly, the position of women in the hills is far from being inferior though majority of them followed Christianity. They too enjoy high economic and social status. Horum (1977) says, "The mother plays the main role in running the household. The majority of domestics' affairs are in her hands".<sup>6</sup> S.A Ansari (1991), "All her life a women enjoys considerable freedom. She participates freely in singing and dancing and entertains the guest. She is never made to feel that she belongs to the weaker sex".<sup>7</sup>

Historically, the state played an important role to protect the well-being of women. This is evident from the institution of Pacha Loishang (women's court), the women's right to appeal<sup>8</sup> and economic freedom accorded to them. While Pacha Loishang and women's right to appeal have disappeared over time, the institution of keithel (Women's Bazaar) and women's economic role have persisted. Subsequent integration of Manipur with India has not altered these roles of women.<sup>9</sup>

However, it is a widely accepted fact that there is discrimination and biases against women in economic spheres despite their contribution to the economy. The discrimination and biases against women witnessed in social spheres gets mirrored on to economic spaces not only through direct, legitimate routes but also through the resilience in perceptions and mindsets among the agents of labour markets that reconfigure to retain elements of gender imbalances.

The equity argument for a gender-focused approach is based on the assumption that women are poorer than men. Then the question that needs to be answered is whether women are actually poorer than men?

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<sup>6</sup> M.Horum, "Social and Cultural Life of Nagas", 1977. p.61.

<sup>7</sup> S.A. Ansari, "Manipur: Tribal Demography and Socio- Economic Development", 1991. p.138.

<sup>8</sup> Run by women, Pacha Loishang looked after cases related to women. Women could appeal against injustices and were heard by the authority. By virtue of this right even capital punishments were pardoned by the kings. See B. Kulachandra Singh, 'The High Status that the Law of Manipur Accorded to Meitei Women', Manipuri text, Macha Leima, No.15, December 2001, p.5.

<sup>9</sup> Homen Thangjam, ' Armed Conflict and Women's Well-Being in Manipur', Eastern Quarterly, July-September 2005.

Any answer to this query is to be preceded by a definition of poverty.<sup>10</sup> The term poverty implies deprivation—the inability to attain a minimal standard of living. This minimal standard of living defines the poverty line for the society and divides the population into the poor and the non-poor. But how is this minimal standard of living defined? This can be defined in terms of satisfaction of a minimal bundle of basic needs— for example, health, education, and nutrition. The minimal standard of living can be expressed alternatively in terms of a summary indicator of welfare— minimum consumption expenditure or income.<sup>11</sup> Irrespective of the definition of poverty, women can be poorer than men in two distinct senses. First, there may be a larger percentage of women than men who are below the poverty line. Second, among the ranks of the poor, women may suffer from greater degrees of poverty, as measured by the depth of poverty, which indicates the shortfall in income (expenditure) from the poverty line, when poverty is defined in terms of income (expenditure).<sup>12</sup>

Some have taken a more general approach, arguing that all relevant social and economic factors should be taken into account in determining one's economic status (Jodha 1989). According to this argument, poverty is not to be measured by an individual's income or expenditure alone but by other factors such as the nature and type of employment and the quality and the character of one's social and economic relations. Even if men and women have the same income but women have to do more arduous or inferior work, then the women should be considered poorer. Similarly, if women enjoy less leisure than men—leisure being an important component of 'full income'— then, even if men and women do enjoy equal income/consumption, women should be considered worse off in welfare terms. Similarly, even if men and women have the same income/consumption, the same choice of leisure and employment, but women remain socially, politically, and

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<sup>10</sup> For nontechnical discussions of the conceptual and measurement issues on poverty, see Quibria (1991) and Srinivasan (1993). For a more technical discussion of some of these issues, see Atkinson (1987) and Foster (1984).

<sup>11</sup> It is argued that judging welfare or poverty, of women, in terms of income or expenditure, in a developing economy is a difficult one. In many of these societies most women are engaged in unpaid work as housewives and as a helper in family farms and enterprises. In judging poverty of women, it is suggested, the household should be the focus and an important consideration should be whether women are over-represented in the poorer household, see Quibria (1995), P.402.

<sup>12</sup> M.G. Quibria, 'Gender and Poverty: Issues and Policies with Special Reference to Asian Developing Countries', *Journal of Economic Surveys*, Vol.9, No.4, Dec.1995. P.375.

psychologically more constrained, with limited freedom of participation in the society and polity, then women should be considered worse off in terms of well-being in comparison to men. However, this represents a much broader perception of well-being—and poverty—incorporating aspects which are often neither quantified nor quantifiable.

It may also be noted in passing that Amartya Sen, in a series of research contributions (see, for example, Sen 1985), has argued that an individual's well-being should not be viewed in terms of 'possessing of commodities,' which has only 'derivative' significance. According to Sen, well-being should be seen in terms of an individual's ability to achieve—what he calls 'capabilities'—those attributes—what he calls 'functioning'—that contribute to one's quality of life. These attributes relate to being able to live long, being well-nourished, being healthy, and being literate and so on. According to Sen, while income and consumption are important as instrumental variables, variables that contribute to 'capabilities', but they do not by themselves provide a direct measure of well-being or living standard. Whether or not one finds Sen's concept of living standard and welfare defined in terms of 'capabilities' and 'functioning' illuminating, one can perhaps still agree with him that life expectancy, literacy and health are important indicators of well-being.

We also know that the space for unbiased consideration and gender based comparison is not only constricted by data inadequacies but is nullified due to the perceptions derived from patriarchal role stereotyping that precedes any deliberation on women's contribution to the economy, necessitating the recognition of these elements as precursors to such analysis on gender inequalities. The standard measurements of poverty in India are based on the income (or expenditure)-based methods, which do not give gender disaggregated measures of poverty. Data is collected on household consumption and then poverty is determined on the basis of the composition of the households. As these income-based methods rely on household measure of resources, they have limited ability to measure differences in poverty between men and women, who typically live together in households.

Despite the above limitations certain studies have been done by some authors to understand the dimensions of female poverty in India by selectively taking the broader notions of wellbeing, i.e. education and health. These notions are not only theoretically superior but offer a much more promising route to gendered measures of poverty because these measures are gathered for individuals and not only for households.

In fact many studies have revealed “gradients” in health and educational status by income, some of which are gendered so that, for example, girls are sometimes less likely to go to school than boys if they live in poor households but equally likely to go to school in well-off households (Filmer, 1999); Poorer people live shorter and less healthy lives than richer people in the world over, and excess infant mortality among girls is higher among less educated women.

However, recent studies also reveal that women are discriminated in India not because they are poor or illiterate: it appears that the growth in incomes and education of women, variables that would grant women an equal status in society, has actually worked in a reverse direction in states like Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.<sup>13</sup> Rather, religion, ethics, morality, social and community leaders, cultures etc. have important role to play in granting equal status to women.

In the light of above discussion, this study is an attempt to investigate whether women are poorer that is having lower quality of living than men in Manipur. We shall begin by analyzing the employment status of women in Manipur and then go on to discuss literacy, health and finally some other important social indicators in the following chapters. We conclude this study with some findings and remarks on the prevailing situation of women in Manipur.

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<sup>13</sup> R.L. Bhat and Namita Sharma, ‘Missing Girls: Evidence from Some North Indian States’, Indian Journal of Gender Studies, Vol. 13 No.3 Sep-Dec 2006. p. 351.



## 2

### **GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT**

When we talk of human development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it not only means more education, better health and a minimum income to live a reasonably decent life, but also various freedoms and certain entitlements. Human development is not complete without gender equality, and a concomitant attention to women entitlement. When we talk of education as a variable in human development we imply that the education of women is crucial, both in the micro as well as in the macro contexts. Similarly, women's entitlement to health is fundamental to ensure the human development of the family or the household.

Women also have the right to work. The unfortunate fact is that in many developing economies like India, despite growth and development, women are still not granted an equal status at the micro level of household or at the macro level of the community and society at large. It was reported in the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector, 1987<sup>1</sup> "Virtually nowhere did we find equal wages being paid to men and women for the same work- not in any occupation. Even in the states where women's status is not that low, like Nagaland, Manipur, and Assam, women do not receive equal wages. It is not only the private employers who practice this discrimination. Co-operatives are also at fault. Even when the government is the employer, the payment to women is less than to men for the same work...as many times as we probed we witnessed women doing the exactly same labour and putting in the same hours as men, nowhere were we given any satisfactory answer as to why they are being paid less".

Women's development is closely associated with education, employment and empowerment. These factors always go hand in hand, not preceding other. Economic empowerment of women through education and employment raises their status in the family and society as well. Moreover, employment is the most effective way to make

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<sup>1</sup> National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector, 1987. Pp Iix.

women economically empowered. It can create miracles in the family and society. The immediate impact of better and more employment opportunities for women will be on the education and health of their family members, especially girls.

However, one need to keep in mind that in order to examine gender dimensions within remuneration and income earnings in India, the context of gendered participation of labour supply in its entirety needs to be accounted for. The dimensions affecting pre-entry conditions that influences capabilities, human capital traits and labour supply characteristics; aspects of in-market discriminations and gender bias against women in terms of hiring, promotion, segregation, gender relations and remuneration; and factors influencing women's work time distribution among paid and unpaid activities, own and hired labour, extended SNA (System of National Accounts) activities of household maintenance, care-giving, socially derived, traditional roles and sexual division of labour that influences the different agents of the labour markets have to be explored to understand the nature of gender inequalities in India.<sup>2</sup>

In this section, given data inadequacies, it will not be our objective to see the dimensions of labour supplies in its entirety. However, we shall try to see the occupational structure of Manipur women. The idea is to see whether workload is equally distributed between genders, or if it is the case that large proportion of women workers are concentrated in agriculture and household activities and in other unorganized sectors where wages paid are minimal. We shall also look at the work-participation rate of women in Manipur for different periods. Declines in work participation rates imply a decline in the economic participation of women and a decrease in their capacity to earn an income/wages and thereby implies further impoverishment of the women. A decline further implies reduced opportunities of work for the women. In doing so we shall try to find out the existence of gender disparity in Manipur. For instance, if women workers are concentrated in unorganized sector and if the work participation rate is low we can infer that gender disparity exist in Manipur in terms of employment as in other parts of India.

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<sup>2</sup> Preet Rustagi, 'Understanding Gender Inequalities in Wages and Incomes in India', Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Vol.48, No.2, 2005. p.319.

The position and status of women in Manipur when compared with the women of other states in India is comparatively high. In this regard, S.K. Bhuyan (1954) observes, 'Manipur women have been enjoying a freedom which their sisters in India failed to attain. They were not confined to the four walls of their domestic life; they go out freely for purposes of petty trades mainly to sale the products of their own hands. They weave fine durable textures where colors are assembled in the most attractive manner. At the same time Manipuri women have shown their gallantry and valor in desperate and critical situations.'<sup>3</sup> Mrs.Grimwood (1997) also expressed her view that the Manipuris do not shut up their women as is the custom in the most parts of India and they are much more enlightened and intelligent in consequence.<sup>4</sup>

Women in Manipur, irrespective of their class and status, performed all the domestic works in the family and are responsible for the maintenance of the family. They educate the children in matters relating to the social norms, values, customary laws, etc. They also contributed for the growth of the family income by doing handicraft, agriculture, small-scale industries and selling through their skillfulness.

The women of Manipur also like in other states are employed in skilled professions like medical, engineering, legal service, administration, teaching, professions in active services, technical, clerical, and the many other ministerial jobs. Many responsible factors were for making women to take up employment. Among others, important factors were education, economic and social development, and constitutional provision. The economic compulsions had also been greatly responsible for making women to seek jobs as the limited budget of the family might be inadequate to meet its daily needs.

## **2.1 Agriculture**

Manipur is essentially an agricultural state. About 70 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture. From the time of seed-sowing till harvesting women takes an active part. Womenfolk mostly do seed sowing, weeding and harvesting. In the valley, the people

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<sup>3</sup> Bhasan Khomjinba, 'Assam and Manipur', 1954, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs Grimwood, 'My Three Years in Manipur', Cultural Publishing House, Delhi, 1997.

practice two methods of cultivation – dry land cultivation and cultivation in wetland. In the hills, the hill tribes practice both jhum and terrace cultivation. The present issue related to Agriculture in the state has been an extensive exploitation of nature due to the practice of shifting cultivation in the hilly areas, cutting down of trees for firewood, charcoal, etc. As a result of deforestation, women had to walk long distances carrying firewood and other agricultural products. Apart from this, the presence of a number of insurgents and army patrolling has made the forest unsafe for women. For them, the insurgent groups and the Indian army are equally dangerous. Often we see women are rape and molested in the forest or agricultural land. In most districts of Manipur it is a well known fact that women no longer work alone without the presence of male members in the hilly cultivated land. Many a times they are unable to work for 2/3 days or sometimes 1or 2 weeks due to exchange of fire between armed groups or between army and armed groups. There are also times when their crops are damaged or stolen.

## **2.2 Handloom Industry**

Weaving which had been one of the important sectors of industry in Manipur play a crucial role in its economy. Most of the people engaged in this field are women. Every grown up women are expected to know the art of weaving. In the tribal society of Manipur knowing the art of weaving is a good qualification for marriage as well. The women of Manipur weave different designs of clothes and the products are exported to the neighboring states. Women also supplement their family income by selling clothes in different markets. As per national loom census, there are 2, 70,261 looms of various types supporting a population of 2, 84,205 in the state. During the last 25 years, the state government has taken a number of steps to develop the handloom industries through co-operative as well as individual sectors. The Manipur state handloom weavers Co-operative Societies Ltd. has affiliation of 1056 primary weaver co-operative society. Besides this, Manipur Handloom and Handicraft Development Cooperation and Manipur Development Society were also established for the development of handloom industries in the individual sectors. But, as a result of globalization, many handlooms industries have died and do not function like before.

### 2.3 Marketing

Manipuri women do not lay behind the veil, they also do all the buying and selling of goods in the market. Women dominate the markets in rural and urban areas. This unique role in the market will be known if one visits the Ima Market, which is running in the heart of the city. They are greatly involved in the agricultural activities and fishing. They are artistic and creative which drove in the field of handloom and handicraft. One significant observation that we see today in Manipur is the increase in the number of women entrepreneurs and women self help groups.

