

**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE STATUS
AND PROCESS OF EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AMONG
THE MAJOR TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL COMMUNITIES
IN MANIPUR SINCE INDEPENDENCE (1947)**

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BY

Mrs. TINKHONEI HAOKIP

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF
Dr. (Mrs.) ANUPAMA KESKAR
NEHRU INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TILAK MAHARASHTRA UNIVERSITY
(DEEMED UNIVERSITY)
GULTEKDI, PUNE 411037

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CERTIFICATE BY THE GUIDE

Certificate that the work incorporated in this dissertation, “A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE STATUS AND PROCESS OF EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AMONG THE MAJOR TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN MANIPUR SINCE INDEPENDENCE (1947),” submitted by Tinkhonei Haokip was carried out by the candidate under my supervision. The candidate has conducted a genuine work, has completed all the required course work for the Ph.D course, and such materials as have been obtained from other sources have been duly acknowledged in the dissertation.

Dr. (Mrs.) Anupama Keskar

[Research Guide]

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

I, Mrs. Tinkhonei Haokip declare an oath that the references and literature that are used in my dissertation entitled, “A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE STATUS AND PROCESS OF EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AMONG THE MAJOR TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN MANIPUR SINCE INDEPENDENCE (1947),” are from original sources and are acknowledged at appropriate places in the dissertation.

Further, I declare further that I have not used this information for any purpose, other than my research.

Place: Pune

Dated: June, 2008

Tinkhonei Haokip

SYNOPSIS

PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

Critics of the Indian family system say that women in the Indian society have from time immemorial been victims of discrimination. They haven't enjoyed an equal platform with their male counterparts. They have not only been deprived at the society level but also in the family. It is not uncommon to come across individuals from all strata of society, not expressing happiness at the birth of a girl child. In fact there are sections of societies in India that even kill the girl child before she could come into this world. She may not even have any share in her father's property. Ideologies, institutional practices and existing norms in society have contributed much to their harassment. In spite of the legislative measures adopted in favor of women in our society after independence, the spread of education and women's gradual economic independence, countless women still continue to be discriminated and harassed. In the light of this dismal picture, the condition of the rural women is even more pathetic. Illiteracy, cultural and religious oppressions have made their condition even more pitiable. Comparatively, in some sections of the urban areas, women are considerably aware of their rights and privileges. They have learnt to be assertive and accept new roles for themselves. They have developed optimism and a hopeful approach to life. My in depth survey of the life of the women of Manipur has shown that they too are oppressed, first of all as women and secondly as tribal women. This has probed me to do an in depth analysis of the various factors associated with their condition and whether these factors have contributed to their empowerment or not. A comparative study of the condition of non-tribal and tribal women in Manipur has also thrown light on the working of factors differently for both these groups and has gone to prove that the condition of the non-tribal women is much better as compared to the tribal woman.

Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India, clearly contended that while women participation in the nationalist upsurge was crucial, "the women of India have an additional task, and that is to free themselves from the tyranny of manmade

customs and laws. They will have to carry on this second struggle by themselves for man is not likely to help them.” This is even truer for the women of Manipur, who have to bear the whole burden of struggle for women emancipation themselves.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Women's empowerment is a crucial issue facing women as a whole and Manipur women in particular. Today as they themselves have become better aware of the need and as they struggle to reaffirm their indigenous identity, rights, values and dignity as human beings and have become determined to stand against the threat to their existence perpetrated by ideologies of sexism, colonialism, materialism and individualism.

Thus, for the women of Manipur, the struggle for gender equality is to be launched not only within the confines of the home and the community but also at the state and national arenas and platforms where negotiations for socio-economic cooperation and understandings are accomplished. Women have no contribution as they have no control over their lives and natural resources. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, clearly points out, "If an ancestral treasure lying buried in a corner of the house unknown to the members of the family were suddenly discovered what a celebration it would be for the occasion.” Manipur women's marvelous power is lying dormant. If the women of Manipur wake up they will dazzle the Nation.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The main aim of my study of the women of Manipur was to realize the following objectives:

1. To study the concept of empowerment and its various dimensions among different communities in Manipur.
2. To study the Status and process of Empowerment among the tribal and non- tribal women of Manipur.
3. To bring to light the reality and causes of the existing social inequality between men and women in Manipur with a view to compare the structure of both the tribal and non-tribal societies of the state.

4. To understand women-men equal participation in developmental processes in Manipur.
5. To analyze women's movements in Manipur to fight for their rightful contribution in the society.
6. To analyze the status and role of men and the influence of patriarchal values
7. To find out if the process of empowerment is strong among the women of Manipur.

HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis (or hypotheses) is a tentative statement about what is predicted .In other words hypothesis is assumed to true unless proved otherwise. The prime hypothesis of this study can be stated that by and large the women of Manipur especially the women belonging to the tribal communities of Manipur are comparatively not more empowered than the women belonging to the non-tribal sections of the state, due to the various prominent socio-cultural, economic, religious factors that contribute towards this process.

Therefore, the various other hypotheses that I have also deeply delved into are as follows:

1. Customary and legal laws like male inheritance, the root causes of inequality among men and women in tribal societies of Manipur.
2. The culture of Manipur society, the customs and patterns of behavior, are not different as far as tribal and non-tribal women are concerned. However the process of empowerment is comparatively different among them.
3. Status of tribal women is comparatively lower than that of the non-tribal women in Manipur.
4. Women's position and degree of empowerment is defined by gender and gender-relations in both tribals and non-tribal societies in Manipur.
5. Level of literacy along with higher education is a powerful and multi-prolonged force in improving women's status in Manipur, especially among the tribal community.

6. Conscientization with regards to gender equality is low among women as seen in their educational aspirations for girls and boys in Manipur both tribal and non-tribal women.

STUDY AREA

The present composition of the population of Manipur may be broadly classified under five main groups: (1) The Meiteis, (2) The Scheduled caste Meiteis (3) The Kuki-Chin-Mizos (4) The Nagas and (5) The Muslims. Manipur consists of nine districts having numerous blocks and villages. Out of the nine districts of Manipur, I have selected four districts of Churachandpur, Senapati, Bishnupur, and Imphal. Among these four districts Bishnupur and Imphal comprise mostly of the non-tribal population whereas Churachandpur and Senapati are predominantly populated with tribal communities.

CRITERIA AND METHOD OF SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

Since my study was aimed at the process of empowerment of the women of Manipur, the significant number of my respondents comprised of woman generally between the age group of 18 -60.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population under consideration constituted the tribal as well as the non-tribal women of Manipur. The sample that was representative of the women of Manipur was carefully selected from the four main districts under study namely Bishnupur, Imphal, Churachandpur, and Senapati. The respondents, mainly the women who were aged between eighteen to sixty years and who were active in all aspects of life, were selected for the purpose of my study.

SAMPLING

In this study the sampling method that was employed was stratified random sampling where past data or some other information related to the character under study was used to divide the population into various groups or strata such that units within each

group are as homogenous as possible and the group means were widely different as possible. This classification was done keeping in mind that proper classification of the population into various strata was done and there was suitable sample size from each stratum.

DATA COLLECTION –TYPES AND SOURCES

For the purpose of the study two main sources of data were used:

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

Primary data is one, which is collected by the investigator for the purpose of a specific inquiry or study. Such data is original in character and is generated by surveys conducted by the individuals.

Following methods were widely used for collection of primary data:

1. Observation
2. Questionnaire
3. Schedule
- 4 Interview Method.

II. SECONDARY SOURCES OF DATA

Secondary data is that which has been already collected by some other individual or agency. Secondary data can be obtained from journals, reports, government publications, publication of professional and research organization and so on.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Analysis of data is done with the help of computer software. Qualitative data is analyzed with the help of tabulation and evaluated in descriptive writing. In the present study, researcher used SPSS software to analyze the data. Before the analysis the data was edited so that the errors could be corrected or omitted.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

During my study of the women of Manipur, I came across certain hurdles that delayed my study to a certain extent. Moreover since I needed to contact woman from both the urban as well as the rural areas, it became difficult at times and expensive too. Most of the woman of the tribal communities as well as the women living in

urban areas were either engaged in work in the fields or fetching water or working in schools or offices thus it was difficult to meet them and interview them in during the day time.

CHAPTERISATION PRESENTATION

The data collected and analyzed is arranged according to chapters. Thus keeping the objectives of the selected topics in mind, the data collected has been presented in eight chapters:

Chapter I- Consists of relevant information about the background of the state and the people of Manipur.

Chapter II -Consists of Methodology and the sources of data collection and Review of Literature.

Chapter III- Consists of the Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents

Chapter IV - Consists Family Factors and women empowerment

Chapter V - Consists of Cultural Factors and women empowerment

Chapter VI - Consists of Occupational and Economical factors and women Empowerment

Chapter VII - Consists of Health Status and women Empowerment

Chapter VIII - Consists of Religious and Political and women Empowerment

Chapter IX - Consists of the Conclusion and Suggestions

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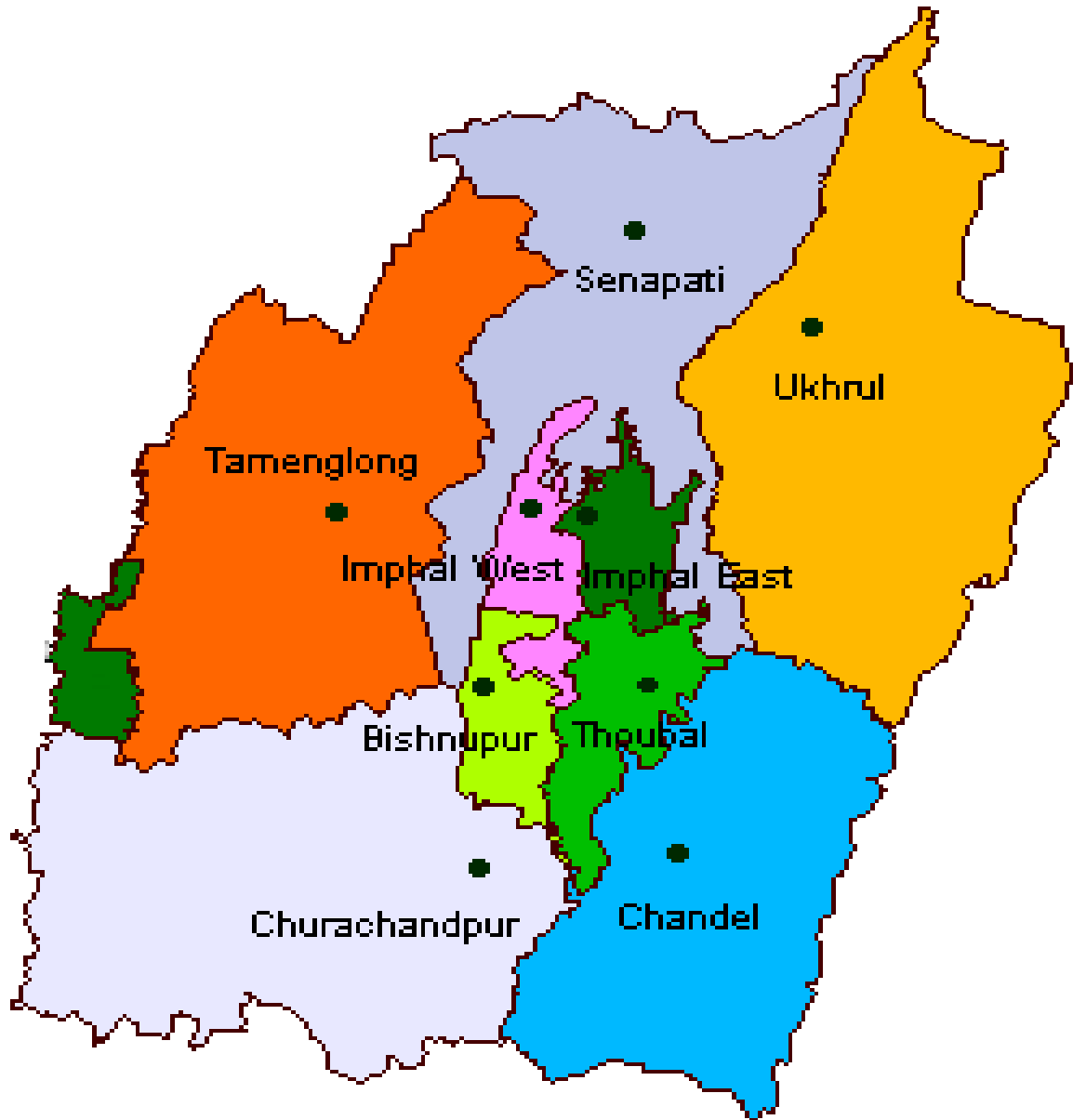
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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STATE AND THE PEOPLE OF MANIPUR

1. INTRODUCTION

India is considered to be an anthropological laboratory because of its regional, religious, ethnic, racial and linguistic diversities. It has always attracted the attention of the world as being one of the oldest civilizations with kaleidoscopic variety of rich cultural heritage.¹ It has also been described as a 'melting pot' of races and tribes.² Next to Africa, India has the largest concentration of tribal in the world.³ If the above is true for India as a whole, it is even truer for North-East India, where there is a greater variety of cultures and traditions.

North-East India is comprised of seven states, namely, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh. The region is also called 'the Land of Seven Sisters' (now it become eight states including Sikkim). Except for Tripura and Manipur, the other states were carved out gradually from the erstwhile Assam province of British India.⁴ The entire area of North-East India is populated by variegated groups of people. Migration of people from Burma (now Myanmar) to these areas was common and, as such, we find that people with Mongoloid physical traits were subsequently identified and differentiated, one from the other, as a result of various historical developments, of stresses and strains. The North-East provides shelter to numerous people groups with various ethnic affiliations having different social structures and cultural heritages. The land is considered to be a cultural corridor between India and South-East Asia and has a tremendous strategically importance, not only because of its geography but also because of its history,

demography and culture.⁵ There are about 130 major tribal groups in the North-East India, one-third of the total number of tribes for the whole of India are to be found in this region.⁶

Manipur is one of the North-Eastern states of India which came into being on the 1st December 1963. It is a composite of different people of the Tibeto-Burman group of the Mongoloid stock who migrated here at a different period in the history than others and developed a culture, which, with all its homogeneous and heterogeneous elements, is an integrated expression of the cultures of these people. The historical records suggest that the migration of assorted, colourful tribal communities to this region started from the very early times. Moreover, the chronicles of the state of Manipur clearly supports the existence of many tribal communities, from the first century of the Christian era. There are twenty-nine recognized tribes in this state. The hilly area, which is situated at an elevation of about 750 metres from sea level, is the domain of tribal people. They are considered to be autochthones. The evidence of stone-age cultures in Manipur and adjoining regions is a proof enough that there was human habitation in this area during prehistoric times. The polished stone implements that have been discovered from these areas signified the beginning of agriculture. Manipur is the ancient homeland of the Meiteis, the Muslims and twenty-nine indigenous tribes who have dwelt there for many years. All these tribes, in fact, already have accessed socially and emotionally to indissoluble rights of life, properties and privileges, which are guaranteed in the constitution of India. The habits, tastes and behaviours of various tribal people living together for centuries have synchronized with the geographical and topographical features of Manipur. The cultural integrity of the tribes or

communities corresponds to the territorial integrity of the land where they are living.⁷

1.1. The name Manipur

The term “Manipur,” is a Hinduized term imported through the window of the Baishnav cult of Hinduism.⁸ It literally means the city or the land of gems.⁹ A romantic name, whose reverberation is found in the rolling hills and spectacular dales is aesthetically described by many as “Land of Gems”, “Jewels of India”, “A Little Paradise”, “A Flower on Lofty Heights” and “the Switzerland of India”.¹⁰

In the olden days, Manipur was known by the neighbouring states by different names which were given to it. In Rennell’s Memoir and Maps of India it was called ‘Mecklay’. In the narrative of Symes and in Maps of that period, Manipur was called ‘Cassey’. To the Shans it was known as ‘Kase’ and to the Burmese as ‘Kathe’, a corruption of the same word; the Ahomes called it ‘Makeli’ and the Cacharis ‘Mavli’, while the old Assamese name for it was ‘Moglan’.¹¹

There are also a number of explanations showing how the state got the name ‘Manipur’. According to some, it came to be known because there was much diamond ore in the area in ancient times; ‘mani’ meaning diamond and ‘pur’ place. The legend goes like this: when the country was at one time water logged, Lord Shiva and Uma, who in Manipur were known as Nongpokningthou and Panthoibi respectively descended upon it and performed the Lai Haraoba dance. The entire country was lit up day and night by the snake God Ananta who came to see the dance with the magic gem ‘mani’ on his hood. From this, the land was named Manipur, ‘The City of Gem’.¹²

1.2. Geographical features of Manipur

Geographically, Manipur is bounded on the north by Nagaland, on the east by the Surma Tract and upper Chindwin of Myanmar, on the south by Chin Hills (Myanmar) and Mizoram and on the west by the Cachar District of Assam. It covers an area of 22,327 sq. km., which constitutes only 0.68 per cent of the total area of the Indian Union and is one of the smallest states in India. The state is situated between 92°58' E and 94°45' E longitudes and 23°50' N and 25°42' N latitudes.¹³ It occupies a proud place in the galaxy of States with exquisite natural beauty and splendour as well as cultural distinctiveness. In the words of Mrs. St. Clair Grimwood, "it is a pretty place more beautiful than many of the show places of the world."¹⁴ According to Roy, it is one of the beautiful spots of the earth and rightly called "The Jewel of India."¹⁵ Still another scholar Ghosh described the state as the gem of India, her velvety green fields; transparent lakes, zigzag streams and bracing climate induce a visitor to feel as if he or she is in Kashmir.¹⁶

According to its physical features, the state may broadly be divided into two parts, viz., the hills and the valley. The hills comprise five districts, namely Senapati, Tamenglong, Churachandpur, Chandel and Ukhrul, while the valley is comprised of the districts of Bishnupur, Thoubal, Imphal East and Imphal West. The average elevation of the valley is 790 meters above sea level. The hills are spread from north to south with an average height ranging between 1500-1800 metres.¹⁷ There is also a proposal of a new district called 'Sadar Hills' that is to be carved out from Senapati District.

In the field of communication, two National Highways run through the State. NH-39 links Imphal with the railway head of Dimapur in Nagaland at a distance of 215 km. to the North and NH-53 with Silchar in Assam towards the South West. The State also is connected by air with Guwahati, Dimapur, Calcutta and Delhi.¹⁸

1.3. Population of the state

The state of Manipur is the homeland of a bewildering variety of peoples and kindred, tribes and tongues. In diversity of population, no other part of the world of its size can rival it. The present composition of its population may be broadly classified under five main groups: (1) The Meiteis, (2) The Scheduled caste Meiteis (3) The Kuki-Chin-Mizos (4) The Nagas and (5) The Muslims.

Table.1. District Population 2001

District	Male	Female	Total
Senapati	196,646	182,568	379,214
Tamenglong	57,994	53,499	111,493
Churachandpur	114,740	113,967	228,707
Bishnupur	102,772	103,135	205,907
Thoubal	183,338	183,003	366,341
Imphal West	218,947	220,585	439,532
Imphal East	197,710	196,070	393,780
Ukhrul	73,413	67,533	140,946
Chandel	61,778	60,936	122,714
Total	1,207,338	1,181,296	2,388,634

(Source: http://www.neportel.ogr/northeastfiles/Manipur/Population/Districts_2001)¹⁹

Table.2. Total Population, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe population by sex and place of Residence, Manipur state, District. 2001. (Excluding the population of Mao Maram, Paomata and Purul Sub-division of Senapati)

Place of Residence	Sex	Total Population	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribe
Total	Person	2,166,788	60,037	741,141
	Male	1,095,634	29,934	374,319
	Female	1,071,154	30,103	366,822
Senapati	Person	156,513	238	122,791
	Male	86,230	143	61,785
	Female	76,283	95	61,006
Tamenglong	Person	111,499	3	106,349
	Male	58,014	3	54,020
	Female	23,485	0	52,329
Churachandpur	Person	227,905	205	212,482
	Male	117,232	197	107,002
	Female	110,673	26	105,480
Bishnupur	Person	208,368	2,727	6,143
	Male	104,550	842,	3,064
	Female	66,618	866	3,079
Thoubal	Person	364,140	33,969	4,274
	Male	182,250	16,640	2,200
	Female	181,890	17,329	2,074
Imphal West	Person	444,382	13,276	21,118
	Male	221,781	6,646	10,478
	Female	222,601	6,630	10,640
Imphal East	Person	394,876	10,409	24,712
	Male	198,371	5,374	12,382
	Female	196,505	5,035	12,330
Ukhrul	Person	140,778	0	134,493
	Male	74,465	0	68,696
	Female	67,313	0	65,797

Chandel	Person	118,327	210	108,779
	Male	50,741	107	54,692
	Female	58,586	103	54,087

(Source: census 2001)²⁰

According to the 2001 census, the population of Manipur is 2,388,634, representing only 0.22 per cent of the total population of India, while the tribals constitute 632,173 persons-1,207,338 males and 1,181,296 females. The tribals represent 34.41 per cent of the total population while their women represent 30.05 per cent of the total female population of the state. Out of the total population, 57.67 per cent of Manipur is Hindus, 34.11 per cent are Christians, 7.27 per cent Muslims, 0.07 per cent Jains, 0.17 per cent Sikhs, 0.04 per cent Buddhists and 0.77 per cent belongs to other religion.