The women of Manipur are hard working people involved in trading the various agricultural and industrial products. Women in the hills would also take their agricultural products and sell it to the valley people. Sometimes they would go from door to door to sell their products. In Manipur, especially in the valley, every locality has its own market with women running it. They solely do the transaction of selling and buying dealing in different trades like vegetables, fruits, fish, and handloom products. There are also other women whose business is to sell eatable things like meals, tea, pakora, etc. There are also some women who give loans to the needy women in the market and earn daily interest and thereby add to their family income. In the course of time, especially after Independence, with the change in economic structure of the state, women are exploring other means to maintain their families. There are also some unemployed women who are running weaving cooperative societies by employing young women and girls. They act as a link between the Government Funding agencies and the women weavers. Some educated women also have started their own business like establishing knitting, embroidery centers, etc. by applying modern tools and techniques. With the impact of globalization, self-employed indigenous women weavers face a lot of problems in production and marketing. As the price of the thread and labour they put into doesn't allow the weavers to earn much profit, many of these women have now left their professions and become laborers. They are now engaged in selling Moreh goods that comes from Burma. Manipur government adopted free trade policy with Burma since the last 5/6 years and since then Manipur started importing foreign goods. Today grass roots women are selling eatables and other household articles from door to door, walking 4/5

km just for a commission. This kind of earning becomes a new profession among the women in the small towns. This might lead to the losing of traditional skill and is an area we need to be concerned with. Still other engage in unfair practices like selling of drugs, cinema tickets, and petrol in black market, in making of alcohols, in Moreh trades, Pan Corner and sex work etc. which is becoming a social issue at present.

#### **2.4 Work Participation of Women and their Status**

In India the major economic activity providing employment to women is agriculture. Though in both developing and developed economies the share of agriculture to GDP has decreased agriculture is still an important sector to provide employment in many parts of the world. Even though the importance of agriculture sector is declining for men and women alike, the rate of shifting away from agriculture for women is slow. So their representation in the agricultural labour force is not falling at the same rate as that of men. In other words agricultural labour force is highly feminized in India.<sup>5</sup> The same thing seems to be true in Manipur as well.

According to 1961 census, the workers and non-workers of both sexes were male – 1,83,127; female – 1,25,425; Non-workers male – 2,03,931; female – 2,18,186 of 7,80,037 total population. (Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 1961, The Statistical Bureau Manipur Administration, SBI Pub.6, Imphal.) It shows almost equal work participation of both sexes. According to 1971 census, the workers and non-workers of both sexes were male – 2,45,435; female – 1,25,428; Non-workers male – 29,624; female – 4,06,650 of 10,72,753 total population of Manipur. (Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 1980, Directorate of Economics, Government of Manipur, Imphal). Again, according to 1981 census, we can study the female workers participation according to their area and work status. The work status may be divided as main workers, marginal workers and non-workers. The main workers are those who had worked in any economically productive activity for a major part of the year preceding the period of enumeration i.e. 6 months or more. The Marginal workers are those who had worked at least some time in the year

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<sup>5</sup> Meera Bai M, “Women’s Development in Globalised India: Opportunities and Threats”, edited by K.Rajan

preceding the enumeration but have not worked for the major part of the year. The Non-workers are persons who have not worked at all in the year preceding the enumeration. The distribution of female population by work status and place of residence is given in table no.2.1.

**Table 2.1 Details of Workforce in Manipur (Number)**

Year	Main Worker		Marginal worker		Non-Worker		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1971	2,45,435	1,25,428	-	-	2,96,240	4,05,650	5,41,675	5,31,078
1981	3,31,242	2,42,097	6,200	34,269	3,83,564	4,23,581	7,21,006	6,99,947
1991	4,14,812	2,93,471	9,958	56,663	5,13,589	5,48,656	9,38,359	8,98,790
2001	4,30,227	2,29,137	96,987	1,88,860	5,68,418	6,53,157	10,95,634	10,71,154

-Not available

Note: Figures for 2001 excludes Mao-Maram, Paomata and Purul Sub-Divisions of Senapati.

Source: Census Publications of the Office of the Registrar General, India. Statistical Abstract Manipur 2004.

**Table 2.2 Details of Workforce Activity-wise (Number)**

Year	Cultivator		Agricultural Labourer		Household Industry	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1971	1,67,038	81,442	8662	4,863	5,882	28,741
1981	2,11,862	1,52,759	10,961	17,652	6,673	48,822
1991	2,43,267	1,94,232	19,151	28,199	6,024	35,065
2001	1,74,869	1,10,940	25,387	16,432	14,337	28,826

Source: Census Publications of the Office of the Registrar General, India. Statistical Abstract Manipur 2004.

It is evident from table 2.1 that the ratio of female employment to male employment is considerably unequal. Majority of the female workers are engaged in unorganized and informal sectors where work is irregular, wages are minimum and trade unions are ineffective. We can see from Table 2.3 that the percentage of male dominates that of female in the main worker category in all the period. One can see that the proportion of female marginal worker and non-worker is much greater than that of male in all the period. Marginal workers and non-workers of women are higher than men because women are mainly engaged in small internal trade and commerce and household work. However, both genders show a decline in main worker category which is reflected by increase in marginal worker.

**Table 2.3 Details of Workforce (in percent)**

Year	Main worker		Marginal Worker		Non-Worker	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1971	45	23	-	-	54.6	76
1981	45	34	.86	5	53	60.5
1991	44	32	1.06	6	54.7	61
2001	39	21	8.85	17.6	51.8	60.9

Source: calculated with figures from “: Census Publications of the Office of the Registrar General, India. Statistical Abstract Manipur 2004”.

When we look at the activity-wise work, both genders are evenly distributed in cultivation and agricultural labourer till 1981, in fact showing a higher proportion of male in 1971. This picture changed from 1991 onwards with female worker’s proportion rising in cultivation and as agricultural labourers. In household industry female outnumbers male in all the periods (table 2.4). thus, one is tempted to infer that there is feminization of agricultural labour force in Manipur as in other parts of India.

**Table 2.4 Details of Workforce Activity-wise (in percent)**

Year	Cultivator		Agricultural Labourer		Household Industry	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1971	68	64	3.5	3.8	2.39	22.9
1981	63.9	63.09	3.3	7.29	2	20
1991	58.6	66	4.6	9.6	1.4	11.9
2001	40.6	48.41	5.9	7.17	3.3	12.5

Source: calculated with figures from “: Census Publications of the Office of the Registrar General, India. Statistical Abstract Manipur 2004”.

Table 2.5 shows the employment of women in the organized sector. Unfortunately, figures for 2001 is not available for most of the sector. However, it can be clearly seen that proportion of women in the entire organized sector, both public and private, though their number increased with the passage of time, is much lesser than that of male figure. Number of women employees in the organized sector (public and private) was about 35,975 for the year 1991. This constitutes 12.25 percent of women employment to total women employed in the state. This means 87.74 percent of women are engaged in agriculture and other informal and unorganized sector. The men folk numbers about



1,46,370 in the organized sector in 1991 constituting 35 percent of the male workforce. This implies sixty percent of the male workforce is engage in the informal sector.

By the end of decade i.e., by 2000 the percentage of women employment to total employed in organized sector increased to 25 percent (0.8 lakhs).<sup>6</sup> Though this figure is higher than the figure for all India percentage of women employed in organized sector for the year 2000, which is only 17.6, it is less than the percentage of men employed in organized sector. The percentage of men employed in organized sector increased to 50 percent in 2000.

**Table 2.5 Employment in Organized Sector.**

Year	Agriculture and Allied activities		Mining and Quarrying		Manufacturing and other than Household Industry		Construction	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1971	2,045	281	79	11	4,570	1,541	4,538	89
1981	4,809	768	124	98	7,815	2,477	10,095	686
1991	8,695	2,036	159	53	11,269	5,075	9,847	1,124
2001	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2.5(continued)

Year	Trade and Commerce		Transport storage and Communication		Other Services	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1971	7,669	5,480	3,989	55	40,963	2,925
1981	10,402	8,934	5,076	72	63,425	9,829
1991	17,325	9,831	8,191	345	90,884	17,511
2001	-	-	-	-	2,15,634	72,939

-Not available

Note: Figures for 2001 excludes Mao-Maram, Paomata and Purul Sub-Divisions of Senapati. Figures under 'Other Services' for the year 2001 refers to other workers i.e., those engaged in some economic activity during the last one year, but not as cultivators or agricultural labourers or manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairing in household industry.

Source: Census Publications of the Office of the Registrar General, India. Statistical Abstract Manipur 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Statistical Abstract Manipur, 2004. p.263.

In this context it would be important to look at employment of women in the organized sector by zones. This is given in table 2.6.<sup>7</sup> From the table 2.6 it can be seen that female employment in the organized sector is the highest in the south zone and lowest in the central zone. However, we can also see that north eastern zone have quite impressive performances despite the fact that the region is lacking behind in terms of development. This might be due to the higher status accorded to women by the society in north east region.

**Table 2.6 Employment of women in the Organized Sector by Zones.(Employment as on 31<sup>st</sup> march, 2000)**

States/ U.T	No. of Women Employed
North Zone	603.7
Central Zone	434.1
North Eastern Zone	437.3
Eastern Zone	452.9
Western Zone	790.8
South Zone	2199.0

Source: DGE&T, Ministry of Labour: Employment Review, 2000.

**Table 2.7 Work participation by women in rural areas and urban areas**

Marital status	Rural	Urban	Total
All Marital Status	38.85	22.71	34.59
Unmarried Status	19.13	8.03	16.24
Married	67.21	41.69	60.57
Widowed	47.93	35.96	44.30
Divorced/Seperated	65.60	54.21	61.63

Source:Census of India, 1981, General Economics and Social Table Series 13, Manipur.

In any occupation women are in the lower strata. Men hold most of the white-collar jobs, administrative and managerial positions. The work participation of women in rural and urban areas is given in table 2.7.The table shows that higher rate of work participation by women in rural areas than in urban areas in all categories-married, unmarried, widowed and divorced/seperated women. The classification of work participation rate by marital status reveals that unmarried female has the lowest participation rate of 16.4 percent and maximum participation rate of 61.63 percent by divorced/seperated women whereas

<sup>7</sup> Meera Bai M, " Women's Development in Globalised India: Opportunities and Threats", edited by K.Rajan

60.57 percent of married women participated in economic activities. This conforms to the notion that in Manipur unmarried women are less likely to be in the labor force than married, widowed and divorced women for whom work participation is often an economic necessity. The higher participation rate in the labor force by divorced and separated women might also be indicative of low economic position in the society. Married women get support in the form of material or financial help from parents, husbands, relatives, etc. Widows get the sympathy and support from their children, parents, and relatives and enjoy the property left behind by the husband. But, the women who are divorced/separated have to face different social problems. For this group of women, self - dependence became an absolute necessity for survival in the society because of segregation. Now, we may examine women's work participation according to their educational Status (table 2.8).

**Table 2.8 Distribution of female work participation rate by educational status**

Place of residence	Educational Status	
	Illiterate	Literate
Rural	57.03	26.96
Urban	43.16	11.26
Total	54.08	22.34

Source: calculated with figures from "Census of India, 1981, General Economics and Social Table Series 13, Manipur".

The above table shows the work participation in both Urban and Rural areas by literate and illiterate women. The participation of illiterate women is higher than those of literate women in both rural and urban areas. The female participation in rural areas is still higher than in urban areas. The work participation rate of illiterate (54.08 percent) is higher than the work participation rate of literate (22.34 percent). This may be due to the lack of job opportunities for literate women.

## **2.5 Labor Force Participation**

Labour force participation not only gives women an opportunity to earn income, but also exposes them to the outside world and to authority structures and networks other than kin

based ones (Dixon-Mueller, 1993). In a developing country like India, however, where women's workforce participation is often motivated by poverty, these benefits are likely to be mediated by the social context of women's work and their total work burden (Bardhan, 1985; Desai and Jain, 1994). In addition, the empowering effects of employment for women are likely to depend on their occupation, the continuity of their workforce participation, and whether they earn and control income. It is generally expected that women who work at regular jobs, who earn money and perceive that their contribution is a substantial part of total family earnings are more likely to be empowered than other employed and unemployed women ( Youssef,1982; Sen, 1990; Mahamud and Johnston,1994). The National Population Policy adopted by the Government of India in 2000 (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2000) explicitly recognizes the importance of women's paid employment in achieving the goal of population stabilization in India and also specifies measures that will encourage paid employment and self-employment of women.

According to the National Family Health Survey-2, there exist significant state wise differences in the work patterns of ever-married women. The highest proportion of working women are in the northeastern states of Manipur(70 percent), Nagaland(64 percent), and Arunachal Pradesh( 60 percent), and the lowest are in Punjab (9 percent) and Haryana(13 percent). Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh are the only states where working for someone else is the least important form of employment among ever-married women. Self employment is the most important form of employment in Manipur (28 percent) and more than 10 percent of the women are self-employed in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland as well (table 2.9).<sup>8</sup>

**Table 2.9 Percent distribution of ever-married women age 15-49 by work status for Manipur and India,1998-99**

	Working In family Farm/business	Employed by Someone else	Self- employed	Not work in the past 12 months	missing	Tota l perc ent
India	14.4	19.7	5.0	60.8	0.0	100. 0

<sup>8</sup> NFHS-2, pp 63-64.

Manipur	22.9	18.6	28.4	30.1	0.0	100.0
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Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), 1998-99, p.65

Labour force participation rates by sector (rural/urban) and sex for Manipur for the year 1993-94 and 1999-2000 is given in table 2.10 below. Women labour force participation rate decreased during the intervening period for both Manipur and all India in both sectors though there is a slight increase in the male labour participation rate. The significance of the table is that for all periods the women labour participation rate for Manipur is higher than all India figure in the urban sector but lower in the rural sector. And when we look at the male-female gap we find that the gender gap is less pronounced in Manipur than the all India gap.

**Table 2.10 Labour force participation rates by sex and sector**

State	1993-94				1999-2000			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Manipur	48.3	31.1	45.6	23.0	50.6	25.7	47.8	22.5
All India	56.1	33.0	54.3	16.5	54.0	30.2	54.2	14.7

Source: Statistical Abstract Manipur, 2004. p.262.

## 2.6 Work Participation Rate

Manipur has a high female work participation rate as compared to other states of the country. In 1991, female work participation rate for Manipur was 38.96 percent and it stands in third position just below Dadra & Nagar Haveli (48.79) and Mizoram (43.52). Female work participation rate increased to 40.51 during the decade and stands at second position in 2001 next to Mizoram (47.63). In addition, women work participation rate is much greater than all India rate in the said period (refer to table 2.11). The next section discusses in detail the huge economic contribution of Manipur women, particularly in the area of aquaculture.

**Table 2.11. Female Work-Participation Rate**

State	1991	2001
Manipur	38.96	40.51
All India	22.27	25.68

Source: Census of India.

**2.7 Manipur women in Aquaculture**

Aquaculture is a major activity carried out in the state and women are most actively involved in it. Integrated aquaculture like fish culture in paddy fields, integration of animals with fish culture and horticulture are commonly practiced. Involvement of women in all stages of aquaculture is a common phenomenon observed throughout the state. Digging ponds along with men, preparing ponds for stocking fish seed, procurement of seed, routine pond management like fertilization, feeding, harvesting fish, marketing of harvested fish, have all been carried out by women along with men. Recognizing the interest of women in aquaculture and the hardship confronted by them, women's associations, such as the nupi ngayok marup (Women Fish Culture Group), have been established. Across the state there are now 696 such groups that undertake fish culture activity with the support of the department of Fisheries (DoF)<sup>9</sup>. The members of the organization are provided with fish seed from the DoF on a credit basis and the payment is made to the DoF after the harvest. The scheme which started in 1983 has been quite successful in introducing improved methods of fish culture.