1.4. Rural-Urban Composition of Population

Out of the total population of 2,388,634 persons found in Manipur as per the provisional totals of 2001 Census, a total of 570,410 persons representing 23.88 percent of the total population are found residing in urban areas. The corresponding figures in 1991 Census are 505,645 persons (27.52 percent). It means that while the absolute number of urban dwellers has increased by 64,765 persons during 1991-2001, the proportion of urban population to the total population has declined by 3.64 percent in 2001 Census. The share of the rural sector, therefore, shows an increase by the same proportion during the period.

Table.3. The pattern of the rural-urban composition of the population at the state level for 1991 and 2001 is presented below.

Rural	Persons	Males	Females	% of total population
1991	1,331,504	682,395	649,109	72.48
2001	1,818,224	923,428	894,796	76.12
Absolute increase	486,720	241,033	245,687	
Urban	Persons	Males	Females	
1991	505,645	255,964	249,681	27.52
2001	570,410	283,910	286,500	23.88
Absolute increase	64,765	27,946	36,819	

(Source: census 2001)²¹

1.5. Growth of Population

The growth rate of population for any decade for census purposes may be defined as the percentage of the difference in population between the two censuses divided by the population of the previous census. Based on the provisional population figures of 2001 Census, the percentage of the decadal growth rate of the state and the districts for the period 1991-2001 shows the decadal growth rate of the rural areas higher than that of the urban areas. The growth of population for the rural areas during the period is 36.55 percent against the growth rate of 12.81 percent for the urban areas. As stated above, until 1961, Manipur continued to have only one town. With the influx of the rural population to the urban areas, the number of towns increased to 8 in 1971 and 32 in 1981. Consequently, the urban population has also grown suddenly to 108.95 percent during 1961-1971 and to an all-time high growth rate of 165.36 percent during 1971-81. The growth in the urban population from the census

context is, however, affected not only by the increase or decrease in population due to the demographic factors of births, deaths or migration but also because of addition of fresh areas as new urban places or deletion of existing urban areas.

Table.4. The progress of population by rural and urban sectors for the periods from 1901 to 2001 is shown below.

Year	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951
Rural	212,231	271,572	304,013	359,802	412,353	574,773
Urban	72,234	74,650	80,003	85,804	99,716	2,862
Year	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	-
Rural	712,320	931,261	1,045,493	1,331,504	1,818,224	-
Urban	67,717,	141,492	375,460	505,645	570,410	-

(Source: Census 2001)²²

The population structure of Manipur is unique with 34.41 percent hill people and the Meiteis, constitute nearly two thirds of the total population. In addition, there are about one lakh Manipuri Muslims. Technically, it is a multilingual state, but dominated by the Meiteis, Manipuri speaking group who are overwhelmingly found in the valley of about 700 sq. miles. The valley is encircled by mountain ranges and contains about 76 per cent of the population of the state. In conclusion, we can say that Manipur thus with her pluralistic society presents a picture of homogeneity and heterogeneity within a multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-lingual base of civilization and culture.

1.6. Population-land ratio

The population number of India is closely related to the carrying capacity of the land. It is more so in the case of Manipur, as agriculture is the sole support of more than 70 percent of the people here, and the cultivated land is highly

limited. Therefore, crude population density alone cannot reflect the actual situation of the density in the state. The physiological density and agricultural density of the areas rather convey a real picture of the pressure of population on land here.

The physiological density of the state as a whole is 632 persons per sq. km. This shows very clearly that the population in the state is not as low as reflected by the numerical density. In the valley region the highest physiological density is found in the Imphal West Block I (1070 persons per sq. Km) followed by the Imphal West block II (1000 per sq. Km). The blocks of Bishnupur, Thoubal and Jiribam have physiological density of 700, 790 and 640 persons per sq.km., respectively. Still these figures are much higher than the numerical density. The high concentration of people is thus evident in the entire valley region. This situation in the hill region also is no less acute. The physiological density is of the order of 501 to 1000 per square km in the blocks of Mao-Maram, Sadar hills East, Sadar hills west, Nungba, Chandel, Tengnoupal, Chakpikarong, Ukhrul central, Churachandpur and Singat. In the remaining blocks, it varies from 200-500 per sq. km. In the case of agriculture, the density varies from 144 persons per sq. km in Phungyar block to 402 persons in the Tipaimukh block. In the Jiribam it is 152 persons per sq km. In the valley region it varies from 140-180 persons per sq km. The present agricultural density in the state which is greatly lacking land-resources strongly suggests that the pressure of population on its land-resources is intense. Unless a balance between human resources and natural and other resources are maintained the present conditions may deteriorate further in the near future.

1.7. Distribution of major ethnic groups

Manipur is comprised of numerous distinctive ethnic groups, who arrived at various times and contributed to the growth of the civilization in this hilly state in India's northeastern frontier.²³ So far as the distribution of ethnic groups in Manipur is concerned, except for the Meiteis, all groups are distributed in different areas in the state. The majority of the Meiteis are concentrated in the Manipur Valley part of the Jiribam Basin. They constitute about 55 percent of the total population of the State. The Muslim population is 7.0 per cent of the total population of the state. Like the Meiteis, they are plain dwellers. They are found mainly in some pockets of the valley region such as Lilong, Mayang Imphal, Yairipok, Khetrigao, Sora and Kwakta. The Nepalese are mostly concentrated in the Sadar Hills of the Senapati district, where more than 50 percent of their people lived. They constitute about 2.65 percent of the state population. The Bengali population of Manipur is mostly distributed in the southern part of the valley and the Jiribam basin with 1.5 percent of the state population.

Of the tribal groups, the Thadous who are scattered in different parts of the hill districts make up about 5 percent of the State's population. However, majority of them are found in the Churachandpur district. The Hmars are concentrated in the blocks of Tipaimukh and Churachandpur, and they represent about 2 percent of the population of the state. The Vaipheis constitute about 1.03 percent and majority of them are found in the Churachandpur district. The Marings and Anals are found in the blocks of Tengnoupal subdivision and Chandel town and they constitute 1 percent of the State population. The Tangkhuls are largely concentrated in the Ukhrul district and constitute 5.01 percent of the state's total

population. The Maos and Marams are confined in the Senapati district. They represent about 4 percent of the total population. The Kabuis (Zaliangrongs) constitute 3.18 percent of the State's total population. They are mainly concentrated in the Tamenglong district and in some pockets of Manipur valley. The Paite people make up about 2 percent of the population and are mostly confined to the Churachandpur district. The Meiteis are the dominant ethnic group, consisting of about 55 percent of the state's total population. The various groups belonging to the Scheduled Tribes are scattered in the hill areas, and now a large proportion of tribal population may be found in the valley region, particularly in and around Imphal Town.

1.8. THE PEOPLE

As mentioned earlier, the present population composition of Manipur may be broadly classified as the Meiteis, the Scheduled caste Meiteis, the Kuki-Chin-Mizos, the Nagas and the Muslims. The Kuki-Chin-Mizos and the Nagas inhabited the hill areas of the state, whereas the Meiteis, the Scheduled caste Meiteis, and the Muslims are the main inhabitants of the valley besides some tribals, the Mayangs and other Indians.

1.8.1. THE MEITEIS

The Meiteis are the dominating group of the people of Manipur. They are concentrated in the three valley districts such as: Imphal, Bishnupur and Thoubal Districts.²⁴ The civilization here is rural and the economic life of the people is not defined by capitalism. The Meiteis were Hinduized during the eighteenth century and yet simultaneously followed their traditional religion. They are probably the sole exception in the history of the world who follow two

religions at the same time. The land of the Meiteis was known by several names, such as Meitei Leipak, Kangleipak, etc. Mongoloid in physical features, belonging to the Tibeto-Burman Linguistic group, and professing the Radha-Krishna cult, Meiteis may be considered one of the most talented group of people in the history. Their talents were not limited to any particular sphere; however, they proved their excellence especially in areas such as weaving, handicrafts, dance, music and even games.²⁵

T.C. Hodson is of the opinion that the group name “Meithei” has been derived from Mi=man and thei=separate. But Brian H. Hodgson, in a footnote to *A Contribution to the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1853*, expressed the view that in the Moitay of Manipur, we have the combined appellations of the Siamese Tai and the Cochin Chinese ‘May’. However, in view of the great Shan influence over the culture and politics of Manipur, it is difficult, especially on linguistic grounds, to group the Meitheis with the Tai races when the structure and vocabulary of the Meithei language alike agree with those of the Tibeto-Burman races.

It is also said that a small section of the Meiteis strongly believes that they are of western descendant. However, on linguistic and anthropometric grounds this idea is quite untenable. The modern Meitei race is a composite formed out of several tribes. The fertile valley of Manipur witnessed invasions of different tribes from time immemorial. At different periods the Nagas, the Kukis, the Shans, and the Chins settled in this land and over time merged into the Meitei community.²⁶

The Meiteis mainly inhabited the main valley of the state. Their Mongoloidness in physical features is evident from the fact that their men are muscular and stout with well-developed chests and hard limbs, possessing enormous stamina and muscular power. Their improvised Mongol features distinguished them from the other Mongolian races. Their features are strikingly different than that of their neighbours, the Nagas and the Kukis, as well as the nearest to them, the Burmese. Their hair is generally coarse and black, very few grow beards, and moustaches are not in fashion. The women are beautiful with improved Mongol features such as slightly sharp facial features. Instant identification of a Meitei woman is the improvisation in the eye sockets, the flatness of the nose, the thickness of the lips and the progression of the cheeks. The complexion varies from dark to fair, but in general the women are either fair whitish or dark. Their hair is luxuriant and one rarely finds a woman with grey hair.

The dress of a man is white kurta, dhoti and pagari and they are distinct and specific for particular ceremonial occasions. The woolen 'endi' or silk shawl is wrapped around the body over the white kurta and dhoti. Pants, shirt, and coat are also common, especially with the young and office-goers. The women dress themselves with *choli* to cover the upper part of the body and a skirt type garment called '*phanek*' which is wrapped around the waist up to the ankles, and they are fond of gold ornaments. The possession of gold is considered a sign of wealth. They wear earrings of various designs as well as necklaces and bracelets.

Col. McCulloch described their houses as well being adapted to the climatic conditions. The rich construct their houses on the posts and beams with wood, and the poor with bamboo. The walls of both types are made of reeds plastered with a

mixture of earth and cow-dung, and the roofs of all are thatched with grass. All dwelling houses face eastward, with a large open verandah facing in this direction. In villages, some affluent people have replaced these old types with cement, brick and concrete material. The villages are established with a cluster of a few houses in pockets distributed throughout the valley. The habitation can be marked by the growth of groves in and around the village; the rest is left for cultivation and is covered with paddy fields where no trees are generally grown.

Agriculture and cottage industry are the main occupations for the majority. While men and women jointly work in the fields, women weave at home and sell their products in the market. The embroidery works of the Meitei women are diverse and excellent. They keep their houses, clothing and utensils very clean.

The Meitei society is very democratic and is hardly affected by the caste system. They are easy-going people. Singing, dancing, and fishing are indispensable parts of their social life. Both men and women have active social lives. Their women are highly respected; nobody disobeys them.²⁷ The Meitei women do not suffer from seclusion; they are hard workers and share the burden of the family with the male members even outside the home. This may be not so for the traditional Hindu women of other parts of the country, where she is expected to stay at home and do household chores. She is confined to the home in the name of discharge of the duty of the motherhood. The concept of beauty on the part of a woman has subjected her to exploitation. The mother has to nourish the child; she has to rear it and she has to look after its needs and welfare.

The wife should consider her husband as God, serve and worship him in spite of the fact that he is devoid of character that he is lustful and that he does not possess any semblance worth.²⁸ In towns, the Meitei women keep themselves busy selling small merchandise articles. Some of them run big textile shops while some are retailers, grocers, etc. In rural areas their main occupation is working in fields and fishing. In general, weaving and basket-making are the main interests of a Meitei woman. It is said that there used to be looms even in the palace. In every house a loom is installed and women are on the job. They are expert in the art of weaving. Their men have a special aptitude and are known for their craftsmanship. The common profession among men is agriculture, although now the educated ones also seek official jobs and some are engaged in different kinds of businesses.

The principal agricultural crop for the Meiteis is paddy. All kinds of vegetables, such as cabbage, carrots, radishes, beetroots, turnips, lady fingers, pumpkins and pulses are grown and the yield is very good. In some areas different kinds of fruits are also grown. In agriculture, specifically food-grains, Meiteis have always been advanced and self-sufficient. Rice is the staple food. Wheat is not eaten in the form of chapatti or otherwise. In the town some people eat bread at breakfast but in the villages there is no concept of a breakfast. Both the morning and evening meals will include rice along with dal, vegetables and fish. Dried fish is very popular.

Fishing is a hobby as well as a profession. The peripheral banks of Loktak Lake are inhabited by fishermen. It is a common sight to see women engaged in fishing with the help of weirs, traps, fishing nets, spears and fishing baskets in lakes, ponds, rivers and marshes. It is quite interesting to watch a woman fishing with the

square net. The suspended net is raised by applying a sufficient force, her feet are firmly fixed to the ground making an oblique bend to her body at the knees and the hips, and then she makes a pull with hands to the central pole of the net. Fish is a common dietary food for the Meiteis. Most of them do not eat meat and are purely vegetarians, and fish is considered to be vegetarian.

The religious faith of the Meiteis is Vaishnavite Hinduism. The traditional Meitei religion was based on animism, so we find that some indigenous rituals have amalgamated with Meitei Hinduism.²⁹

1.8.1.1. Genesis of gotra system

The Meiteis are divided into seven *saleis* (clans): Ningthouja, Khoomon, Looan, Angom, Moirang, Ngangba and Chengloi. All such *saleis* consist of a number of sub-groups called Yumnaks, the number varying from 115 in the Ningthouja (Royal clan) to seventeen in the Ngangba. The Meiteis are exogamous regarding the clans or *saleis* into which they are divided, but are endogamous regarding members of other tribes. There are subsidiary rules as well, for example, the Looangs are forbidden to take their wives from among the Khoomons, and the Moirangs are not permitted to marry the Khabananbas. According to the Vaishnava cult of Hinduism which is prevalent in Manipur, the seven *saleis* originated from different limbs of Guru.

1. Ningthouja from the left eye.
2. Angom from the right eye.
3. Chengloi from the right ear.
4. Ngangba from the left ear.
5. Looang from the right nostril.

6. Khoomon from the left nostril.
7. Moirang from the teeth.

The advent of Hinduism assigned different gotras to these clans, and in the process the preachers of the Vaishnava cult were responsible for seizing for the Meiteis the best lot of the prevalent gotras among the Hindus. Thus, though Ningthouja was assigned the Brahminic *Shandilya* gotra, others such as the Angom, Chengloi, Ngangba, Looang, Khoomon and the Moirang groups have been assigned Kausika, Bharadwaj, Noimisha, Kashyap, Modkoilya and Ateya gotras respectively. The Brahmadev (the creating of the Universe) had sprung out from the Navel lotus of Narayan (the protecting God of the Universe), Marichi Muni (a Hindu sage) was born from the limbs of Brahmadev' Marichi's son Kashyap Muni's son Shaborna Muni; Indra Muni's son Chitrabirja; Chitrabirja's son Chitra Sarba' Chitra Sarba's son Chitra Rath; Chitra Rath's son Chitra Bhanu; Chitra Bhanu had no son, only a daughter named Chitrangada; Chitrangada's son Babrubahan; Babrubahan's son Suprabahu; Suprabahu's son Pakhangba (jobista) Pakhangba was the first ruling king of Manipur.”³⁰

1.8.1.2. The spread of Hinduism and its Impact

The spread of the Ramayana-Mahabharata tradition in the predominantly tribal Manipur Valley has an interesting history. Though the early history of Manipur is shrouded in mystery, there is some evidence to show that the Valley, like the Brahmaputra Valley, had links with the rest of India in the seventh century; the Meitei king Naothing Khong who ascended the throne in A.D. 633 married a Hindu princess from north India. The regular Brahmins settlements were made in the fifteenth century and the process of migration of Brahmins to Manipur

continued thereafter. The young Brahmins came to Manipur single and married to the Meitei women. It is reasonable to assume that the impact of Ramayana-Mahabharata tradition became more vigorous thereafter, influencing the religious and spiritual world of the indigenous Meiteis.

The reigns of two Meitei kings, Charai Rongba and Garib Niwas, are important when considering the spread of Hinduism in Manipur. During the reign of Charai Rongba (1697-1706) Vaishnav Hinduism became a dominant force. In 1704, the first emissaries of Vaishnavism (the Nimbarka school) came to Manipur and the king and his family were initiated into this sect. Although the king himself formally took the sacred thread he did not attempt to establish Hinduism as the state religion or neglect the worship of the traditional *lai* and the observance of the Meitei beliefs. However, Garib Niwas (1708-1748) made Vaishnavism the official religion of the state. The principal influence in him was Santidas, a Brahmin who came to Manipur from Sylhet and introduced the worship of Ram and Hanuman. He became the Guru of Garib Niwas, and the Ramanandi School replaced the Nimbarka. The Krishna theme came to Manipur as a result of Chaitanya's influence, again via Sylhet, and it became particularly popular in the second half of the eighteenth century. With these developments, the earlier religion of the Meiteis popularly known as *lais*, which included forest gods, snake-worship, stone-worship and human sacrifice began to change.³¹

Everyone knows that Hinduism in Manipur is of recent origin and even Gambhir Singh, technically a Hindu, once ordered a Brahmin to eat a pet goose which had died from his neglect at a time when he was entrusted to its care. Colonel McCulloch stated in 1858 that as many as 300 deities of animistic origin "are still

propitiated by appropriate sacrifices of things abhorrent to real Hindoos." Among these were *Lam Lai*, the nature God in charge of the rain, *Imung Lai*, the household deity, *Sena Mehi*, (Sanamahi) the deity of success, *Noongshaba*, the deity of creation of the rocks and stones and *Laiching*, the hill deity.

Even during the reign of Pamheiba, the Brahmins were associated with the worship of the popular deities like: *Panthoibi*, *Taibong*, *Khombi* and *Yumthoi Lai*. The spread and consolidation of Hinduism could not eliminate the influence of the deities which led Hodson to remark as late as in 1908:

"It is difficult to estimate the precise effect of Hinduism on the civilization of the people, for to the outward observer they seem to have adopted only the festivals, the outward ritual, the caste marks and the exclusiveness of Hinduism, while all unmindful of its spirit and inward essentials."³²

This explains why the Meiteis, in spite of their decisive transformation from tribe to the fold of caste, preferred to preserve their identity, in their system of naming, their Hindu name being prefixed and suffixed by indigenous expressions. Today the revivalist thinking is threatening to shake off the bond of Hindu religion and the idea of Meitei identity is so dominant that there has been a demand to recognize the Meiteis in the list of Scheduled Tribes. Apparently religion has failed to act as a cohesive force in the society, and what is more significant is the desire to move from caste to tribe. About 34.41 percent of the population of Manipur is Scheduled Tribes belonging to 29 different tribes.³³

Hinduism entered the Meitei society in the year 1737 when a preacher from Baisnav cult, Shanti Das Gosain, entered the Meitei society. He converted King Pamheiba and gradually manipulated the King to declare the new faith as Royal religion. The Hinduised Pamheiba assumed the name Garib Niwaz and has been

known as King Garib Niwaz since then. Shanti Das Gosain was more a politician than a saint, and he wanted to grab the administrative power with the help of the King, his latest follower. At his instigation, the King burned all religious books existing in the society so that he would have supremacy through the religion. The famous event, known as “Puran Meitheiba,” is still celebrated by Meiteis. However, the burning of important books on culture and religion has created a vacuum so that important information about ancient Meitei society, rich in cultural heritage, is missing.