Fish ponds are commonly seen in homes in the Manipur Valley. In places where there is no drinking water supply system, families maintain two ponds—one to meet family water necessities and another to culture fish. Table 2.12 shows in brief the importance of fisheries in Manipur.

**Table 2.12 Capture fisheries production in Manipur**

Year	Fish production (tones)
2003-2004	10.56
2002-2003	9.96

<sup>9</sup> DoF (State Department of Fisheries). 2001. Report on Fishery Resources of Manipur. Department of Fisheries, Imphal, b Manipur, India.

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2001-2002	9.90
2000-2001	9.63
1999-2000	9.30

Source: State Department of Fisheries (DoF),2005,Manipur,Imphal.

Unlike in other places where men play key roles in transportation of fish and women in marketing, in Manipur, women carry out both the activities efficiently. Although men do assist in large-scale operations, in general women independently undertake the smaller-scale activities, thereby allowing men to attend to other tasks. Fish marketing is generally undertaken by women and is an exclusive domain of women in the retail trade sector. There are markets that are known as Nupi Keithels or Ema Keithels, which means women's or mother's market, and only women are allowed to trade in these markets. In the central market of Imphal, there are about 300 women fish traders. All these women are allocated a regular trading place by the municipal Council on a rental basis. Women come to the market very early in the morning, after collecting fish from the farmers. As women are involved with fish trading during the major part of the day, they are hard pressed for time to accomplish other activities. Women face enormous problems in the transportation of fish in the early hours of the day. The most severe problem is frequent strikes by various groups which result in the loss of several days a month. With no trading on strike days, women face severe hardship. With no cold storage facilities in place, women are not able to preserve fish. They have also expressed the need for cold storage and ice production facilities. Improving the hygienic condition of the market is also essential.

### **2.7.1 Role in Fisheries**

The fisheries activities in Manipur are largely dominated by women. They play multiple roles; apart from the traditional role of managing household activities from cooking to taking care of the elders and children in the family, they are involved in outdoor-related tasks. The many water bodies in the valley provide a wealth of fishery resources and a variety of aquatic plants that are used as food by the people. In many ways, the role of

women in fisheries activities reflects the situation in Cambodia<sup>10</sup>. Women are involved in capture and culture fisheries, fish processing, fish marketing and fish transport. During the season when fish are available in abundance, women spend several nights working to preserve them in various forms for use during the off-season.

The most common sight one would see in Manipur is the active involvement of women in fishing using various types of fishing gear that can be easily operated by them. Chinese dip nets are most commonly used by women to collect fish from areas where these are reasonably abundant. Women are also involved in handpicking different types of snails. Different types of bamboo gears are also used for collecting fish and other animals from the water. Fishing in ponds using a scoop net or drag net is also common.

Although in Manipur women have been playing key roles in all fisheries activities, they constitute only 15.1 percent of the total staff strength in the DoF (table 2.13). Although women in this state enjoy better freedom as compared to the other states in India, their low level of literacy has not helped them to secure good jobs. As in the other parts of the country, it is the men who are encouraged to acquire higher qualifications, thereby securing a large percentage of government jobs. It is necessary that emphasis is laid not just on literacy, but in providing a higher level of education to women and recruiting them to ensure gender balance to carry out the work efficiently. As women are the most active participants in the fisheries sector, any effort to bring gender equity in the staff structure of the DoF is likely to benefit women and the fisheries sector.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> M.C Nandeeshha and H.Hanglomong, (Eds). 1997. Proceedings of the Seminar on Women in Fisheries in Indo-China Countries, 6-8 March 1996. Bati Fisheries Station-PADEK, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Pp 167.

<sup>11</sup> S.D. Gurumayum,G,A, Devi,M.C. Nandeeshha, 'Women's Participation in Fisheries Activities in Manipur Valley in India with Traditional Fish-based beliefs and Customs', worldFish Centre/ Global Symposium on Gender and Fisheries, 2005, Pp.157.



**Table 2.13 Details of Staff of Manipur State DoF.**

Staff category	male	female	total	Percentages of female
Technical	298	73	371	19.68
Administrative	58	63	121	52.07
Office Support	76	8	84	9.52
Field Support	217	30	247	12.14
Total	649	174	823	15.06

Source: DoF (2001), Manipur, Imphal.

Women contribute immensely to the Manipur economy and culture through fish. They acquire a special status in the society and much of the discrimination seen against women in other parts of the country is not seen here. However, many problems common to other areas do occur. In particular, education for a female child has not received priority. With low literacy levels, women tend to confine themselves to household activities and move on to field-based activities which do not require a high level of education.

From the above discussion we find that there is a huge proportion of female marginal worker in Manipur. However, when we look at activity wise proportions we find that they are evenly distributed even though the proportion of female in agriculture activity slightly outnumbers the male population. In the organized sector, even though there are less female employed in the organized sector as compared to their male counterpart, when one looks at the gender gap we find that the situation is much better as compared to other parts of India. In addition, the female work participation rate increased during the period 1991-2000 and is higher than the all India rate. Labour participation rate, though it has decreased marginally, is also more than the all India rate.

Another important point to be noted here is that the National Population Policy adopted by the Government of India in 2000 (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2000) explicitly recognizes the importance of women's paid employment in achieving the goal of population stabilization in India and also specifies measures that will encourage paid

employment and self-employment of women. We find that self employment is the most important form of employment in Manipur (28 percent). The point, as mention in the introductory section is that the institution of keithel(Women's Bazaar) and women's economic role has persisted and evolved. In other words, since their involvement in economic spheres persists, it may (may not) mean that the women of Manipur have a say in household decision making and enjoy high status.

Hence, though there is gender bias in terms of employment, women in Manipur fair better than women in other parts of the country. The picture will be clear as we go on to discuss some other variables viz. literacy, health. We shall take up the issue of literacy in the next chapter.

## 3

### GENDER AND EDUCATION

Education is an important aspect to demand one's right and thus it is essential for all. It is a key in making women self-reliant and giving them the confidence to pursue their goals and aspirations. It is a universally accepted phenomenon of development that female educational level have a high impact on health and social issues including sex ratios, crude birth rate, crude death rate, mean age of marriage and a couple of protection rate. Women's education also has a great impact on her ability to deliver children and on the child survival programmed. In other words, it is crucial to realize that good education is a key to social and economic development.

The first sine qua non of any achievement of elementary education is the literacy. In India, the most significant aspect of the data on literacy which strikes us is the male-female hiatus. Male-female gender differential continued almost under all censuses. This difference exists across all sectors and regions. However, there are some states and region that show less gender gap in literacy status. This difference might have to do with cultural perception of women which arise due to different cultural norms in the respective place. There are also differences based on religion. This affects the status of women in many ways as will be discuss subsequently for Manipur.

In this section, we shall discuss the male-female literacy status for Manipur and subsequently discuss the interrelationship between the level of education achieved and the level of empowerment by looking at the age of marriages, land possessed and household type.

#### **3.1 Trends of Literacy in Manipur**

Women in Manipur started receiving education since 1899. But the literacy rate of women was then very low. However, with the changing times, it has increased rapidly. The literacy rate has increased from 2.36 percent in 1951 to 59.70 percent in 2001. Male

literacy trends too, have shown improvements from 20.77 percent in 1951 to 77.87percent in 2001. The improvement in female literacy rate have been faster by 0.23percent The following table shows the literacy rate of male and female and the district wise literate population and literacy rate in Manipur.

**Table 3.1 Literacy Rate in Manipur, 1951-2001**

Year	Total population	Total percentage	Male	Female
1951	5,77,635	11.4	20.77	2.36
1961	7,80,037	30.4	45.12	15.93
1971	10,72,753	32.9	46.40	19.53
1981	14,20,953	41.3	53.29	29.06
1991	18,37,149	59.9	71.63	47.60
2001	2,388,634	68.87	77.87	59.70

Source: Census of India 2001.

**Table 3.2 District Wise Literate number of Population and Literacy Rate in Manipur, 2001 Census.**

District	No of literates person	Literacy percentage (excluding age group 0-6)			Literacy rate	
		Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Senapati	1,17,100	99,583	71,517	50.47	56.39	44.04
Tamenglong	56,269	33,640	22,629	58.46	67.04	49.11
Churachandpur	1,48,829	84,537	64,292	74.67	84.98	64.40
Chandel	61,345	35,469	25,876	57.38	66.12	48.57
Thoubal	2,08,464	1,23,372	84,092	67.90	80.50	55.34
Bishnupur	1,27,667	72,751	54,916	71.59	82.25	61.09
Imphal (W)	3,12,125	1,71,350	1,40,775	80.61	89.40	72.24
Imphal (E)	2,60,573	1,47,617	1,12,956	76.38	86.44	66.30
Ukhrul	83,284	47,625	35,659	68.96	75.40	61.91
Manipur	1,429,656	8,15,944	6,13,712	68.87	77.87	59.70

Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur 2002: Directorate of Economic & Statistics, Government of Manipur.

In 2001, the district wise rate of female literacy was highest is Imphal West. Imphal East registers second highest rate with 66.30 percent. The lowest rate of female literacy was Senapati district being 44.04 percent only.

The male –female combined literacy rate in 1981 was 41 percentage points which is higher than literacy percentage of all India in 1981(36.17 percent). In 2001, combined literacy rate increased to 69 percent again higher than literacy percentage of India (64. 84 percent). Further, female literacy rate of Manipur in both 1981 and 2001 which was 30 percent and 60 percent respectively which was greater than the percentage for all India which is 24.88 percent and 53.7 percent respectively.<sup>1</sup>

However, one can see that there exists gender gap in literacy in Manipur. In 1981 female literacy rate was 30 percent as compared to male literacy rate of 53 percent. In 2001, female literacy rate was 60 percent which is lower than male literacy rate of 78 percent. It looks like the gender gap did not close during the intervening period.

In addition, both in rural and urban areas this gender gap exist (table 3.3 and 3.4). Female literacy rate in rural areas is lower than female literacy rate in urban areas. At the same time male literacy rate in rural areas is also lower than the male literacy rate in urban area. Lower literacy rate in rural areas are primarily due to the more conservative nature of Indian village society. Lower male literacy rate in the villages are primarily due to the physical nature of work of agricultural labour and migration of literate men to towns. In Manipur hills which are a tribal area, the system of modern education came quite late. It became popular in the mid of 20<sup>th</sup> century with the advent of missionaries. Thereafter, with the introduction of Christianity and more awareness about the benefits of education and abandonment of old customs, people started to take up education. Some authors (Ansari, 1991) also found that conversion to Christianity has been a contributory factor in achieving higher literacy.<sup>2</sup>

In the table below, the period between 1981 and 2001 is compared. The gender gap in rural and urban exists. However, it is hard to conclude that the rural literacy gender gap is more pronounced than the urban areas. In addition, we can observe that the rise in female

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<sup>1</sup> Statistical Hand book of Manipur, 1981, p.48 and Statistical Abstract Manipur, 2004, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> S.A. Ansari, 'Manipur: Tribal Demography and Socio-Economic Development', 1991. p.164

literacy rate in both the sectors is much faster than that of male literacy rate in Manipur during the period 1981 to 2001 (table 3.5).

**Table 3.3 Population of Manipur by rural and urban and by sex (In number)**

Year	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1981	5,30,331	5,15,162	1,90,675	1,84,785	7,21,006	6,99,947
2001	8,75,271	8,42,657	2,86,681	2,89,287	11,61,952	11,31,944

Source: Census Publication of the Office of the Registrar General, India. (Statistical Abstract Manipur, 2004). p.3

**Table 3.4 Literate population of Manipur by sex and by sector (in number)**

Year	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1971	2,02,371	75,385	47,012	28,322	2,49,383	1,03,707
1981	2,61,621	1,29,103	1,22,610	74,284	3,84,231	2,03,387
1991	3,83,720	2,32,237	1,77,164	1,23,571	5,60,884	3,55,808
2001	5,33,720	3,80,244	2,20,428	1,76,824	7,53,466	5,57,068

Note:

1. Literacy rate is defined as the population of literates in the population aged 5 years and above in the census, 1971.
2. Literacy rate is defined as the population of literates in the population aged 7 years and above in the census 1981, 1991, 2001.

Source: Census Publication of the Office of the Registrar General, India. (Statistical Abstract Manipur, 2004). p.13.

**Table 3.5 Literate population of Manipur by sex and by sector. (In percent)**

Year	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1981	49	25	64	40
2001	60	45	76.8	61

Source: calculated with figures from "Census Publication of the Office of the Registrar General, India. (Statistical Abstract Manipur, 2004). p.13".

### 3.2 Enrolment and Dropout Rates

The next question that arises is to see whether the quality of education imparted is good enough and whether the situation of girls is improving. This can be analyzed through a study of the enrollment rates. Table 6 gives us an idea of number of students enrolled by type of institutions starting from 1990-91 to 1999-2000. Unfortunately, due to

unavailability of data we study the number of students enrolled for one decade starting from 1990-91 to 1999-2000 (table 3.6).

**Table 3.6 Number of Students by type of Institutions**

Year		1990-91	1992-93	1994-95	1997-98	1999-2000
Primary	Male	1,03,562	1,04,075	96,616	92,258	1,00,806
	Female	85,676	96,663	87,692	84,843	1,00,533
Upper Primary	Male	40,184	60,938	74,246	70,043	75,309
	Female	34,748	52,186	60,810	59,620	65,721
Higher Secondary	Male	71,451	1,00,527	1,04,742	1,19,654	1,20,314
	Female	57,811	84,060	89,031	1,01,373	1,06,732
School for Professional & Other education	Male	30,469	2,748#	3,024#	42,845	36,839
	Female	40,075	2,042#	2,281#	30,916	27,098
Colleges for General education	Male	22,427	18,720	26,020	24,249	14,926
	Female	16,697	14,332	19,290	20,600	11,949
Colleges for Professional and Other Education	Male	1,703	1,815	3,639	4,134	562*
	Female	1,307	1,424	2,134	2,674	565*
Universities	Male	696	697	732	1,096	454
	Female	576	582	527	774	428

# Due to cancellation of non-formal Education centre.

\*Including college for teachers training.

Note: Number of College Students relate to 26 Govt. Colleges

Source: 1. Directorate of Education (S), Govt. of Manipur

2. Directorate of Education (U), Govt. of Manipur

3. Manipur University, Canchipur.

The picture becomes clearer when we look at the percentage of female students to total student (table 3.7 and 3.8). There has been a definite increase in the percentage of female students during the decade though marginally in all classes at the school level, in higher studies and in professional studies other than general education. Even though gender gap exists, the gap is not very substantial.

**Table 3.7 Percentage of female students to total students**

Year		1990-1991	1992-1993	1994-1995	1997-1998	1999-2000
Primary	Percent of female students to total	45.27	48.15	47	47.9	49.9
Upper Primary	Percent of female students to total	46.37	46.13	45.02	45.98	46.6
Higher Secondary	Percent of female students to total	44.72	45.5	45.9	45.86	47
Colleges for General education	Percent of female students to total	42.67	43.36	42.57	45.9	44.46
Universities	Percent of female students to total	45.28	45.50	41.85	41.39	48.52

Source: calculated with figures from “: 1. Directorate of Education (S), Govt. of Manipur  
2. Directorate of Education (U), Govt. of Manipur  
3. Manipur University, Canchipur.