The Meitei culture today is a mixture of their traditional culture brought down from generations and the Hinduised Meitei culture, with the influence of Radha-Krishna culture. It may be noted that Meiteis, while being Baisnav, followed the Baisnav rituals and festivals like holi, Rath yatra with Radha-Krishna, Narayan etc. as other deities following their traditional festivals like Lai Haraoba etc. On the other hand, they invite the Meiba and Meibi for the rituals. While analyzing their folk culture, the influence of both cultures can be noticed.

The Meitei society is a society of festivals. Their festivals depict their rich cultural heritage demonstrated by their beautiful rhythms of music, dance and songs. The most colourful and principal festival of Meiteis is Laiharaoba which means rejoicing of the Gods (Lai = Deity and Haraoba = to make merry). The festival starts from the temple of Lord Thangjing at Moirang sometime in February.³⁴

1.8.2. THE SCHEDULED CASTE OF MANIPUR

The Caste system was not practiced in early Meitei society in Manipur, but with

the advent of Hinduism, they began to imitate the caste system of the Hindus. The idea of untouchability became part of the thinking of the Hindu Meiteis. There was even a time in Meitei society when the Meiteis degraded other Meiteis who did not adopt Hinduism; they did not mix with them nor eat and sit with them.³⁵

Manipur has passed through three phases of religious change; Hinduism in the 18th century which led to Sanskritization of the Hindu Meitei society based on caste system, conversion of the hill tribes into Christianity since the early 20th century leading to the transformation of the traditional tribal society towards westernization or modernization and Sanamahi religious movement in the mid-twentieth century facilitating a process of desanskritization among the Meiteis.³⁶

There are seven listed scheduled Caste communities in Manipur according to the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe amendment act, 1976 (No.108 of 1976). They are (1) Loi (2) Yaithibi (3) Namsudra (4) Patni, (5) Ravidas (6) Sultradhar and (7) Dhobi. Most of them are mainly concentrated in the valley districts of Imphal, Thoubal and Bishnupur.³⁷ According to Das, the Loi constitutes the largest single group among these communities, accounting for about 68 percent of the total scheduled caste population of the state.³⁸ However, they were treated as different tribe by the other Meiteis. This is evident from Bino Devi's observation, "Loi communities did not adopt Hinduism. And for a long time, they were treated as a separate tribe even though they belong to the same clans of the Meiteis. This attitude of treating the 'lois' as the lower caste by the Meiteis is an important factor for them to be included in the scheduled caste

even though their habits are quite different from other scheduled castes of the country.”³⁹

The term ‘Loi’ generally stands for the people who preserve the pre-Hinduist tradition and customs of the Meiteis. It also refers to the people who were banished to the penal colonies, namely, Sugnu, Ithing and Thanga as a punitive measure for some offences. There are eight Loi villages in Manipur, of which seven are on the western fringe of the valley and one on the eastern fringe. They speak a dialect known as Chakpa, worship the natural gods and goddesses like Koubru, Wangren, Sanamahi and still pursue their traditional occupations, such as pottery works, sericulture, distillation of liquor, rearing of pigs. They were included in the list of scheduled castes only in 1956 on the basis of an application submitted by Kh Chaoba, President of the ‘Chakpa-speaking Loi Association’ to the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Tribal Welfare.

Hodson writes:

“Khaganba seems to have been the first monarch to make use of the Loi villages as places of detention for prisoners, for he is said to have sent captives, taken on a raid against Nagas probably in the neighbourhood of Maram in the north to Sugnu in the year 1645 A.D.”⁴⁰

The Loies claim that they are the autochthones of Manipur and their traditional customs, still being preserved, are the same as those of the Meitei customs prior to their embracing of Hinduism. In any case, the Loi very closely resemble the Meitei and, except for a few characteristic features, are almost indistinguishable from them. Hodson has gone a step further by proposing a common origin of the Loi and the Meitei.

He writes:

“In discussing the origin of the Loi communities I found it necessary to set in

array facts which clearly show that they are for the most part of the same origin as their Meitei masters.”⁴¹

There is, however, the popular notion that the Lois are a different set of people because of the offensive occupation pursued by them. Brown also considered the Lois to be a degraded group. Even among the Lois, some hold the opinion that the term ‘Loi’ is derogatory and the actual term should be Chakpa, which signifies the language spoken by them. The Lois are agriculturists, distillers, potters, and they also practice sericulture. At Andro and Thongjow the Lois are handmade potters, at Phayeng they rear silkworms, while the people of Sekmai, Khurkhul and Koutruk are principally agriculturists. Moreover, the Sekmai people have a good reputation for distilling liquor, which is also a traditional calling for the women. In the past, liquor-making was the main occupation of the people. Liquor is distilled from rice. The residue after distillation becomes food for the pigs. The liquor they manufactured had a wide market. Almost invariably, all Sekmai houses were thriving centres for selling distilled liquor. There was a time when, even in the open market, it was sold by the women. Among the customers were people belonging to the Naga and Kuki tribes from the adjoining hill areas. They used to come down to Sekmai and buy liquor regularly. Undoubtedly, liquor-making and selling enhanced the economic condition of the people of Sekmai. The village has still the reputation of being generally more prosperous than other villages dependent mainly on agriculture. The people of Phayeng also distil liquor, and the tribals living to the west of Phayeng often come to the village in search of distilled liquor. Distillation of liquor was officially banned in the year 1959 under the Bengal and Assam Excise Act of 1010. Since then, the people of Sekmai, including men of status, have consistently demanded from the Government some relaxation in the

enforcement of prohibition. One of the memoranda submitted by the Loi Association to the Prime Minister of India on 16.7.1979 states:

“Scheduled caste women (Lois) maintain their livelihood by distilling and selling liquor. Since 1959 distillation of liquor has been prohibited. We have been consistently demanding substitute work to our women, but still the Government of Manipur is neglecting us without paying any attention to it.”⁴²

The villagers drew a comparison between pre- and post- prohibition days and almost all of them invariably said that economically they were much better off during those days when the manufacture of liquor at the household level was their main occupation. Cultivation was nothing more than a side attraction to them. Apparently, the difference in the potential earning from the two occupations has relegated agriculture to a secondary position. Even today, liquor is manufactured surreptitiously in many houses. During the ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death, people are entertained with liquor. Incidentally, distillation of liquor and rearing of pigs are generally considered by the Meiteis to be a symbol of inferior status.

Silk threads spun by the Lois are distributed through open markets. It may be pointed out here that except for the Meiteis of Chairen village, who are treated with scant regard by others, particularly the status-conscious among them, the Lois are the only people in the valley to turn handmade pots. The pots turned and the silk thread spun by the Lois caters to the needs of the valley population.⁴³

In conclusion, it could be stated that the scheduled castes in Manipur in general present a rather unique and interesting picture in the sense that they constitute a very small segment of the total population (1.7%) and yet live as a part of a

wider society in a situation where the caste system is almost non-existent.

1.8.3. THE SCHEDULED TRIBES

Besides the Meiteis and the Scheduled Caste groups, the other ethnic groups that lived in Manipur are the Scheduled tribes. The Scheduled Tribes of Manipur are broadly divided into two: the Kuki Tribes and the Naga Tribes. As already mentioned, these tribes are 29 in all.⁴⁴

1.8.3.1. THE KUKIS

The Kukis are one of the indigenous tribes of the Indian Union, having close affinity with the Mizos in Mizoram and Chins in Myanmar.⁴⁵ Gangmumei, in his article, *Glimpses of Land and Peopple of Ancient Manipur*, describes the Kuki tribes of Manipur as a group of the great Kuki-Chin family of People. They are linguistically related to the Meiteis. He further states that, Kuki is a genuine term covering a large number of tribes and clans in north eastern India and some part of Upper Burma in Chin Hills, Kuki is a foreign (Bengali) word meaning hill man. They migrated to Manipur hills in the pre-historic times along with or after the Meitei advent (early 18th century) in Manipur Valley.⁴⁶ There are many more such theories related to the term "kuki". However, the origin of the term "Kuki" is obscure. There are no written documents or monumental inscriptions to trace their history. Moreover, they had limited contact with their neighboring people, which make the task even more difficult.

There are diverse views and opinions presented by different writers and scholars, none of which, to this day have been universally accepted. The most commonly accepted view is that they originated from *Khul* (Lit. A cave, or a fortified place), which is analogous to *Sinlung* and *Chhinlung* versions.⁴⁷

According to Ch. Budhi Singh, the then Head of the the Department of Anthropology, Manipur University, "the Kukis are known in the state as early as AD 33."⁴⁸ The Kuki-Chin is both a linguistic and an ethno-cultural entity. Linguistically, the Kuki-Chin is a sub-family of the Tibeto-Burman comprised of the Kuki, Chin, Mizo (Zo, Zomi) and the Meitei (Manipuri) languages, on the basis of the linguistic classification adopted by G.A. Grierson, in his "The Linguistic Survey of India." As an ethno-cultural entity the term excludes the Meitei but covers the Kuki, Chin, Mizo (Zo, Zomi) and other cognate tribes and clans. The evolution of this composite name is an outcome of the colonial imposition of a common identity and a search for common ethnic identity on the part of the Kuki-Chin-Mizo people themselves.

Historically speaking, the first reference was made to the *Kuki* in 1777, when these tribesmen attacked British subjects in Chittagong when Warren Hastings was the Governor General of Bengal. According to J.H. Hutton, the name Kuki first appeared in the writing of Rawlins on "the Cucis or Mountaineers of Tripura" in *Asiatic Researches* (II. xii). E.T. Dalton mentions that the Kukis were first known from an article written by Surgeon Mecrea in *Asiatic Researches* Vol. VII, on 24th January, 1799, describing the Kukis as a "nation of hunters and warriors." T.H. Lewin, another frontier officer and ethnographer, refers to the account of the Cucis or inhabitants of the Hill Tiperah written by J. Rennel, the Chief Engineer of Bengal in 1800. The Meitei name for the Kukis is *Khongsai* or *Khongjai*, and as such R.B. Premberon (1835) refers to them as *Khongjuees*. *Khongsai* is one of the ancestral lineages of the Kukis. The Kukis are a powerful and independent people who are known to the Bangalees by the name of *Kookie* and the Burmese as the *Lankhe*." ⁴⁹

The Kuki-Chin-Mizo group in Manipur includes the Anal, Aimol, Biete Chin, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Hmar, Khotlang, Kom, Koirao, Koireng, Khelma, Lamkang, Lushai, Paite, Poi, Purum, Simte, Sukte, Thadou, Vaiphei, Zou, etc. Although blood-related brothers, the Chin-Kuki-Mizo groups had a serious setback in relation to integration and have widely divided today. **Of course, this process of transassociation has mostly a political overtone.⁵⁰ Tribes, such as the Anal, Aimol, who now prefer to call themselves Naga, originally belonged to the Kuki group.**

The Aimol are somewhat uncertain in their stand. In the case of Anal, common political aspirations are said to be at the root of their association with the Naga. The call for unity with the Nagas initially came from those who were well acquainted with the activities of underground Nagas operating in their area. There was also another agency through which Naga identity got a boost. They were the church leaders, mostly from the Tangkhul Naga tribe who popularized Naga as an ethnic label.

The Marings are one of the good examples who were motivated to call themselves Naga more by the church leaders than by any other agency. The modernization process is also instrumental in producing a group, which could no longer find effective socio-economic ties with their own people.⁵¹ From the above findings, it could be concluded that the term Kuki means hill man or mountaineer; the Kukis originated from *Khul* and are known in Manipur as early as A. D. 33.

1.8.3.1.1. Settlement

The land occupied by the Kuki-Chin speaking people extends roughly from a latitude of about 25 degrees 30 minutes North to about 20 degrees and 30 minutes North and falls between 92 degrees 20 minutes East. Presently, this region covers parts of different political areas as follows:

- (a) Assam: parts of Chachar, North Cachar Hills and Mikir Hills
- (b) Meghalaya: parts of the East (c) Mizoram: state
- (d) Nagaland: parts of extreme south (e) Tripura: part of the East
- (f) Manipur: state (except parts of the extreme North)
- (g) Myanmar: The Chin State, large groups including Tiddim-Falam and Haka are to be found, and parts of Magwe Division (Arakan Hill Tracts, Akyab, Kyakpyu and Sandoyway), where various southern Chin tribes are located and the Kabaw valley in upper Burma; (h) Bangladesh: Syllhet District and Chittagong Hill tracts.⁵²

The main bulk of Kuki-Chin ancestors lived in the Chindwin valley with the Shan for some centuries. Thus from around the 13th or 14th century CE, they started migrating in a westerly direction, for reasons which no satisfactory answer is available within the present state of scholarship.

These late migrants can be divided into two groups: the southern group consisting of Asho nad Sho or Khxou or Zo; and the other group, made up of Laimi (Poi, Mara, Haka etc.), Mizo (Lushai and allied tribes) and Kuki (Paite, Hmar, Gangte, Vaiphei, Thadou, Kom, Chiru etc.). This picture is a rough sketch and should not be taken as absolute because one will find, say a Hmar, for example, among Mizo, Thadou, Zomi. But this division, apart from having

some geographical convenience, has some synchronicity with the socio-cultural, religio-political, cultural-linguistic variations.⁵³ Some basic differences between southern and northern groups have been detected.

The southern group, first moving westward and slowly turning northerly to form the immediate neighbor of the southern group mentioned above. The northern group, from the southern boundary of Chin State to the northernmost North Cachar and Naga Hills formed more or less a homogeneous group in spite of many dialects that developed during the few centuries of expansion. The writer affirmed that some words are comprehensible between groups if they are patient enough to listen to each other.⁵⁴

1.8.3.1.2. Migration

The Kukis who migrated to Cachar and the North Cachar Hills of Assam in the 18th century became settled subjects without much trouble. Tarun Goswami has clearly indicated the cordial relationship between the Kukis and Tularam Senapati, the ruler of North Cachar Hills and consequently between the Kukis and the Dimasas. Actually it was Stewart, and later Soppitt, who were serving officers in these areas and who wrote first on the affinity between the Kukis, Lushai and Chin. The common identity of the Kuki was maintained in Assam (later in Nagaland). The twenty-eight clans were recognized as Scheduled Tribes under the category of *Any Kuki Tribe* in Assam.

Maharaja Nara Singh of Manipur settled the Kukis in Manipur hills with the assistance of Political Agent W.Mc Culloch. They were recruited to Manipur's armed forces. The Kukis formed a part of the army of the state before 1891. Maharaja Chandrakriti of Manipur (1850-1886) had a very close relationship

with them. Even the rebellion of 1917-1919 was officially called the Kuki Rebellion or the Kuki Punitive Measures. The official writers like R. Brown and E.W. Dun had already indicated the existence of various tribes who were settled in Manipur for more than a thousand years but speaking dialects peculiar to the Kuki-Chin speech. They have great affinity with the new migrants of the 18th and 19th centuries. These tribes were described by the British writers as Naga and Kuki.

As Manipur was an independent state, the British did not have the opportunity of direct administration before 1891; therefore, there was confusion over the identification of these tribes. They also invented the term *old Kuki* to be differentiated from the recent Kuki migrants, and this term was applied to the Manipur tribes with linguistic affinity with the Kukis. This classification was based on their linguistic and cultural affinities and difference in the period of their migration to their present habitat.⁵⁵

1.8.3.2. THE THADOUS

The Thadou-Kukis are a particular group within a larger Chin-Kuki-Mizo family. The appellation Thadou has been derived, according to their own version, from the word *'that'* meaning to kill and *'dou'* connoting war. The 'Thadou' literally conveys the sense of waging war against the enemies and killing them in order to protect themselves. Indeed, the British administrators who had to encounter the *Thadou gal* on many occasions, until they were suppressed in 1917-1919, knew them as brave and tough men in highland warfare.⁵⁶ P.C. Misao explains the meaning of the term 'Thadou' in this way: “‘*Tha*’ kill, ‘*dou*’ resist. It means ‘Killer of all who resisted or fought’.”⁵⁷

The word *Thadou* in general signifies a group of people speaking the Thadou dialect and having common customs and usages. The Thadou-Kuki includes; Kipgen, Haokip, Sitlhou, Lhouvum, Hangsing, Chongloi, Singson, Phoh-hil, Doungel, Changsan, Lhang-um, Sah-um, Lenthang, Thangeo, Insun, Jongbe, Mate, Lupho, Lupheng, Misao, Ngoilu, Lamhao, Thalhun, Lunkim, Baite, Guite, Kiluong, Touthang, Tuboi, Lotjem, Guite, Lhungdim, etc.

The Thadou-Kukis were known for their brave warriors. Though they were small in size they even resisted the mighty British occupier in Manipur. The years between 1917-1919 are known *the Kuki war of Independence* or *the Kuki Rebellion* or *the Thadou Gal*. The British policy to exert control over the hill people necessitated the imposition of land revenue, house tax and forced labor which fundamentally contradicted the existing laws of the natives. However, though the sending of the expeditionary forces against the hill areas of Manipur earned the appreciation of some minor tribes and smaller villages, the big and powerful villages considered them as an absolute interference in their own internal affairs. In the minds of the Thadou-Kukis the white men's laws proved that the British were *exploiters* and so they reacted violently against the British rule in 1917, bringing about tremendous political, economic and social change to the history of the Thadou-Kukis.

With the advent of the British, the influence of the chiefs declined and the importance of the Lambus, who acted as hill peons, interpreters and sometimes advisers to the British Officials, kept on multiplying. The Lambus took advantage of their contact with the rulers, who in the turn depended more and more on them, rather than the chiefs, for administrative purposes. Those chiefs,

who maintained a high status and good relationship with the Meitei Kings, resented the concept of *Lambus* superiority because they frequently over-ruled their judgments and enjoyed special treatment in every village through which they toured. These men were also responsible, in no small measure, for the rebellion. It is obvious that many *Lambus* took money from the hillmen, promising them that they would be free from recruitment. When the chiefs offered money instead of sending recruits, one of the chief commanders of the British soldiers and ordered them to either supply men or submit to punishment. The discontentment of the Thadous, coupled the whole population of the Manipur hills, especially the Thadou inhabited areas.

The Chief of Aishan, Chengjapao, head of all the Thadou-Kukis, sent orders to all the leading Thadou Chiefs to resist recruitment with force, if necessary.⁵⁸ The British authorities, under the direct command of Brig. Gen. Macquoiel, deployed in different sectors of the war 2400 riflemen in addition to 3000 riflemen of Burma Military Police. The eight sectors are Eastern, South Eastern, Southern, Western, Northern, Assam, Burma and Upper Burma. The two-year long encounter between the Kuki warriors and the British army came to a close when the British government announced a general amnesty with the call for general surrender.

The Kuki fighters on the whole had suffered a setback due to the lack of supplies, ammunition, and lack of support from their Naga neighbors, who in some cases even turned against the warriors, siding with the British armies. The long drawn-out war of the first Kuki war of Independence virtually came to a close on 20th May 1919. In the course of the war, according to L.W.

Shakespeare, eighty-six rebel villages were destroyed, 970 muskets confiscated in Manipur, 600 muskets confiscated in present day Burma. In order to cripple the Kuki nation, the British divided the land inhabited by Kukis into two, giving half to India and other half to Burma.⁵⁹ Therefore the Kukis are scattered not only in the north-east part of India but also Burma and Bangladesh as well.

From the brief discussion above, one gets a fair idea of the different sections of the Kuki-Chin race and their distribution on the vast border areas of three sovereign states. In tracing the origin of the Kuki or Chin or Mizo people, the above sketch is a minimum requirement, for the simple reason that they share a common tradition, religion, social and cultural life, language, etc. (the different dialects are not a barrier in conversation if the people are patient). But it is unfortunate that, unlike the Nagas, the Kuki-Chin are not eager to form a nation or unite in one body, preferring to be branded individually. This is most evident in Manipur so that one writer fittingly comments:

“For them (Kuki-Chin tribes) to understand each other's language is not a problem. But to unite themselves in one body is a very big problem. Interestingly the Nagas do not understand each other's language. They communicate with each other in Meitei. Yet to them to unite in one body as Naga is not a problem.”⁶⁰

1.8.3.2.1. Social structure

The traditional Thadou-Kuki social organization is based on patrician system of different families and clans. Each Family and clan professes to trace its descent through the male line to a common ancestor, whereas the female line is absorbed in the clan descent to her husband at marriage. They have numerous kinship terms designated to their relatives, such as, “*Gang*” (the man who marries the sister of an ego’s father), “*Ni*” (the sister of an ego’s father), “*Nu*”

(Mother), “*Pa*” (Father), “*Uh*” (Elder brother or sister), “*Nao*” (Younger brother or sister), “*Pi*” (Grandmother), etc. Every family has the household council called “*Insung Kivaipohna*” (family administration). It comprises of the family helper or stewards (*Tucha* and *Becha*), the maternal relatives (*Pute* or *Sung-gao*), and soul mates and partners (*Jol* and *Gol*).⁶¹

Tucha and *Becha* have great responsibilities and duties towards a family of their attachment. When a Thadou performs any function in his family, his *Tucha* and *Becha* take over all the charges and responsibilities for duly performing the function. Suppose, there is a marriage feast or any function in a family, the *Tucha* and *Becha* have to manage and supervise it. If any animal is killed for the function, it is the duty for the men *Tuchas* to clean its stomach portion, which is known to them as *sagilsah*, and the women *tuchas* (*tuchanupis*) fetch water for cooking and cleaning the vessels. Then the men *Bechas* cut the meat into pieces and cook it and the *Bechanupis* cook the rice. When everything is ready, the *Bechas* and the *Tuchas* serve the meals. The *Bechanupis* engage themselves in distributing rice and the men *Tuchas* in distributing the meat. When the feast is over the *Tuchas* and *Tuchanupis* clean all the utensils.