**Table 3.8 Percent of female students to total students in professional and other education**

Year		1990-91	1992-93	1994-95	1997-98	1999-2000
School for Professional & Other education	Percent of female students to total	56.8	42.6#	42.99#	41.91	42.38
Colleges for Professional and Other Education	Percent of female students to total	43.42	43.96	36.96	39.27	50.13*

# Due to cancellation of non-formal Education centre.

\*Including college for teachers training.

Source: calculated with figures from “: 1. Directorate of Education (S), Govt. of Manipur  
2. Directorate of Education (U), Govt. of Manipur  
3. Manipur University, Canchipur.



Further, state-wise enrolment rates for the year 1998-99 also show that girls enrolment in primary (84.11 for girls and 100.17 for boys) and upper primary level (68.47 for girls and 77.31 for boys) is higher in Manipur than all India figures which is 82.85 for girls and 100.86 for boys and 49.08 for girls and 65.27 for boys respectively<sup>3</sup>.

The gross drop out rate of girls is 47.02 and for boys 45.36 in classes I-VIII for the year 1998-99 in Manipur compared to all India rate which is 56.82 for girls and 54.40 for boys<sup>4</sup>. The important thing that emerges in this context is that there is not much difference in the drop out rates between girls and boys. In other words, one can assume that there is no preferential treatment or bias with regard to girl child or boy child in terms of education in Manipur.

There are policies on gender and education for the disadvantaged groups of children. Article 95 Directive Principles of state policy specified that the state shall provide early childhood care and education to all children until they reach the age of 6 years. Moreover, Article 21 of the Indian constitution stated that the state should provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group 6-14 years. Besides, there are national policies on education of girls to be able to achieve universal elementary education. Further, the national policy for empowerment of women, 2001 gives special attention to the need for provision of facilities to reduce gender, caste, class disparity. In spite of the policy taken up by the Government of India and various organizations for the improvement of education, many young girls and women are still left behind and do not access proper education.

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<sup>3</sup> Annual Report, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education, Government of India, New Delhi, 1998-99

<sup>4</sup> Annual Report 1999-2000, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education, Government of India, New Delhi, 2000.

**Table 3.9 Enrollments According to Faculty and Stage, 2000-2001. Gross Enrollment in Schools/ College by Standard, 2000-2001**

Class I-XII	Total	Girls	Boys
Total	4,87,080	2,31,860	2,55,220
I-V	2,85,580	1,37,340	1,48,240
VI-VIII	1,21,200	56,940	64,260
IX-X	64,680	30,710	33,970
XI-XII	15,620	6,870	8,750

General Education	Total	Girls	Boys
	32,197	14,594	17,603
Arts	18,218	9,051	9,167
Science	12,261	4,971	7,290
Commerce	1,718	572	1,146
Professional education	2,564	864	1700
Engineering/Technical	630	127	503
Education	416	261	155
Medical	142	43	99
Agriculture	212	91	121
Veterinary Science	80	27	53
Law	930	278	117
Others	152	37	117

Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur 2002: Directorate of Economic & Statistics, Government of Manipur.

The above table 3.9 shows that the enrollment of boys exceeded girls in all the faculties and stages. The overall enrollment of boys was 274523 and girls 247318. The difference between boys and girls enrollment in all the faculties and stages were 27205.

As reported in a research paper 'Beyond Practical Gender Needs: Women in Manipur'<sup>5</sup>-A focus group discussion had been organized in the main city of Imphal where the participants were students, housewife and unmarried women. The discussions reveals that some of the girls had to leave schools or colleges due to death of their parents, failure in the examination, engaged in domestic works, sickness of parents, irregular attendance, having many brothers and sisters. When the father of a family expired, the son or daughter attending school had to leave school, but when a mother died, generally the daughter had to dropout to look after the household work of the family. Normally, if there were many children, the eldest daughter had to look after the younger ones to enable their parents to be free to work. Thus irregular attendance led them to dropouts.

In addition, the same research paper reports that in another focus group discussion held in Churachandpur main town in the first week of February 2005, where participants were Pastors, leaders of churchwomen ministry, leaders of women community based organizations, and Government Schools Headmasters, some reasons for the lack of women education were pointed out. This included-the customary laws which prevent women from inheritance rights which made many parents to prefer sons' education for family and social security and girl from a tender age are burdened with household work and thus could devote less time in studies. The other main reasons were poverty and ignorance of parents. Moreover, it was also reported that some male participants were of the opinion that boys are more intelligent and better in studies than girls. Another reason mentioned was the lack of educational infrastructure in the state especially in the interior areas largely due to corruption in all fields and the problem of insurgency, which debarred all government developmental works. The participants are of the opinion that providing higher education for girl's means helping others because daughters get married and serve their husband's family. Whereas sons are the owner of family property and they are responsible to look after their parents.

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<sup>5</sup> Rural Women Upliftment Society Sielmat, Box-3, Churachandpur, Manipur, 'Beyond Practical Gender Needs: Women in Manipur', 2005. p. 18.

The educational system in the hill areas of Manipur is often reflected in the daily newspapers. On 29th November 2004, one of the popular Daily papers, “The Sangai Express” has stated that UJB Primary School at Phuoibi village in Senapati district has turned into a Chicken Coop! This kind of school condition can be seen in many other places across the state. This is because teachers consider postings in the hill district as a punishment. More over, most of the time teachers who are posted in the hill areas just do not want to go to their post in particularly in the interior parts. Awareness of gender and women’s education could go a long way in reducing gender disparity in education in the rural areas.

### 3.3 Mass Media

It is said that in a country like India where a large majority of women are illiterate or have little formal education, informal channels such as the mass media can play an important role in bringing about modernization. Media exposure varies even more widely by education and standard of living. In NFHS-2<sup>6</sup> it was clearly stated that more than three-quarters of women are regularly exposed to at least one form of media in Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab in the north, Manipur, Mizoram and Sikkim in the northeast, Goa in the west, and all four of the southern states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Further, during the six and one-half years between NFHS-1 and NFHS-2, every state registered an increase in the proportion of women who watch television, with an increase of 20 percentage points or more in Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Kerala, and Punjab. Regular exposure to radio increased in all the northeastern states and slightly in Himachal Pradesh, but declined elsewhere. The pattern of exposure to each of the different forms of media for Manipur and all India figures for the year 1998-99 is reproduced in the table 3.10 below.

**Table 3.10 Exposure to Mass Media (1998-99)**

Exposure to Mass Media					
	Reads a newspaper or magazine at	Watches Television at least once a week	Listen to the Radio at least Once a	Visits the cinema/theatre at least once	Not Regularly exposed to

<sup>6</sup> National Family Health Survey-2, 1998-99, p. 59.

	least once a week		week	a month	any media
India	20.8	45.7	36.5	10.6	40.3
Manipur	39.3	61.2	72.6	13.0	16.2

Note: the figure is percentage of ever-married women age 15-49, 1998-99

Source: National Family Health Survey-2, 1998-99, p.60.

In addition to the above finding one can see from table 3.10 that Manipur women have more exposure to each of the different form of media in comparison with all India figure. It is said that education, work participation and exposure to mass media are some of the means by which women gain status and autonomy, both of which are important aspects of their empowerment. In other words, since women in Manipur have more exposure to mass media, one might infer that they too must be enjoying high status and autonomy and hence empowered.

### 3.4 Age at First Marriages

Table 3.11 presents information on age at first marriages for women age 25-49 by state. There are considerable differences across states in the age at first marriage of women. About half of the women age 25-45 married before age 15 in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan, and about four-fifths of women in these states marry before reaching the legal minimum age at marriage of 18 years. By contrast, the median age at first marriage is 22-23 years in Manipur, Goa, and Mizoram, and 20 years in Kerala, Nagaland, Punjab, and Sikkim. Notably, however, in Kerala, Nagaland, Punjab, and Manipur at least one out of five women was already married by age 18<sup>7</sup>.

**Table 3.11 Age at first marriage for Manipur and India, 1998-99**

	Percentage ever married by exact age.						Median age at first marriage	Median age at first cohabitation with husband
	13	15	18	20	22	25		
India	15.4	33.3	64.6	79.4	87.9	93.7	16.4	17.0
Manipur	0.3	3.1	20.6	37.8	51.6	67.2	21.7	21.8

Source: NFHS-2, 1998-99, p.57.

<sup>7</sup> NFHS-2, 1998-99, pp. 56-57.

### **3.5 Level of Education and Land Possessed**

Land is rarely in women's names. Only in the case of widows, usually with no sons, is it listed under her name, and she can only rarely, with great difficulty, retain it in her name. This, despite the fact that women have also devoted their entire lives to cultivating and nurturing this land. Wherever collective tribal lands are being privatized women are losing status because they are being registered under the man's name.

Women continue to be the primary producers, but the policies of consolidating land and industrializing agriculture have left women bereft of land resources and control over food production. Indigenous women and those living in forests and mountain areas are losing the rights and concessions over forestland. This has lowered women's status and led to homelessness, increased overall violence against women and trafficking. This vulnerability is further aggravated by the impact of globalization that has led to greater land scarcity further impacting women's livelihood rights.<sup>8</sup>

Without equal rights to land and housing, women do not have basic food security nor do they have assets necessary for their development. This then results in the lack of health, food, education, and sufficient employment.

Similarly, women without access to land or housing are extremely vulnerable to domestic violence. Many women in these situations are made homeless and landless, in addition to the physical and mental trauma they and their children face. Where women have land or a house it is found that their risk of domestic violence is significantly reduced. Access to land is thus important for women both as economic and physical security.

Does female educational attainment make a difference in possession of land? Or the more appropriate question to ask in our case is to see whether there is a disparity in possession of land between male and female in Manipur. Table 3.12 gives us the distribution of persons aged 7 and above by level of education, separately by sex and land possessed, for rural Manipur.

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<sup>8</sup> A submission for the commission on status woman (Beijing+10), march 2005. 'Women's equal rights to land, livelihood and adequate housing.'

What one finds in the case of Manipur is that first there is no huge gender differences in land possessed both in size and for different level of education. Secondly, as expected, we see an increase in possession of land with an attainment of higher level of education. This is true for both genders. This suggests that there is no differential treatment for male and female in Manipur substantiating our argument about the unique status of Manipur women.

**Table 3.12 Per 1000 distribution of persons aged 7 & above by level of education, separately by sex and land possessed, 1999-2000. Manipur (Rural)**

Size Class of land possessed	Not literate	literate	Literate Below primary	primary	middle	Second-dary	Higher Second-dary	Graduate & above	Estd. No of persons	No. of Sample persons
<b>Male</b>										
<0.01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0.01-0.40	231	769	144	136	222	156	60	52	2066	596
0.41-1.00	275	725	131	145	170	150	89	40	1807	562
1.01-2.00	249	751	96	247	192	101	67	48	1172	369
2.01-4.00	266	734	141	144	163	137	96	52	390	176
4.01+	202	798	0	172	39	364	83	141	39	33
All classes	251	749	128	163	193	143	73	48	5523	1748
<b>Female</b>										
<0.01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0.01-0.40	353	647	134	145	196	91	50	31	2059	589
0.41-1.00	391	609	146	167	120	115	48	13	1699	532
1.01-2.00	431	569	158	125	149	73	34	31	1030	338
2.01-4.00	356	644	159	150	135	102	51	48	319	147
4.01+	228	772	0	151	300	148	77	96	44	30
All classes	381	619	144	148	157	96	46	27	5196	1646

Source: NSS Report No.473, Sept 2001: Literacy and Levels of Education in India, 1999-2000. P. A-141.

### 3.6 Level of Education and Household Type

Like in the case of land possessed, one can see from the table below that there is no significant gender difference in terms of level of education and household type in Manipur as compared to other parts of India. Males and females are evenly distributed in different category of household type suggesting that there is no barrier created for women whatsoever their level of education. For both men and women table 3.13, seems to indicate there is no discrimination against women.

**Table 3.13 Per 1000 distribution of persons aged 7 & above by level of education, separately by sex and household type, 1999-2000. Manipur (Rural)**

Household Type	Not literate	literate	Literate Below primary	primary	middle	Second-dary	Higher Second-dary	Graduate & above	Estd. No of persons	No. of Sample persons
<b>Male</b>										
Self employed in non-agr.	129	871	162	162	259	181	63	44	506	176
Agricultural labour	392	608	152	116	126	139	49	26	334	90
Other labour	235	765	191	89	418	67	0	0	158	39
Self employed in agr.	314	686	114	177	182	134	56	24	3294	1063
Others	92	908	140	142	188	167	142	130	1209	374
Not recorded	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>All</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>5523</b>	<b>1748</b>
<b>Female</b>										
Self employed in non-agr.	266	734	174	205	154	100	37	63	461	164
Agricultural labour	505	495	174	93	148	38	22	21	310	85
Other labour	277	723	257	145	264	57	0	0	183	44
Self employed in agr.	433	567	121	158	152	96	30	9	3065	977
Others	275	725	166	111	158	117	105	68	1175	375



Not recorded	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
All	381	619	144	148	157	96	46	27	5196	1646

Source: NSS Report No.473, Sept 2001: Literacy and Levels of Education in India, 1999-2000. P.A-73.

Similarly, in urban areas there is no huge gender difference for the level of education and household type. When we look at the self employed and casual labour category, we find that for males and females, self employed and casual household type decrease with increase in level of education. And for regular wage/salary earning household type there is an increased for both gender with increased in the level of education (table 3.14).

**Table 3.14 Per 1000 distribution of persons aged 7 & above by level of education, separately by sex and household type, 1999-2000. Manipur (Urban)**

Household Type	Not literate	literate	Literate Below primary	primary	middle	Second-dary	Higher Second-dary	Graduate & above	Estd. No of persons	No. of Sample persons
<b>Male</b>										
Self employed	94	906	148	156	190	197	104	111	782	663
Regular Wage/salary earning	25	975	60	98	158	224	154	281	785	649
Casual labour	159	841	262	182	154	123	109	9	43	52
Others	67	933	139	63	173	252	134	172	141	153
Not recorded	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
All	65	935	110	123	172	210	130	189	1763	1528
<b>Female</b>										
Self employed	229	771	193	120	156	143	88	71	725	628
Regular wage/salary earning	140	860	114	97	191	125	142	191	864	702
Casual labour	283	717	276	139	195	32	73	2	51	58
Others	239	761	106	44	175	185	200	51	160	164
Not recorded	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
All	190	810	149	103	175	135	124	125	1808	1561

Source: NSS Report No.473, Sept 2001: Literacy and Levels of Education in India, 1999-2000.P.A-85.

From the above discussion one can conclude that as in other parts of India there exist gender gaps in terms of education in Manipur as well. However, one can also see that this gender gap is less pronounced than in other parts of India. This is further supported when we look at the access of mass media by women of Manipur. In addition, we also see that women of Manipur performed better when we look at the age at first marriages. Besides, we also see that there is not much of a gender gap as compared to the rest of India in terms of level of education possesses and land holding as well as in terms of level of education and household type. Of course it is true that much more need to be done to achieve gender equality in Manipur.

Some of the suggestions for the improvement of educations are, to up root the insurgent groups, sincerity and hard work with commitment to bring out reforms in the society. A reform among the educated women is a must to bring about change in the society. The women organizations should work together to improve the present status of women. The widespread of drugs need to be checked. Communities in the interior areas should raise their voices for the improvement of schools in their respective localities and villages. Lobbying and advocacy is the need of the hour. Health and social issues including sex ratios, crude birth rate, and crude death rate is taken up in the next chapter.

## 4

### GENDER AND HEALTH

So far we have discussed employment and educational achievement on gender basis in Manipur. From those chapters we inferred that the results were mixed in the case of Manipur and hence one cannot arrive at a conclusive solution. As such we need to look at some more indicators that will help us substantiate our result and to arrive at something concrete. It was mentioned in the previous chapter that female educational level has a high impact on health and social issues including sex ratios, crude birth rate, crude death rate, mean age of marriage. In the case of Manipur female educational level fair better as compared to all India level. However, we also saw that educational gender disparity exist in Manipur though less pronounced than most of the other states of India.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease as per the definition given by WHO. The first thing to start with in studying the health of women would be to look at their population growth. As far as all India is concerned there has been a slight increase in the total female population of the country, from 407.1 million in 1991 to 495.7 million in 2001. But even then the demographic imbalances continue to exist. The figure for Manipur for the period 1981 to 2001 is given in table 4.1. From the table one can see that there is an absolute increase in population of both male and female and even though demographic imbalances continue to exist the differences are less pronounced (table 4.2). Female population has decreased by one percent from 49 percent in 1981 to 48 percent in 1991 but increased to 49 percent again in 2001.

**Table 4.1 Population of Manipur by sex (in Number)**

Year	Male	Female	Total
1981	7,21,006	6,99,947	14,20,953
1991	9,38,359	8,98,790	18,37,149
2001	11,61,952	11,31,944	22,93,896

Source: Census Publications of the Office of the Registrar General, India.

**Table 4.2 Population of Manipur by sex (percent)**

Year	Male	Female
1981	50.74	49.25
1991	51.07	48.92
2001	50.65	49.34

Source: calculated with figures from "Census Publications of the Office of the Registrar General, India".

#### **4.1 Sex Ratio**

The sex composition of the human population is one of the basic demographic characteristics which have vital ramifications for the socio-cultural fabric of a society. It is an important social indicator to measure the extent of prevailing equality between males and females in a society at a given point of time. It is mainly the outcome of the interplay of sex differentials in mortality, sex-selective migration, sex ratio at birth, and at times the sex differential in population enumeration.<sup>1</sup>

Many studies expressed serious concern over the decline in the sex ratio in India as it indicates the woman's status. The sex ratio has declined in Manipur since 1971 but not much attempt has been made to examine this declining trend. Although there has been a little improvement from 958 in 1991 to 978 in 2001, the sex-ratio is still a matter of concern. Despite the death of many youths (male) due to armed conflict and drugs, the number of males is even more than the females. The table (4.3 and 4.4) below shows the trend in sex ratio and district wise sex ratio: -

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<sup>1</sup> R.L. Bhat and Namita Sharma, 'Missing Girls: Evidence from Some North Indian States', Indian Journal of Gender Studies, Vol. 13, No. 3, Sep-Dec 2006, p.353.

**Table 4.3 Sex ratio and Rate of Change in the Sex Ratio in India and Manipur  
(1901-2001)**

Year	Sex Ratio		Rate of Change in %	
	India	Manipur	India	Manipur
1901	972	1037		
1911	964	1029	-0.82	-0.77
1921	955	1041	-0.93	-0.17
1931	950	1065	-0.52	+2.31
1941	945	1055	-0.53	-0.94
1951	946	1036	+0.11	-1.80
1961	941	1015	-0.53	-2.03
1971	930	980	-1.17	-3.45
1981	934	971	+0.43	-0.92
1991	927	958	-0.75	-1.34
2001	933	978	-	-

Source: reproduce from Rural Women Upliftment Society, 'Beyond Practical Gender Needs: Women in Manipur', 2005. p.8.

**Table 4.4 District Wise Sex Ratio in Manipur (1961-2001)**

District	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Senapati	1002	950	929	942	2001
Tamenglong	1061	1016	975	935	928
Churachandpur	1006	976	929	931	922
Chandel	1008	1008	935	913	923
Imphal east	-	-	-	-	1007
Imphal west	-	-	-	-	992
Bishnupur	-	-	-	-	925
Ukhul	1033	969	917	884	943
State	1015	980	971	958	978

Source: reproduce from Rural Women Upliftment Society, 'Beyond Practical Gender Needs: Women in Manipur', 2005. p.8.

According to research paper on 'Beyond Practical Gender Needs: Women in Manipur'<sup>2</sup> (2004), discussion with health workers both in formal and informal sectors have indicated reasons for the decline of sex ratio- migration due to armed conflict, female selective termination of pregnancy, sex ratio at birth and death, progressive under count of women and multiple counting of males. It further reports that a women NGO worker based in Imphal, dealing with Health Issue reveal that many new machines has been set up in the city private clinics which are operated by untrained persons. Many women in the capital city and even from other districts come and aborted female child there. Rural poor women do not received such kind of scanning facilities, but the practice of abortion is done by lady mystic called Maibi. In many cases method of Maibi does not work and the patient faced constant bleeding and even leads to death.

It is a widely known fact that women live longer than men. At the same time, it is also a fact that numerically women are less than men (refer table 4.5, number of death registered in Manipur). The sex ratio in India during the last 40-odd years has been hovering around 930. It had always remained unfavorable for females. During the census decade 1991-2001 it has improved slightly from 927 to 933. The fact that the female population during the last decade has increased slightly makes the phenomenon of declining child sex ratio a problem that merits serious analysis and discussion. Though the female population growth rate improved during the last decade viz. 1.97 percent as compared to 1.90 percent growth rate of male population (Mospic.nic.in 2002)<sup>3</sup>, the disturbing fact about India is that the child sex ratio in the age group 0 to 6 has been persistently declining during the last 50-odd years, with the sharpest decline reported during the 1991-2001 census decade.

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<sup>2</sup> Rural Women Upliftment Society, Sielmat, Churachandpur, Manipur, 2005 "Beyond Practical Gender Needs: Women in Manipur". Commissioned by: Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi.

<sup>3</sup> Mospic.nic.in 2002.

**Table 4.5 Number of Registered Death in Manipur classified by sex in Rural and Urban areas**

Year	Number of Registered Death			
	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1991	142	75	367	335
1992	400	170	636	307
1993	578	201	716	330
1994	1161	486	1095	469
1995	676	216	796	328
1996	759	217	1014	419
1997	-	-	-	-
1998	661	188	910	412
1999	838	488	1917	1882
2000	620	165	1804	738
2001	840	239	1686	617

- Not available

Source: Directorate of Health Services, Manipur

Table 4.6 below shows the sex ratio at birth for Manipur from 1991 to 2000. It can be seen from the table that Manipur also has not performed well in terms of sex ratio with exception of two years namely 1993 and 1998 where sex ratio at birth was 976 and 969 respectively. However, in 2001 the sex-ratio increased to 978.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> India, Registrar General and Census Commissioner. (2001). Provisional Population Totals: Paper 1 of 2001. New Delhi. P. 143.

**Table 4.6 Sex ratio Registered at birth in Manipur (Female per 1000 males)**

Year	Rural	Urban	Total
1991	925	911	914
1992	903	815	851
1993	941	1000	976
1994	924	784	850
1995	840	873	856
1996	868	916	893
1997	-	-	-
1998	1050	875	969
1999	959	853	888
2000	793	972	914

- not available

Source: Directorate of Health services, Manipur

#### 4.2 Infant Mortality Rate

However, when we look at infant deaths registered by age and sex in Manipur for the year 2000 (table 4.7) what we find is that for each different category the number of female infant death is less than that of male.

**Table 4.7 Infant deaths registered by age and sex in Manipur, 2000**

Age	Male	Female	Total
Under one week	25	23	48
One week to one month	27	24	51
One month but below three months	20	17	37
Three months but below six months	22	20	42
Six months but Below twelve months	28	21	49
Total	122	105	227

Source: Office of the Chief Registrar of Births and Deaths, Directorate of Health Services, Manipur.



The infant mortality rate is the single most important indicator illustrating the level of human development of a nation or State. IMR below 10 indicates a high level of development. Kerala is the only state in India with an IMR of 14. The States/UTs which are not too far behind are Mizoram, Goa, Pondicherry, Manipur and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Table 4.8 below gives us infant mortality rates of both male and female in Manipur since 1961 to 2003. It is interesting to see that in addition to having low infant mortality rate, the female infant mortality is lower than that of male for the year 2002 and 2003. The table seems to re-impose our proposition that there is no male-female bias in Manipur.

**Table 4.8 Infant Mortality Rate**

Years	Male	Female	Persons
1961	31	33	32
2002	13	7	10
2003	18	13	16

Source: Economic Survey, 2005-2006. P. S-115.

The Infant Mortality Rate by sex and rural-urban status for the year 1999 is given for Manipur in table 4.9. Though the table is only for one year what one find is that in rural areas there is no bias against the girl child. In fact, we observed a higher male infant mortality rate than female infant mortality rate. However, in the urban areas we see a significant diversion with male infant mortality rate as low as 9.6 as compared to female mortality rate of 25.7. Urban areas normally have a higher standard of living. Does this mean that there is female discrimination in Manipur as they achieved higher standard of living?

**Table 4.9 Estimated Infant Mortality Rate by Sex and Rural-Urban Status, 1999**

	Combined		Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Manipur	22.1	23.7	25.8	23.1	9.6	25.7
India	69.8	70.8	75.6	75.2	47.4	39.7

Source: India, Registrar General. (2001). Sample Registration System Bulletin, April 2001. New Delhi. P.2.

It is not necessarily the case that there is female discrimination in Manipur once people achieve a higher standard of living. From table 4.10 and 4.11 one can see that for different MPCE (Monthly Per Capita Expenditure) class we observe no difference in terms of preferences for male and female, both adult and children. One can also look at the sex-ratio for different MPCE class. We find that the sex-ratio is evenly distributed over different MPCE class. This is true both in rural areas and urban areas.

**Table 4.10 Per 1000 break-up of households and persons by MPCE class and number per 1000 households of adults and children by sex in different MPCE classes and sex-ratio for Manipur (Rural)**

MPCE class (Rs)	no. Per 1000 of hhs	no. per 1000 of persons	No. per 1000 households of				Sex Ratio*
			adults		Children		
			male	female	male	female	
0-235	0	0	1000	2000	1000	1000	1500
235-270	0	0	1000	1000	4000	1000	400
270-320	2	2	1541	1246	1123	838	782
320-365	26	27	1798	2142	451	912	1358
365-410	36	41	1929	1928	1046	850	934
410-455	74	79	1737	1644	1009	1071	989
455-510	131	147	1902	2059	907	861	1040
510-580	227	241	1965	1968	738	705	989
580-690	238	231	1867	1722	738	592	888
690-890	173	155	1738	1727	585	487	953
890-1155	65	54	1700	1750	324	453	1089
1155 & more	27	21	1498	1361	490	622	997

\*number of female per 1000 males

Source: NSS Report No. 508: Level and Pattern of Consumer Expenditure, 2004-05, p. A-6.

**Table 4.11 Per 1000 break-up of households and persons by MPCE class and number per 1000 households of adults and children by sex in different MPCE classes and sex-ratio for Manipur (Urban)**

MPCE class (Rs)	no. Per 1000 of hhs	no. per 1000 of persons	No. per 1000 households of				Sex Ratio*
			adults		Children		
			male	female	male	female	
0-335	1	1	2277	1599	643	723	795
335-395	12	12	2010	1719	703	583	849
395-485	82	99	1906	2015	948	959	1042
485-580	189	193	1651	1665	806	789	999

580-675	186	197	1974	1917	616	593	969
675-790	182	190	1838	1750	845	575	867
790-930	150	140	1448	1676	822	531	972
930-1100	117	105	1623	1801	484	415	1052
1100-1380	42	36	1542	1368	615	621	922
1380-1880	35	22	966	1139	570	426	1018
1885-2540	4	3	1252	1008	0	756	1409
2540& more	0	1	3143	3071	1714	1357	912

\*number of female per 1000 males

Source: NSS Report No. 508: Level and Pattern of Consumer Expenditure, 2004-05, p. A-18.

### 4.3 Nutrition

The wealth of a nation is its citizens. Optimal growth and development of the human resources of a nation is possible only when adequate nutrition is available for physical and mental growth during years of childhood and adolescence. Adequate nutrition is also essential to have a healthy productive working population. Adequate nutrition of children and adults is increasingly being seen as a basic human right.

Keeping in mind of the objective of our study table 4.12 presents the nutritional status of preschool children in Manipur for the year 1998. It can be seen from the table that greater percentage of boys have a weight for age as compared to girls in both rural and urban areas. However, there is greater percentage of girls with mild and moderate weight for age. But when we look at the case of under nutrition, boys outnumbered girls. Thus, table 12 gives us a mixed picture with no clear preferences either for boys or girls. Contrary to other findings in other part of India, in the North- Eastern region girl child have a nutritional edge over the boys.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 4.12 Distribution of Nutritional Status of Children (1-5years) according to Weight-for-Age, (in percentage), (Gomez Classification), 1998. Manipur**

	Rural		Urban	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Normal	31.2	28.3	29.1	24.4
Mild	38.8	45.0	33.7	36.7
Moderate	25.6	23.3	27.4	31.1
Severe	4.5	3.4	9.3	7.8

Source: India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Women and Child Development. Food and Nutrition Board. (1998). India Nutrition Profile. New Delhi. p.54.

<sup>5</sup> G. Rama Rao, L. Ladusingh and Rajkumar Pritamjit, ' Nutritional Status of Children in North-East India ', Asia-Pacific Population Journal, Vol. 19, No. 3, Sept 2004.

Table 4.13 also shows us the distribution of nutritional status of children (5-18 years) for the period 1998. Just like in the case of pre-school children we get a mixed picture. Though the percentage of boys outnumbered that of the girls in the normal nutrition category, in the other categories (mild and moderate) girls' percentage of girls were higher than that of boys. In the case of severe under nourished the percentage of boys were higher than that of girls though marginally except in the case of rural areas in the 5-12 age group.