The *Tuchas* and *Bechas* enjoy a good status and an enviable position in the Thadou-Kuki family system although they are not born into it. Even in the event of a man killing a wild animal, the *Tucha* receives the waist portion known as *Sakong* of the killed animal and *Becha* gets the chest portion along with ribs of the same known as *Sa-om*. Besides that *Becha* and *Tucha* are invited to take the intestinal portion, which is especially prepared in the family. A part from the above mentioned duties and responsibilities, *Becha* has some other duties to

perform. In any important matter of a family, it is the *Becha* who takes the place of the head of the family. If anything happen in the absence of the head of the family, it is then the duty of the *Becha* to look after the matter and act on behalf of the head of that family. Such are the important functions of the *Becha* and *Tucha* whose participation as integral members of the Thadou family unit reinforces the strength and activities of the social unit.⁶²

Food always means rice to them. Next to rice, maize may be considered the most important staple, and boiling is the most popular culinary art among them.⁶³ “*Ju*” occupied the core of their socio-religio-cultural life without which no ceremonial and religious functions could be performed. However, this is now replaced by tea and the likes. The life of the people is guided by strong moral-ethical principles. The noteworthy ones are “*Tomngaihna*”⁶⁴ (a philanthropic voluntary service rendered to the needy people), and “*Jindot*” (Hospitality). The host is always expected to be hospitable to his/her guest, and he/she is responsible for the welfare and security of the guest. These moral precepts constitute the social order that regulates the social behavior within the society and are the spiritual fabric that had sustained the Thadou-Kuki society.

1.8.3.2.2. Economic

The traditional Economic system of the Thadou-Kukis is the subsistence economy. They manufactured almost all the things they need for their socio-economic requirements. Moreover, for the purpose of hunting and self-defense, they also manufactured swords, spears, bows and brass muzzle-loaded guns. Like the Chins of Myanmar, they also knew the technique of making gunpowder and bullets.⁶⁵ Shifting cultivation is the basis of the economy,

supplemented by hunting and food collection from the jungle. They also had a well organized corporate labour system in the economic pursuit. Such corporate works were organized in the village level by forming a member of labour group called *Lom*.

Lom is also an organization in which training for leadership is given to the young people of the village. Further, it is an organization in which the young ones learn a sense of duty and dignity of labour. This organization is in a way connected with the *Thih-kheng* office, because the success or failure of the organization depends upon the ability of the *Thih-kheng* to produce and to provide implement.⁶⁶

The *Lom* can be divided into different forms: “*Lompi*” (Big labor corps), “*Lomneo*” (Small labor corps), “*Lomlhang*” (General corps), and “*Lomgol*” (Colleague corps). These *Loms* may perform feast or functions as and when the job works are completed viz. finishing of mowing, clearing grasses in the *jhums*, reaping of the crops, transporting and depositing of the products of the *jhum* and construction of thatch-houses.⁶⁷

The function of *Lom* is concerned mainly with the economic development of the village. All the able-bodied men and women of the village join this organization, irrespective of age, sex and the capacity of the individual. Any household of the village can requisition the services of the *Lom*. The number will be credited to his (a *Lom* member) name and the same number of work he thus earns will be repaid to him by other members with labour. In this way, the *Lom* members reciprocate in helping each other and keeping the village, as far as possible, self-sufficient in the matter of physical labour. Sometimes the *Lom*

can be hired by any villagers or chief. In return, the members are given food and drink but this entertainment needs not be instantaneous. It may be on a later day when the person who engages the *Lom* is in a position to repay.

1.8.3.2.3. Political

The traditional Thadou-Kuki village is an important, social, economic and political unit. The village site is selected with reference to a good defense position and convenience of cultivation with water at hand.⁶⁸ Each village maintained a separate independent administrative unit, having the village chief called 'Kho-Haosa' as the administrative head, and his house serves as the village court. He governs in accordance to the customary laws with the assistance of his officials called "*Semang Pachong*", who are nominated and retained by him at his pleasure, and their verdict is final and binding. Customary Laws have been institutionalized by the Village Council or Village Organization under the leadership of the Chieftain with his Council of Minister popularly called the *Haosa System*. **The Village Council is composed of persons of wisdom, integrity and knowledge of Customary Laws. They are nominated by the office of the Village Chief. They remain in office as long as the *Haosa* is pleased.**

The Village Chief functions within the territorial jurisdiction where the village is the highest independent political unit. The *Haosa system* wields political authority and prerogative over the villagers in absolute terms. The Village Chief holds the supreme political power, economic control and supervision of social behaviour and norm. The position of the Village Chief is not elective but hereditary and it passes on from father to the eldest son. The primitive state is

not tyrannical to its subjects because the first and foremost, we know, that a primitive tribe is always a body of people related by bonds of kinship and relationship; practically, everybody is related to everybody else in the village. Unlike the Nagas, the Thadou-Kukis have no right over the land whatsoever. Only with permission from the Village Chief, who is the legal owner of landed properties, the villagers can cultivate the land and utilize other economic resources, including hunting wild life on payments either in cash or kind. Together with such rights of holding immovable properties, **the *Haosa* system has certain obligations to the villager. In return to the services rendered by the villagers free of charges and tributes paid by them as tokens of loyalty, recognition, obedience and solidarity, the *Haosa* system has to protect the interests of the villagers by providing security socially, politically and economically. It is also the bounden duty of the system to see that every villager is protected from external aggression, harm and danger.**⁶⁹

The Village is the highest political unit among the Thadou-Kukis, and Chief of the village and his Council of Ministers which function within a territorial jurisdiction wielding its political authority and prerogative over the villagers in absolute terms are the supreme political powers. The administration of justice, enforcement of executive functions, maintenance of social practices and customary law, including religious performances are the areas of the village administration under the Chieftainship and his Council of Ministers. Thus, a Thadou-Kuki village is an important administrative unit. The office of the Chief is hereditary, and is passed on from father to his eldest son, who otherwise is known as “*Upa*”.

The office of the Chieftainship or *Haosa* is vested with so much of power and authority over his subjects that a person in that capacity is often prone to abuse his power and thus turn himself into a despot. *Haosa* is the office of the Village Chief. It is hereditary, passing from father to the son. The office is occupied only by the *Upas* except among the Lushais, and unlike the Nagas, *Haosa* has the absolute right of ownership of the entire land of the village. The villagers have no right over the land whatsoever. Even if a villager, who is generally a *Naopa* wishes to establish a new village, he can do so only with the permission of the *Haosa*. However, absolute right over the land might be, normally allowed in consultation with his Council of Ministers, the villagers to cultivate and utilize as per their requirements.⁷⁰

The feudal system of the *Haosa* and its prerogatives have however, lost their favour considerably since the time of the British. Consequent upon the developmental schemes taken up during the post-independence days in the country, the institution of *Haosa* has shown further changes. Its importance has greatly declined, and the effectiveness of the institution and its authority waned. With the introduction of the Village Authority Act, 1956 in Manipur, *Haosa* is the ex-officio Chairman of the Village Authorities. The members are no longer nominated by the *Haosa*, but are elected by the villagers themselves, through ballot system. This system has given birth to different parties within a village and, therefore, the village as a single unit could not be cohesive. The solidarity of the whole village which used to be the backbone of the political system is utterly shattered. Villagers are no longer governed by their customary laws, but are administered by the Village Authority Act. The Act says that the villagers have direct participation in the village government and they are the persons who

run the machinery of the Government.⁷¹

1.8.3.2.3.1. *Som*: *Som* refers to the Home in the Thadou-Kuki traditional culture where young people come together for holistic training. It is a bachelors' dormitory in which all the young boys of village sleep together at night. It was in the *Som* where one received training in all possible fields of knowledge, wisdom, skills and cultural values. The nature of hostility and practice of tribal raids necessitate the existence of this organization, so that in times of emergency the services of all the able-bodied men might be available at short notice. They have to offer their free and compulsory services to the village. Although the main purpose of this organization is to defend the village from the external dangers, in times of peace they render every possible service to the village community whenever required. Moreover, it is an organization for recreation of the young boys.⁷²

Unlike the dormitory of some Naga tribes, the Thadou-Kukis have no separate dormitory building. They choose any house in the village, which has at least a girl inmate as their dormitory.⁷³ In the *Som*, younger boys are taught all sorts of things, from cutting jokes to taking responsibilities. Stories are told by the elder members and sometimes topics ranging from girls to war become the subject matters of great interest. This organization is also connected with the Thih-Kheng office, because the efficient mobilization of the village youths for defense depends mainly upon his ability of the Thih-Khen to produce weapons. This place is also considered place of learning. Boys of different age-groups who are assigned various jobs and other sundry chores stay together. The boys of younger age-groups learn the things from the older groups. They also learn

social customs and manners. It serves as an institution of learning, discipline and other essential characters necessary for a man in future life. It has thus been considered as a very essential part of the village administration among the Thadou-Kukis.⁷⁴

1.8.3.2.3.2. *Thempu*: *Thempu* is the office of the village priest or medicine man. Literally speaking, he is the councilor in charge of public health in the true sense of the term. Persons for this office are chosen from among those who know the Them-Thus (the secret words of medicine). This office is very often regarded as hereditary because the secrets of the medicines are not revealed to each and every person. *Thempus* generally prefer to teach the secret words to their sons and grandsons. Moreover, to learn this secret costs a lot of money and time. Therefore, very few persons bother to master this knowledge. *Thempu* will attend to all the villagers in times of sickness, and he officiates on social and religious occasions. The *Thempu* is so important in the life of the Thadou-Kukis that for an ordinary observer he seems to be the head of the village, because on every occasion- temporal and religious- he takes precedence over the *Haosa*.⁷⁵

1.8.3.2.3.3. *Thih-kheng*: *Thih-kheng* is the office of the village blacksmith. This office goes to the person who has the highest handiness in blacksmithy. He is the authorized blacksmith of the village. He does not charge for what he makes for individual villagers. Everything is done free of cost. He makes agricultural implements, such as hoes, axes, spades etc. and manufactures weapons like swords, arrows, guns, bullets, etc. In recognition of his services, he is given *Changseo* (a basket full of grain collected) by each family in the village annually, but the rate will be lower than that is received by the *Haosa* (Chief).⁷⁶

However, this practice is not so relevant for the present society.