**Table 4.13 Distribution of Nutritional Status of Children (5-18 years) According to Weight-for-Age, (in percentage), (Gomez Classification), 1998 Manipur**

	Normal		Mild	Moderate		Severe		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
5-12 years								
Rural	39.77	34.25	39.20	42.67	18.74	18.63	2.30	4.45
Urban	33.07	20.51	44.88	50.64	19.69	27.56	2.36	1.28
12-18 years								
Rural	45.25	45.10	37.75	38.94	15.00	14.32	2.00	1.63
Urban	39.42	35.24	50.00	52.38	10.58	12.38	0.00	0.00

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Department of Women and Child Development. The Indian Child: A Profile 2002, p.107.

#### **4.4 HIV/AIDS Virus- a serious concern in Manipur.**

The first case of HIV/AIDS in Manipur was detected in September 1986<sup>6</sup>. At that time people did not pay much concern about this disease. But in the span of 18 years the numbers of HIV positive men and women are about 18, 8000. Alarmingly a large number of women have been exposed to the deadly HIV virus through their injecting drug user husbands. Now, while the rate of transmission of HIV/AIDS through the Intravenous Drug Users has been reduced the rate of mother to child transmission is on the increase.

<sup>6</sup> Rural Women Upliftment Society, Sielmat, Churachandpur, Manipur, 2005 "Beyond Practical Gender Needs: Women in Manipur". Commissioned by: Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi.

According to AIDS Control Society, Manipur (MACS) the rate of HIV positive among the IDUS (Injecting Drug Users) decreased from 76 percent in 1997 to 21 percent in 2004 while the rate of mother to child transmissions rose from 0.8 percent in 1994 to 1.66 percent in 2004. Women became aware of their status only after their HIV positive husband was detected and sometimes after the death of their husbands. Further, the impact of the virus is more severely felt by the women from poor families. For their treatment the decision are made by their husband or other family members. In most cases, treatment is delayed partly due to priority given to the needs of the husband and the child because the financial cost of treatment and care may be out of their reach. Above all, systematic gender-based discrimination inhibits the ability of women and girls to protect them from HIV infection.

**Table 4.14 Age-Sex Proportion of HIV Positive Cases (Sero-Surveillance)**

Age Group	Males	Females	Total	% of Total Positive
0-19 Years	347	266	613	4.43
11-20 Years	802	205	1007	7.27
21-30 Years	5441	1683	7124	51.43
31-40 Years	3236	953	4189	30.24
41 & Above	668	251	919	6.663

Source: Manipur Aids Control Society, 2004

**Table 4.15 Break-up of HIV Positive Cases by Risk Category: (Sero-Surveillance)**

Risk Category	HIV Positives	% out of total HIV Positive
Injecting Drug Users (Ides)	7299	52.69
Blood Donors	218	1.57
Blood Recipients	133	0.96
Antenatal Mothers	88	20.64
STD Clinic Attendance	2843	2.52

Suspected ARC/AIDS	381	2.75
Relative of AIDS patients	282	2.04
Prenatal Transmission	316	2.28
Others	2,292	16.55
Total	13,852	100.00

Source: Manipur Aids Control Society, 2004

#### **4.5 Reproductive Health Problems- both Gynecological and Obstetric**

Gynecological and obstetric have been identified as one of the common health problem experiences by rural women and young girls in Manipur. According to a report in ‘Rural Women Upliftment society, Manipur, 2005<sup>7</sup>,’ 90 percent of the married women have reported that they have gynecological problems. Some of the reasons are heavy workload, sexual harassment by their husbands, hospitals and dispensaries far away, feeling of shyness to complaint about owns health even to their husband. Above all, health facilities at the community level are poorly equipped to deal with gynecological and obstetric problems and the lack of female doctors specializing in this field. In the same report, a local churchwomen leader during a meeting at Saikot said “Many women are reluctant to approach male doctors but they are the only available doctors here. We want a female doctor because we are more comfortable with our own sex especially for this kind of health problem”. Non-availability of women hospitals, lack of female doctor specialist in this field and other social stigma is a serious constraint in Manipur.

#### **4.6 Safe Child-Bearing- access to appropriate Health Care Services**

Safe motherhood is still a dream for most women particularly in rural areas. Few women have access to arterial care. As a result, high-risk cases go undetected, anemia is widespread, and knowledge of health and nutrition needs during pregnancy and the post-

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<sup>7</sup> Rural Women Upliftment Society, Sielmat, Churachandpur, Manipur,2005“Beyond Practical Gender Needs: Women in Manipur”. Commissioned by: Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi.

natal period are poorly understood. Access to safe delivery is equally poor: 3 out of 4 rural women in Manipur continue to deliver with the help of untrained attendants in unhygienic conditions. As per records of Manipur Health Directorates<sup>8</sup>, the prevalence of anemia among woman in 1999-2000 was 21.7 mild, 6.3 moderate and 0.8 severe. It was also point out that majority of the rural women who delivered their child at home with the help of a local midwife do not necessarily approach doctors or hospitals largely because of inadequate health care services in the village, lack of infrastructure in the health center, shortage of medicines, non-availability of doctors and nurses in time of needs, lack of health awareness.

They clean themselves, wash clothes and started collection of firewood, water, loin looming soon after giving childbirth for fear of losing favors from in-laws and other social norms. This is because choice of a bride is based on the good health of the mother, which is basically measured in times of delivery. In some of the rural areas there is a belief that a woman who lost her baby at the time of delivery is considered unsafe for others and so people especially pregnant women should not go near by her. This kind of belief and practices are openly diminished due to Christianity and modern education but the stigma is still prevalent. However, the biggest hindrance seems to be lack of awareness among the people of Manipur<sup>9</sup>.

#### **4.7 Malaria and Tuberculosis-a common disease among the rural women**

Based on 'Focus Group Discussions in 6 mains towns of Manipur held between November 2004- February 2005'<sup>10</sup>, it was reported that through consultation with doctors and staffs from Tamenglong district, malaria is a serious problem in Manipur. The state government has taken measures for the complete eradication of malaria but all the sub divisions (interior areas) except main towns are still malaria prone areas. It was further stated that the disease infects more number of women than men because women often work in malaria infested area (mostly in agriculture). Their dress style is less covered and so they are more expose to mosquito bite. Women who have the responsibility of

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<sup>8</sup> Directorates of Health Services, Manipur. 2003-2004.

<sup>9</sup> Office of the Registrar of Births and Deaths, Directorate of Health Services, Manipur, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Focus Group Discussions in 6 mains towns of Manipur, held between November 2004-February 2005.

childcare are constantly out of mosquito net at night. Moreover due to extreme poverty, many rural families could not afford good quality mosquito net. It was also pointed out that there was a high incidence of communicable diseases like tuberculosis. Like malaria the number of women suffering from TB seems to be much more than men. Limited data is a constraint for addressing women's problem. The government provided free medical care for TB patients, which help the patient in the initial stage. It was also pointed out by some of the SHG members in the same report that when a woman suffers from TB, it is very difficult to access complete cure because maintaining a special diet for a mother is impossible and the case is more serious when the patient happens to be a housewife.

#### **4.8 Cholera and other water borne diseases**

In Manipur, cholera is a very common disease especially during the rainy seasons. Unsafe drinking water, unhygienic practices in cooking caused widespread water borne diseases. Many of the rural areas are on the hill slopes and foothills. Most of them have been using pit latrines with usually open pits. The latrine portion is covered with gunny bags. In rainy days it overflows with the smell and flies. This is the condition of typical living in the rural and thickly populated inhabitation<sup>11</sup>.

Thus one can see that women's access to health services in Manipur is constrained by several factors:-

- The time spent on childcare, household work and in their occupational spare leaves the women with little time to think about their health, often resulting in illness.
- The clinic and hospitals offer women no privacy. Men staff many clinics and women show a great reluctance to be treated by them. "Many rural women are reluctant to approach male doctors but they are the only available doctors there.
- The expense and time incurred in traveling long distances for clinics, the drugs fees are also a constraint.
- Lack of awareness among the people of Manipur.

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<sup>11</sup> Directorate of Health services, Manipur.2003-04



#### **4.9 Health Services in Manipur**

In Manipur, health services are provided by the government, private sector NGOs. Majority of NGOs interventions are focusing on HIV/AIDS. In government sector there are two district level hospitals, which has 200 beds each. 101 Primary Health Centers, 440 Primary Health Sub-Centers and 16 Community Health Centers. There are 5 private hospitals run by NGOs and churches and four nature cure hospitals. As per government policy in rural areas, the state government has implemented a Primary Health Center per 3000 population and Primary Health Sub-Centers per 2000 population and Community Health Center per lakh population<sup>12</sup>.

According to Manipur Health Services Rules, 1982 and Civil list of Manipur Health Services offices, total number of doctors is 500 out of which 120 are female. Nursing sisters as on May 1995 were 36 (female 33&only 3 male), staff nurse as on October 1995 is 242 (1 male), female health workers under health and Family Welfare Department as on August 1995 was 680 (all female), total list of pharmacists as on August 1995 was 245. Malaria department and the Family Welfare departments are the other health services available in the state.

Integrated Child Development Programme (ICDS) has rendered valuable services for the mother and child, reaching the interior parts of the state yet the practices need an in-depth investigation. Despite the quantity in health services, especially in the government sector, infrastructure development and provisions of other facilities are still lacking, which has a negative influence in people's perceptions towards health care. Apart from this, due to the prolonged armed conflict, many of the doctors and nurses are not able to provide their services.

One can see from the above discussion that Manipur does not performed very well in terms of women's health. Even though one cannot see a clear bias against women in terms of sex-ratio, infant mortality rate, nutritional status in Manipur we still find that women's suffering from illness and diseases and other health related problems are more

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<sup>12</sup> Manipur Health Services Rules, 1982

prevalent than that of men. In addition, we see that there are several factors that constraint women's access to health services. Among the several factors that hinder women's access to health care, lack of awareness among the people, society norms and superstition are also accounted for. Therefore, collective action between the Governments and the various existing NGO's, for creating awareness among the people, building better health infrastructure and services, could go a long way in improving the prevailing gender health situation in Manipur.

## GENDER AND SOCIAL INDICATORS

### 5.1 Women's Autonomy

Education, work participation, and exposure to mass media are some of the means by which women gain status and autonomy, which are important aspects of their empowerment. To measure women's autonomy more directly, National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2) asked about women's participation in household decision making, their freedom of movement and access to money. Women's autonomy is likely to have a significant impact on the demographic and health-seeking behaviour of couples by altering women's relative control over fertility and contraceptive use, and by influencing their attitudes (for example, attitudes towards the sex composition of children) and abilities (for example, the ability to obtain health services for themselves and their children) (Sen and Batliwala, 1997).

In order to measure women's participation in household decision making, NFHS-2 asked women to report who in their households makes decisions about the following: what items to cook, obtaining health care for herself, purchasing jewellery or other major household items, and her going and staying with parents and siblings.

It was found that women's working for money is more likely than other women in other employment categories to participate in each of the four types of decisions and women who work without earning money are less likely to participate in all the decisions with the exception of decision about what to cook. These results suggest that decision making autonomy is not greater for all employed women; greater decision making autonomy is associated with employment for women only if they are working for money.

It was also found out that freedom of movement increased with age and education. As expected, women who earn money have much more freedom than other women. Access to money was also found to increase with age, education, and standard of living and much greater for urban women than for rural women.

The interstate variation (comparison) in all the three indicators of women's autonomy—women's decision making, freedom of movement, and access to money was also conducted by NFHS-2. It was found that in all states except Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Orissa, more than 90 percent of women are involved in at least one household decision. In each state women are most likely to be involved in decision about what to cook (78-97 percent). There are only seven states in which more than 70 percent of women participate in decision about their own health care (Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Punjab, Mizoram, Kerala, Gujarat, and Arunachal Pradesh). Participation in decisions regarding the purchase of jewellery or other major items is high in Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat, and most of the northeastern states. Though Manipur did not perform relatively well on all of the autonomy indicators, it does not have a poor record either. In other words, Manipur has mixed record on women's autonomy indicators (table 5.1).

**Table 5.1 Percentage of ever-married women involved in household decision making, percentage with freedom of movement, and percentage with access to money for Manipur, India, 1998-99**

	Percentage involved in decision making on:					Percentage who do need Permission to		
	Percentage Not involved In any decision making	What to cook	Own Health care	Purchasing Jewellery, etc	Staying With her Parents / siblings	Go to The market	Visit Friends/ relatives	Percentage With access To money
India	9.4	85.1	51.6	52.6	48.1	31.6	24.4	59.6
Manipur	3.3	87.4	43.3	66.3	63.2	28.6	28.3	76.8

Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), 1998-99, p.70.

## 5.2 Domestic Violence: Attitudes and Experience

In recent years, there has been increasing concern about violence against women in general and domestic violence in particular, in both developed and developing countries (United Nations General Assembly, 1991). Not only has domestic violence against women been acknowledged worldwide as a violation of the basic human rights of

women, but an increasing amount of research highlights the health burdens, intergenerational effects, and demographic consequences of such violence (Heise et al., 1998; 1994; jejeebhoy, 1998; Ramasubban and Singh, 1998; Rao and Bloch, 1993). In a patriarchal society such as India, women are not only socialized into being silent about their experience of violence but traditional norms teach them to accept, tolerate, and even rationalize domestic violence (Jaising, 1995; Hegde, 1996; Prasad, 1999). Both tolerance of and experience of domestic violence are significant barriers to the empowerment of women, with consequences for women's health, their health seeking behaviour, their adoption of a small family norm, and the health of their children.

In this regard NFHS-2 made an attempt to assess this fact at the state level. It was found that there exists a substantial state-wise difference in the proportion of ever-married women who have been beaten or physically mistreated since age 15.<sup>1</sup> According to NFHS-2, beating by persons other than the husband or in-laws constitutes a substantial proportion of beatings in most of the north eastern states including Manipur (table 5.2). It can be seen from the table that Manipur score well in most of the factors except beatings by in-laws and beatings by other person as compared to all India figure. The point to be noted here is that since beating by husband is low in Manipur one may presume that ever-married women normally enjoyed freedom and hence empowered in that sense. Beatings by other person may be high in Manipur because of the prevailing political and insurgency problems and other factors that go along with it. However, one is unable to answer the fact that beating by in-laws is high in Manipur. This is so because if husband beating is less it should normally be the case that in-laws beating should also be less. On the other hand, it might be that the women prefer to substitute husband beating with in-laws. The result seems unexplained in this regards. One need to take into account other factor to arrive at a broad conclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> NFHS-2, p. 78. caution should be exercised I making cross-state comparisons, however, since there are likely to be differences across states in cultural norms about revealing the experience of violence to strangers and the extent to which women perceive the violence they may be experiencing as 'beatings or physical mistreatment'. Even if one of these factors varies across states, the prevalence of violence may be underestimated in some states more than in others

**Table 5.2 Percentage of ever-married women who have been beaten or physically mistreated by their husband, in-laws, or other persons since age 15 and percentage beaten or physically mistreated in the past 12 months for Manipur, India, 1998-99.**

	Percentage Beaten or Physically mistreated since age 15	Percentage beaten or physically Mistreated since age 15 by:			Percentage beaten or physically mistreated in the past 12 months
		Husband	In-laws	Other person	
India	21.0	18.8	1.8	3.1	11.0
Manipur	19.7	8.3	3.7	9.3	5.6

Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), 1998-99, p.88.

### 5.3 Incidence of Crimes against Women

Another way to look at the status of women in the society is to look at the incidence of crimes committed against them. In a society if women are accorded a high social status or are respected the cases of crimes against them would be low. In fact it is interesting to find out that the cases of crimes committed against women, as recorded in the national Crimes Records Bureau (2002), in Manipur was nil in most of the category. As far as figures for 2000 is concerned there were no cases of rape reported for women below 19 years. Exceptional cases of rape were reported for those women in the age group above 19 years. Nor is there an incidence of infanticide, foeticide, abetment of suicide, exposure and abandonment, kidnapping or abduction. In addition, going by the statistics, there was no incidence of procurement of minor girls, selling and buying of girls for prostitution, dowry death, molestation, and sexual harassment, cruelty by husband or relatives as well.<sup>2</sup>

However, according to the latest report of the National Family Health Survey (2005-2006) conducted in 22 states of India, Manipur ranks third with a record of 43.9 percent, in the rate of domestic violence against women. Rajasthan records 46.3 percent and Madhya Pradesh 45.8 percent and are placed in the first and second place respectively.

<sup>2</sup> India, Ministry of Home Affairs, National Crime Records Bureau. 2002. Crime in India 2000. New Delhi. Pp. 216-294.

Manipuri women's response to question of domestic violence and injustice is disturbingly high which signals the growing rate of atrocities women are subject to.

Quite interestingly, the same report of the National Family Health Survey (2005-2006) reveals a paradoxical situation wherein the rate of women in Manipur involved in family decision making accounts for 85 percent.

If women's involvement in family decision making is so strong, there may be less violence against women than is claimed. The question is how could a maltreated woman be so significant as to take major decisions in the family?

What we have to remember here is that Manipuri women fit the portrayal of what is called 'victimization of the victim'. These women have been the victims of the impact of various causes of violence viz. poverty, divorce, judicial separation, conflict, status quo, alcoholism, drug abuse, economic disparity, unequal power equations etc.<sup>3</sup>

#### **5.4 Political Participation of Women**

The meaning and concept of participation differs from situation to situation, from place to place and among different people with different attitudes and cultures. The plurality of the concept of participation in a modern society is a viable theory of democracy. Political participation is a necessary ingredient of every democratic political system. Herbert Mac Closky has defined political participation as the extent to which citizens avail themselves of those voluntary democratic rights of the political activity to which they are constitutionally entitled and the measure is held by the political culture. According to Rousseau, 'Participation is the decision-making and that is, as in theories of representative Government, a way of protecting private interest and ensuring a good government. It also has psychological effects on the participants, ensuring i.e. continuing interrelationship between the working of institutions and attitudes of individual reacting with them. Political participation does not mean only franchise but also means their active involvement in the decision-making activities.

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<sup>3</sup> Dr Bedavati Laishram, 'An Account of Domestic violence and Crimes against Manipuri Women', The Sanghai Expressed, Webcasted, March 30th, 2007.

In a democratic set up, the political road to decision-making usually leads to the parliamentary system via the political parties. Though the ultimate aim of various parties is to achieve power, they differ in their ideologies and programmes. The study of the role and participation of women members in various political parties shows the general attitudes of various political parties towards women. In general, the premises and the programmes they have for the empowering of women are noted in their manifestoes, as also to what extent they encourage women within the organization. In India, there is still a great hiatus between constitutional guarantees and the actual representation and participation of women in different decision-making bodies. Despite constitutional and legal provisions, women are not adequately and proportionately represented in either the Parliament or the State Legislative Assembly.

The constitutional empowerment of women to enjoy equal sharing with men in the country is already guaranteed under the Article 14 of the Indian constitution, which deals with the right to equality before law and protection before law. She cannot be discriminated in sharing power under Article 15, which forbids discrimination against any citizen on the ground of religion, race, caste and creed, sex and birthplace. Clause 3 of the same Article also authorizes the state to make any special provisions for women and children. But in actual practice, women, in general, have not been able to participate in the decision making process and sharing of power at the grass-roots level, in the state assemblies or at the parliament. Women are also found to participate marginally and not adequately in the decision making process at the national and state levels.<sup>4</sup>

The role of women on the development aspects of the family and the society at large has become an important issue as female constitutes half of the population. Women in all society developed and underdeveloped ones usually play important role in the decision-making process of the family. This aspect of women's role and participation in the family has to be taken into account when we discuss and study at the higher political level.

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<sup>4</sup> P. Bakshi, 'Constitution of India', Universal Law Publishing C.Pvt. Ltd., 1992.



#### **5.4.1 Women's Participation in the Social Movements**

The role of Manipur women in social movements can be traced back to the Pre-British period once was in 1904 (first Nupilal) and the in 1939 (second Nupilal). It was against the unjust British administration that women leaders emerged in Manipuri's traditionally male dominated space. But all these movements were spontaneous and short lived. Meirapaibi (torch bearers) movement is a new women's movement in Manipur. It began in the 1980s and is still gaining momentum.

Apart from the Meirapaibis, there are women organizations from different communities like Naga women, Kuki Women Union, Zomi Mothers Association, Hmar Women Association etc. They are actively involved in the socio political affairs in their, respective communities.

However, election results seem to indicate that despite their roles and contributions they seem to be excluded in the decision making. It seems whenever there is crisis in the society, women are expected to be in the forefront to solve the crisis. In a collection force they are strong. But, when the crisis is over their contributions are soon forgotten. This seems to be because of the social norms based on patriarchy where they are dominated by their husbands and sons and so they could not come forward in the decision making process.

#### **5.4.2 Women's Participation in electoral politics**

The women of Manipur enjoyed universal adult franchise for the first time in 1948. In the pre-independence days, there was a strong demand from the people of Manipur to introduce democratic form of government in Manipur. In response to the demand of the people, the maharaja of Manipur framed the Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 after independence. It was under this constitution, adult franchise were held in 1948. Women who had attained the age of 21 years exercised their franchise in electing the members of the Manipur State Assembly.

#### 5.4.3 Participation of Women as Voters

Women of Manipur have been participating in the political process of the state as voters in every election since 1952 held under the constitution of India with women voters always outnumbering the male voters in every election held up to 2002. But out of 60 Assembly Constituencies, as much as 46 constituencies had large number of female voter's than that of male voters in 2002. According to the available records we may compare the percentage of female voters in comparisons with that of male voters from 1972-2002.

**Table 5.3 Percentage Distribution of Male and Female Voter from 1972-2002**  
**Assembly Elections**

Year	Male Electors who voted	Female Electors who voted	Percentage of Electors who voted	Total number of electors
1972	49.9	50.1	78.3	588962
1980	49.4	50.6	82.9	909262
1984	49.1	50.9	87.2	1013678
2000	48.7	51.3	90.6	1447772
2002	48.7	51.3	90.2	1418636

Source: Election Report, Legislative Assembly Election, 2002

#### 5.4.4 Participation of Women in Parliamentary Election

Records have shown that from the year 1952 till 1998 only four women had contested in the parliamentary elections. They were:-- Ishwari Devi (1952, Lhingjaneng Gante (1948), Anne Mangshatabam (1996 and Kim Gangte (1998). Out of these four women only Kim Gangte came out successfully and represents Manipur in the House of the People.

#### 5.4.5 Participation of Women in State Assembly

In 1957, in the territorial Council election Smt. Shabi Devi who played a very active part in the women's movement of 1939, contested as a left candidate from Wangkhai constituency but was defeated. But there were female members in the Territorial Council

from 1957 to 1963 and in the Territorial Assembly from 1963 to 1969 of Manipur by means of nomination. They were Smt. R.K Mukhra Devi, Smt. Akim Anal, Smt. Lhingjaneng Gangte and Smt. A. Bimola Devi. The number of women candidates contesting Assembly elections had increased after Manipur attained its full-fledged statehood in 1972. In the Assembly elections held in 1972, there were three women candidates contesting from Keishamthong, Henglep and Heinang constituencies.

In the mid-term Assembly elections in 1974, there were again three women candidates – Smt. Lhingjaneng from Saikot, Smt. Aribam Bimola from Heingjang, and Smt. T. Kholly from Saikot. But all these women could not get themselves elected. The number of women candidates increased in 1980 Assembly elections. There were eight women in both the valley and hill constituencies.

**Table 5.4 Women Candidates in the Assembly Election, 1980**

Name	Party	Constituency
T. Kholly	Independent	Saikot
S. Radhapriya	NCP	N. Pakhanglakpa
Athing Lingjaneng	Janata	Saikot
. A, Bimola	Janata	Heingang
R.K Mukkhra	Congress	Keishamthong
. Kh. Bilashini	Communist Party	Bishnupur
A. Puinabati	Congress(U)	Thangmeiband
W. Joimati	Congress(U)	Sangolband

Source: Election Result, 1980

The percentage of votes secured by the women candidates was not very high in both the valley and hills. The result might have been discouraging for women such that in 1984

the number of women candidates was reduced to only five and all four of the women candidates lost their security deposits. We may assume that the female voters did not cast their votes in favor of the women candidates because female voters outnumbered the male voters. Again in 1990 Assembly elections, there were seven women candidates contesting in both the hills and valley constituencies.

According to the election report, different political parties had put up three women candidates. The electoral performance of the women candidates improve and three candidates could secure more votes but were unelected. Only three women candidates lost their security deposit and one woman named Hangmila Shaiza (wife of former CM) was elected from Ukhrul constituency. She was the first woman to be elected to the Legislative Assembly after Manipur attained statehood in 1972.

In the by-election held in 1992 from the Oinam Constituency, after the death of the sitting MLA, K. Bira Singh's wife K. Apabi Devi was elected on the congress ticket. Thus, the number of women members in the Legislative Assembly had increased into two.

**Table 5.5 Women Candidates in 2000 Assembly Election**

Name	Party	Constituencies
Ratimanjuri	Nationalist Congress	Heingang
Y. Shakhitombi	Independent	Singjamei
. Smt. Manishang	BJP	Konthoujam
Ak. Mirabai	INC	Patsoi
. H. Mukhi	BJP	Langthabal
W. Leima	Independent	Naoiya Pakhang
K. Apabi	INC	Oinam

. K. Damyanti	Manipur State Congress	Wabagai
Grace T. Shatsang	INC	Chingai
Hathopi Buansing	Federal Party	Manipur Saikot
T. Ngaizanem	Samata	Singat

Source: Election Result 2000

Out of the above 11 contested women only one of them Ms. Leima Devi was elected.

**Table 5.6 Women Candidates in 2002 Assembly Election.**

Name	Party	Constituencies
W. Leima	Independent	Naoriya pakhang
AK. Mirabai	INC	Patsoi
Th. Manishang	BJP	Konthoujam
. O. Bimola	D.R.P.P	Oinam
T. Ngaizanem	SAP	Singhat
Jubilee	MNC	Singhat
. S. Radhapriya	NCP	Naoriya Pakhanglak

Source: Election Result 2002

Out of the above 7 candidates only Mrs Leima Devi was elected. From the above Assembly election reports we may assumed that, till today only three women candidates were elected and theses women were the wives of MPs, MLAs or Ministers. No other common women are elected. It shows that only those who had the political background could get themselves elected.

Women in Manipur could seldom come out successfully unless they (candidate) have a good political background. This means that the women candidates must either be a minister's wife or a relative. Moreover, high handed male power and money is involved in the election process which is a serious constraint for women. In rural areas, especially among the Christian's, women participation in politics is considered to be ungodly. Because of the social norms based on Hinduism; patriarchy etc, women could not come forward in the decision making process.

In addition, due to the prolonged armed conflict and large number of insurgents operating in the state, people, especially women, are reluctant to be actively involved in politics. The society has negative attitude towards women who are involved in politics especially as a candidate. So it is not very encouraging for women to take part in politics. Normally husband and relatives do not permit women to take part in the electoral process.

#### 5.4.6 Panchayati Raj

In the four districts of Manipur-Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Bishnupur- there are local bodies like Municipalities and Panchayats. Especially after the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1992 and 1993, 30 percent of the total seats were kept reserved for women. There are 7 Municipality Councils and 27 Nagar Panchayats (Small Town Committee) in Manipur. In 1995, elections for Municipality/Nagar Panchayats were held. According to the results, 40 women out of 90 were elected in the Municipality Council and 66 women out of 190 were elected in the Nagar Panchayats.

These women were elected on the basis of reservation. Again in 1997 the Zilla Parishad and Gram Panchayat elections were held. 166 women were elected as Pradhan and 1557 as Gram Panchayat member and 16 as Zilla Parishad members were elected. In 2002 Zilla Parishad and Gram Panchayat elections, 23 women out of 61 were elected in the Zilla Parishad and 699 out of 1707 were elected in the Gram Panchayat. The table below shows the results of Panchayat election 2002 and Zilla Parishad Result 2002.

**Table 5.7 Manipur Panchayat Election 2002**

District	Division Block	Pradhan		Elected	Member		Panchayat at elected
		Contest	Uncontest		Contest	Uncontest	
Imphal east	I	26	1	9	162	35	107
	II	29	2	9	156	3	102

	Jiribam	17	-	2	49	6	25
Imphal west	I	29	2	9	150	30	107
	II	23	-	5	111	28	55
Bishnup ur	Bishnupur	13	-	4	93	12	50
	Moirang	15	-	4	66	11	46
Thoubal	Thoubal	27	1	9	203	41	129
	Kakching	18	1	5	56	31	78
	Total	197	7	56	1046	197	699

Source: Pachanyat election result 2002

**Table 5.8 Manipur Zilla Parishads Election 2002**

District	Contested	Uncontested	Elected
Imphal (E)	34	-	6
Imphal (W)	27	-	7
Thoubal	14	-	6
Bishnupur	33	-	4
Total	108	-	23

Source: Zilla Parishal election result 2002

#### 5.4.7 Village Authority in the Hill District

For the rural women in Manipur political participation is a far distant dream. There is no Panchayati Raj system in all the hill districts and the district autonomous council does not function properly. Although there are provisions for reservation of seats for women under the Village Authority Act, it has not been implemented. The Village Authority comprises of the chief and his councilors where women membership is totally nil. In most cases, the Village chief selects the Authority members, which is accepted by the government.

The prevailing culture in politics is generally male-oriented and derives a Political Philosophy that confines women and women's concerns to the private sphere of domesticity. The ever-growing division between private and public life, as it becomes increasingly sectorised and hierarchical has become even more inimical to women. The conventional notion of politics projects the power play as an exclusively 'male domain' where masculinity is synonymous with money and muscle power. Thus political status of women remains low in spite of the participation of women in the local bodies as a result of the reservation provided by the 73rd and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Acts of the Constitution of India.

### **5.5 Violence against Women**

Women and girls around the world are threatened, beaten, raped, mutilated and killed with impunity. The 1980s shows India making progress on rape and domestic violence law with women's groups pushing forward the reform agenda. But till date protection and justice for women victims of violence is yet to improve.

According to Article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the term violence against women includes any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (Declaration on the Elimination of violence Against women, Article 1, resolution issued by the General Assembly of the United Nations, December, 1993). The present study deals with violence against women on physical violence, sexual violence and psychological /emotional violence.

Though Manipur State Commission for Women was formed recently, this Commission apparently looks like a deceptive manifestation of the State Government's approach towards women. Going along the same tune, the Chairperson, Dr. Sh. Jamini herself laments that the Commission is nothing but a Sham! ( Poknapham, 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2007).



She lashes out on the inactive authority delegated to her as a Chairperson, the inadequate provisions and infrastructure and their paralytic position without any legal authority, despite their enthusiasm and fervor to help solve the problems of Manipuri women.

She further recounts that on comparing the condition of the Manipur State Commission for Women and the National Women Commission, Delhi, the situation of our Commission is such a pity that they are compelled to wonder if the Government is not holding three aged women (Dr. Sh. Jamini, Chairperson, Lalzam Begum and Lingzaneng Gangte, members) in the name of a Commission, hostage in a shady room and left them to the mercy of fate. This situation is yet another evidence of the inefficient legal and constitutional remedies.

There is no Women's Jail and very few women cells are properly maintained. Many cases of violence and crime against women go unreported. In the valley, most cases of violence against women are taken up by the Women Civil Societies like Meira Paibis and other NGOs working on Violence Against Women whereas in hill districts, most violence cases are decided as per the customary laws and do not necessarily approach the courts or are reported to the police. There is only one Family Court which in the state capital. Moreover, number of women advocates seems to be very low. Women seldom approached the court on her own will to register their case on her own will. The concern clubs, relatives and women leader like the Meirapaibis, and other family members and relatives of the victims generally puts up women cases.

**Table 5.9 Statistics on Crimes against Women**

Nature of Crime	1999	2000	2001	2002
Murder	11	11	2	2
Rape	10	12	16	7
Molestation	14	29	36	24
Kidnapping	42	40	69	56
Assault	12	9	12	29
Suicide	8	11	4	-
Women Burning	-	-	-	1

Others	8	7	8	15
Total	105	119	147	134

Source: Office of the CID, DIG Crime Branch, Manipur, Imphal

**Table 5.10 Total Number of Cases Filed at Family Counselling Centre  
From July 1998 to December 2001**

Nature of case from July 1998 to December 2001	Total
Maintenance demand care	137
Cruelty by in-laws	36
Desertion	45
Claiming of dowry goods after separation	5
Drug related problems	12
Dispute of family/Old age pensions	20
Bride-price demand	2
Child custody	19
Property disputes	49
Family maladjustment	64
Mental	19
Divorce cases	4
Illegal separation	3
Inter caste marriages	3
Juvenile delinquent cases	4
Destitute Women/Children	7
Total	737

Cases successfully compromised/solved. Source: Dr. Romiobala, Senior Counselor

**Table 5.11 No. of Reported cases on Daily newspapers from January to November  
2004**

Nature of case	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Total
Rape	3	1	2	2	1	6	2	1	3	3	24
Murder	-	2	1	-	-	3	1	2	1	2	12
Rape after Molestation	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	4
Suicide	1	-	1	2	1	-	2	1	1	1	10
Assaults	3	2	-	4	3	1	-	2	2	2	19
Child Abuse	3	5	4	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	16
Burnt	1	1	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	-	8
Complaint	11	4	6	5	1	4	3	-	9	6	49

No. of lost girls	2	3	4	1	2	2	2	-	3	3	22
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Source: Women Action For Development (WAD), Imphal, Manipur.

The crime branch record shows very few of rape, murder and other act of violence against women. But many cases seem to go unreported. In the midst of tensions, conflict, and complex situations, life has very little value and it is always women and girls who are the victims in all forms of violence.

#### 5.5.1 The Fear of Raped

For the women of Manipur, the fear of rape is heightened by the situation in which they live. It stems not merely from the horror of physical assault, but from the subsequent social stigmatization and thus many raped cases are left unreported. Women, especially young girls often prefer to remain silent. Generally rapists are Indian armed focus deployed to curb insurgency, which has been imposed in the state for decades. In many cases, even when the victims reported, the rapist often escaped punishment. Manipuri woman has lost the freedom of movement. They are not even safe to work in the field without their husband or sons. As per report received from the secretary Ima Leima ren Apunba Lup , Churachandpur:-

“Seilah (name changed) 30 years with the children lived in Gangpimoul (3 km. from Churachandpur town), went out working in the field and did not return home till dark. Her worried children who went out in search of their mother found her lying with bruises all over her body. She was raped by 2 army personnel. When her husband came to realize that she was being raped he refused to accept her as his wife. When she was sent back to her parent’s home she decided to commit suicide”.

#### 5.5.2 Gender Violence as a result of Armed Conflict and Armed Special Forces Power Act

The ongoing-armed conflict in Manipur has intensified the violence faced by women, which takes the form of sexual, mental, physical abuse or killing and clashes. The armed Forces Power Act that has been imposed in Manipur has added to the gender violence in the state. The case of Manorama is a living example. However, most cases go unreported due to certain reasons like social stigma, fear, lack of Human Right awareness, and cases decided by relatives according to the customary laws.

### 5.5.3 Polygamy is a common practice in the valley of Manipur

The practice of polygamy however was adopted in the past by coincidence rather than by design where the loss of men in the Manipur Burmese war was significantly high. The unequivocal need for social security gave ways to elders sanctioning polygamy as a means of security and protection to women. This has however become a practice among the meitei community though not in the hill districts and is extremely discriminatory towards women.

According to the customary laws, divorce is an acceptable norm in Manipur<sup>5</sup>. It can be initiated from both sides i.e., either by the husband or the wife. But, it is mostly the husband who seeks divorce. The husband initiates about 90 percent of divorce in Manipur. Moreover, in case of a divorce, the offspring of the husband and wife goes to the husband. The mothers have no right to claim her children against the wishes of her husband. It may also be noted that in the tribal society of Manipur, when a women committed adultery, her husband would send her out of the house with a single dress, and she loses all her property. On the other hand, if the husband committed adultery, the wife could do nothing except to return to her parental home. Moreover, even though remarriage of widows and widowers are permitted, there is difference in the valley of Manipur (not among the hill tribes who practices christianiaty). For a widow to remarry she has to perform certain rites which was not needed in the case of a widowers.

### 5.5.4 Drugs is a menace for Women and Girls in Manipur

Manipur, sensitive frontier of North East India is also trapped into drug culture due to its proximity to “Golden Triangle”, which illicit poppy cultivation and opium production continue unabated. India share about 1800 kilometers of mountainous border with Myanmar on the eastern frontier from where the deadly Heroin enters into the hilly region. Along with this come other drugs like, Diazepam, Proxyvon, Antihistamine (cough syrup) etc. As a result, many growing youth, 8-18 years, are deeply into the habit. The result is a spread of HIV/AIDS virus which added to violence on women. Now,

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<sup>5</sup> Violence Against women in Manipur, Resource Directory, NEN 2003.

number of widows is increasing at an alarming rate. Their husband leaves behind many widows without any means of livelihood. In the society, being a widow is still taken as a curse, a burden on the family but the harsher reality is that if the husband happens to be a HIV/ AIDS positive and died of AIDS then the widow experiences dual stigmatization- first as a widow and second of belonging to a HIV positive husband.

In the patriarchal system in Manipur, years of neglect and discrimination against women cannot be turned around in a day. However, to enforce a positive society, all sections of the community have to launch a virulent attack on all forms of crimes and violence against women. This had to be done with the combined effort of the people, NGO and other political instruments.

#### 5.5.5 Wife beating is common practice in Manipur

Wife beating is a very common practice in Manipur. Wife beating is often not reported to the police or to the community leaders because it is considered as a family affair. Wife beating and insulting is not only common in the rural areas but also among the educated middle class. Woman/girls should not go out, should provide proper services to their in-laws, full time services in household work are acceptable social norms, which is strictly imposed by the head of the family. All these may be the reason that wife and girls are being beaten and insulted. However, the average rate of wife beating seems to be much higher among drunkards. Though the state government has prohibited liquor, traditional liquor continues to be sold by women – a way of earning a living for many people in Manipur. Their husbands' drink and when they are drunk the wife who prepared the drinks is being beaten<sup>6</sup>.

### 5.6 Property Rights

As per the customary tribal laws of Manipur, women are deprived of family property rights. The right of inheritance goes to either the eldest son or youngest son in the family. Generally among the rural communities women do not enjoy property rights. Women still

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<sup>6</sup> Violence Against women in Manipur, Resource Directory, NEN 2003.

have not claimed family property rights. The biggest problem is that many of them seem to be not aware of their rights. However, well to do families in the towns and cities and few educated enlightened arranged an equal share of family properties by including daughters<sup>7</sup>.

Therefore the need of the hour is to make the people aware of the prevailing situation and provide adequate compensation to rape victims in the lower socio-economic profile to enable them to go for justice frame effective legislation on feticide, sexual harassment and other atrocities on women. It is also important for women to reclaim their voices and the right to defend themselves against violence and harassment. Women must be encouraged to speak up, express their own realities and create solidarity networks. Only then things might change for better.

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<sup>7</sup> Thakargee, a fortnightly Journal 1997.

## 6

### CONCLUSION

Manipur has witnessed, though to a limited extent, some successful role of collective women's power in the past and also in the present day. This is something, which we can celebrate. However, despite these limited contributions in the socio-economic life of the state, they are not given their due position in society resulting in mismatch between women's role and status. This is indeed a matter of great concern, which we all need to ponder over.

Women in Manipur, irrespective of their class and status, performed all the domestic works in the family and are responsible for the maintenance of the family. They educate their children in matters relating to the social norms, values, customary laws, etc. They also contributed towards the growth of the family income by doing handicraft, agriculture, small-scale industries and selling through their skillfulness.

The women of Manipur like in other states are employed in professions like medical, engineering, legal service, administration, teaching, professions in active services, technical, clerical, and the many other ministerial jobs. There were many responsible factors for making women to take jobs. Among other responsible factors for making women to take jobs were education, economic development, social development and constitutional provision.

In agriculture about 70% of the populations are engaged in agriculture. From the time of seed-sowing till harvesting women took an active part. Likewise, in weaving, which had been one of the important sectors of industry in Manipur; most of the people engaged in this field are women. Again, aquaculture is a major activity carried out in the state and women are most actively involved in it. Integrated aquaculture like fish culture in paddy fields, integration of animals with fish culture and horticulture are commonly practiced.

We also saw that the women of Manipur are hard working people. They are engaged in trading with the various products of their agricultural field and industrial products. The women run the market as well. Women solely do the transaction of selling and buying. They deal with different trades like vegetables, fruits, fishes, and handloom products. There are also other women whose business is to sell eatables like meals, tea, pakora, etc. There are also some women who give loans to the needy women in the market and earn daily interest and thereby add to their family income. There are also some unemployed women who are running weaving cooperative societies by employing young women and girls

Manipuri women do not lay behind the veil, they also do all the buying and selling of goods in the market. Women dominate the markets in rural and urban areas. As pointed out, this unique role in the market will be known if one visits the Ima Market, which is in the heart of the city. They are greatly involved in the agricultural activities and fishing. They are artistic and creative which is a driving force in the field of handlooms and handicrafts. One significant observation that we see today in Manipur is the increase in the number of women entrepreneurs and women self help groups. We also find that self employment is the most important form of employment for women in Manipur (28 percent). The point is that, the institution of keithel(Women's Bazaar) and women's economic role persisted through the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We also see that Manipur women are involved in social movement. It was pointed out that the role of Manipur women in social movements can be traced back to the Pre-British period. One was in 1904 (first Nupilal) and the second was in 1939 (second Nupilal). It was against the unjust British administration. Women leaders emerged in Manipuri's traditionally male dominated space. But, unfortunately all these movements were spontaneous and short lived. Meirapaibi (torch bearers) movement is a new women's movement in Manipur. It began in the 1980s and is still gaining momentum. Apart from the Meirapaibis, we find that there are women organizations from different communities like Naga women, Kuki Women Union, Zomi Mothers Association, Hmar Women Association etc. who are involved their respective communities.



However, despite the importance of women's economic contribution and the trend of the work force the goal to achieve an economic equality among men and women may be an ambitious one. The factor that controls gender inequality has its root in many facets of life. There is gender biased in education, in training, in health care, in job opportunities, access to resources and properties, in payment of wages for the same labor, as also gender biases in economic decision making where women participation is much constrained.

The unequal economic status of gender is shown by the disparity of economic activities. This study shows that work force of women is more concentrated in rural areas, in unorganized informal sector, in self employment sector, micro enterprises, credits and as cultivators and agricultural laborers in rural areas. It is also manifested by the difference in wage levels. We also saw that as per the customary laws of tribal in Manipur, women are deprived of family property rights. The right of inheritance goes to either the eldest son or youngest son in the family.

In addition, we find that their representations both in the secondary and tertiary sectors are quite minimal. The preference of male child is still prevalent. There are certain rituals where women's involvements are considered profane and their participation is restricted. Women produce children; they are mothers and wives; they do the cooking, mending, sewing and washing; they take care of men and are subordinate to male authority; they are largely excluded from high status occupations and from positions of power. In terms of the reward of prestige, wealth and power attached to gender role, women almost invariably come off worst. As reported in 2001 census, Manipur has a total population of 2,388,634. Out of these the numbers of males and females are 1,207,388 and 1,181,296 respectively. The literacy rate of the state is 68.87 percent. For males the literacy rate is 77.87 percent while for females it is 59.70 percent. Thus there is a gap of 18.17 percent in the male-female literacy rate, which clearly indicates the prejudices of the society towards the female child. It is also worth noting that 40.30 percent of the female populations are illiterate. Here, education is crucial because it is said that if you educate a

man, you educate an individual whereas if you educate a woman you are educating the entire family. One interesting fact is that the sex ratio of Manipur is much above many other Indian states. It is 978 as compared to the all India ratios of 933. Though the cases of dowry deaths, rape and molestation are not so high in Manipur, there are incidents of eve-teasing and domestic violence which are symptomatic of a larger malaise where Manipuri women are not given their due position in society. When it comes to woman's health we find that there are many factors that hindered their access to health services. Similarly, election results seem to indicate that despite their roles in social movement they seem to be excluded in the decision making. It seems whenever there is crisis in the society, women are expected to be in the forefront to solve the crisis and are forgotten soon after.

Therefore, there is a need to change the attitude of the society in general and men in particular. It is high time that we respect and reflect the contributions of women not only in the socio-economic sphere but also in the fields of culture, politics and sports. To enforce a positive society, all sections of the community have to launch a virulent attack on all forms of crimes and violence against women. This had to be done with the combined effort of the people, NGO and political instruments. Women of Manipur deserve a higher status; for the development of any society the status of women is a key factor determining progress.

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*Women involved in different market activities-traditional clothes, fish, vegetables, pottery, fruits are shown in the picture below:*