1.8.3.2.4. Religion

Generally, most of the tribals including the Thadou-Kukis have been considered animists before they became Christians. It has been said that the natural objects such as stones, trees, mountains, rivers and certain places were believed to be the abode of the spirits and demons. This idea led them to the worship of nature. They did not worship the object but the spirit that dwelt in it.⁷⁷ In this case, one should rethink whether or not they should be called animist. They believed that these spirits were forces alive in the nature, which were hostile to man, and have power to harm people bringing them sickness, and the likes. To appease these spirits, people chose to offer sacrifices through the instrumentality of priests appointed and approved by a particular village authority or the Chief.⁷⁸ They believed in dreams and visions and lived under the bondage of these spirits and had no peace of mind. Courageous people, who dared challenged the mighty British Empire lived under the constant fear of these spirits and appointed a priest who could serve as a mediator between the spirits and the living being.⁷⁹ They also believed the god *Nungzai*, which is reigning in this world. Some believed this god to be a female god and the wife of *Chung Pathen*. *Nungzai* is identified as *Satan* from whom all the evil spirits originated. All those spirits were considered to be more powerful than human beings but they were not gods in the proper sense. Sacrifices were made in order to ward off their anger and satisfy their appetite but *Chung Pathen* is the only one God.

The Thadou-Kukis believe that *Chung Pathen* is the Creator and the sustainer of the whole universe. He is the highest benevolent God who lives in Heaven or in

the sky. Everything concerned with prosperity, growth and strength of life is nothing but the gift of *Chung Pathen*. *Chung Pathen* is a good God who does not want appeasement of sacrifice.⁸⁰ Their primal religion (*Sakho*) embraced the total ongoing way of life. Its nature is an effective desire to be in right relation with a sacred transcendental order controlling human destinies and natural events...⁸¹ They believed in the supreme-creator God called *Pathen (Holy Father)* as the creator of the whole universe and all the things in it. They usually perform an annual worship to *Pathen* at the village gate to seek His blessings mainly for good health, prosperity and better life here and life after death. They also believed in the existence of a host of deities and spirits (either benevolent or malevolent), residing in the natural world.⁸² Sacrifices are usually offered to the malevolent spirits in order to appease them.

This shows that the Thadou-Kukis are not animists who worship trees, stones, and any other natures. Today, the primal faith and worldview had undergone a drastic change as they are exposed to Christian faith and scientific knowledge. The customary usage of a fermented drink or country beer called “*Ju*” is replaced by tea and the like. In like manner, the primal religious connotations in the performances of rites, ceremonies and sacrifices are abandoned or continued by giving Christian meanings, while the place of village priest is taken over by pastors in the present day.

1.8.3.2.5. Status of Thadou-Kuki Women

The Thadou-Kuki society, being patriarchal the entire major decision making power rest among the male in all the fields of activity except in that of the household management where female domination becomes apparent to any

visitor. She is the undisputed mistress of the household, no doubt, but her authority within the household is subordinate to the decision of her husband. The status of the Thadou-Kuki women in the over-all social milieu is somewhat subdued and inferior to that of their male counterparts in as much as they are not permitted to stand on an equal footing with the males in all matters concerning political, judicial and religious. Nevertheless, their prominent role in Thadou-Kuki economic life raises their social status as equal partners in their total economic life. They not only work hard in all the processes of economic production in the field but also engaged widely in weaving shawls, lungis and go to the market places for economic transactions without any restriction.

The Thadou-Kuki women feel free to participate in any economic activity which is not a taboo. Ploughing, for example, is not prohibited for women; but it is they who are preferred for sowing the seeds and harvesting the crops. Although decision-making is admittedly a male privilege, a loving husband invariably consults his wife before taking a final decision in all domestic matters. In public matters, however, he may not condescend to share his views with the weaker section. No restriction is imposed on her movements provided her activities are within the limits of the Thadou-Kuki norm. Women have no right to inherit parental properties. She cannot inherit immovable property like land and house. Nevertheless, she is free to purchase and possess land and transmit it to her posterity. She has also a right to her mother's ornaments and cloths.

It is a fact that a man's status does not change much after marriage; but that of a woman changes to one of the serving the interests of her husband, submission to

whose authority pays her a good dividend of being her husband's trusted friend and domestic guide. Fertility in women is an asset for womanhood. Infertile woman appears to be less wanted by her husband or her neighbours in spite of other accomplishments. A woman who produces daughters only may not be praised even by her admirers. Birth of sons enhances the status of a Thadou-Kuki woman as she becomes the proud mother of the male inheritors of the lineage and the family properties. **Another handicap suffered by the womenfolk is that they are debarred from performing the religious rites. The village priest is always a man. Above all, they are entirely debarred from participating in the traditional political activities. They could never be members of the traditional village council, not to speak of becoming the chief of a village.**⁸³

For a Thadou-Kuki woman there are no holidays. She has to get up early in the morning to bring water and cook morning meal. At the same time she has to pound paddy to dehusk rice. The husband does not help in her domestic work. When morning meals are over, she has to prepare packed-lunch for the day time and follow the husband to the jhum. After finishing the day's work for the day she has to carry back firewood and fodder to feed the domestic animals at home. As soon as she reaches home she has to prepare evening meals. After finishing the evening meals, the husband takes rest and sleep soundly. But the wife has to dry up wet clothes of the men over charcoal fire at late night. After doing all these, she has to sit at her spinning wheel till late night for she is responsible for providing the garments to all her family members. So, it seems that the Thadou-Kuki women consider only weaving and spinning wheel as a special holiday.

Regarding marriage, the girl has to marry the boy chosen by her parents and her bride price is fixed by them. This is because of the fact that: (a) Women are considered as maidservant and on sojourn in her husband's family. (b) Women had a bride-price (c) Men consider women as merely child-bearers. (d) Husbands consider their wives as slaves (e) Women are weaker than men (f) Women think always that they had original home and one day they can go back at the time of their husband's death. Fixing of bride-price could be one of the main reasons for the Thadou-Kuki women being dominated by men and excluding them from the inheritance of her husband's properties. The term price makes low status to all women. So long as the phrase bride-price is used, the husbands will consider them like a property which can be moveable or changeable at any time and any moment. Hence it is better to change the term bride-price into marriage bond or gift. In doing so, there shall be equality between men and women in the tribal community. After the death of her husband, she is a widow who considers herself that she has no more rights in the family and returns to her parents.⁸⁴

1.8.3.3. THE HMARS

The Hmars are one of the sub-tribes of the Chin-Kuki-Mizo. They settled in Manipur in 1872. They are a distinct community with respect to their traditions, culture, and social customs. The Hmar people are united by common tradition, common language and customs. They claimed that they originated from Singlung, which is located somewhere in central or south-west China. According to their history, ancestors of Hmar belong to the Chinese dynasty. In the course of their movement, southward through the borders of the Himalyas and eastward, they resided for some time in Shan State in Myanmar. Here they

became acquainted with agriculture and the use of iron implements. In 1871 the British government conquered their mountain territory, and then the land was divided into Mizoram, Cachar and north-Cachar (Assam), Tripura and Manipur, and Chin Hills. In Manipur, they are mostly found in the Tipaimukh, Jiribam and Churachandpur areas.

Ecology plays an important role in shaping the mode of livelihood of the Hmars. They depend considerably on forest products. The impact of ecology on the economy is indispensable, and the environment has significantly influenced their economy which can be divided into two divisions: traditional and subsidiary occupations. Shifting cultivation by hoe culture is the main and traditional occupation as well as blacksmithing, carpentry, poultry-raising, basketry, priesthood, herbal medicinal, etc. The village chief and his ministers have control over the yearly jhumming. Rice is the main crop of shifting cultivation. Maize is another important crop which is sown broadcast in the same field. Hunting and gathering wild vegetables from nearby forest supplements the daily consumption. Food gathering is the women's job in most of the Hmar families.

The Hmars are the worshippers of supernatural beings, benevolent and malevolent, by whom their everyday life is surrounded. *Pathien* is the supreme god who is the creator of all beings. They have a rich culture and embrace customs of the traditional society as their way of life. However, it is a well-known fact that change is inevitable for any society at any point of time, at any place. The wave of change has reached the Hmar society in their social, economic, political and religious aspects.⁸⁵

1.8.4. THE NAGAS

It is not clear how the name "Naga" was derived. There have been several attempts made by anthropologists and historians to trace out the origin of this word. Some have connected the "Naga" with Sanskrit "Ng" meaning mountain as the people live mostly in the high hills. Thus it implies "hill man." However, Verrier Elwin points out that, "the derivation of the word is still obscure." Even four decades after Elwin made this observation the question remains unanswered. Attempts have been made to present explanations put forth by different scholars in order to discover the truth of this matter. The issue is complicated due to the continuing process of identity assertion, formation and expansion movement of the Nagas themselves. The Puranas and Epics refer to many Naga dynasties. The first reference to "Naga" in the Ahom chronicles dates back to the 9th century A.D. when the Ahom-Tais or Shans were living in upper Burma and had not crossed to the Brahmaputra valley.

One theory of the origin of the *Naga* was propounded by a British explorer and tea cultivator, S.E. Gait, the great historian of Assam in 1906, who wrote, "The collective designation by which they are known to the Assamese seems to be derived, as suggested by Holcome and Peal, from 'Nok' which means folk in some of the tribal dialect. When strange parties meet, they are said to ask each other term *Noke* or *Nok* meaning 'what folk are you' and *Nokrang* meaning 'the people of the sky'. Meanwhile a few Naga scholars who want to discount the colonial writer's view proposed two theories.

One is that Naga was derived from the Kachari word Nokka (Nokkhar) meaning *warrior fighters* as the Kacharis came into violent conflict with Nagas. Another

is that it was derived from the Burmese word *Na Ka* meaning pierced ears. Though the final word has not been said on the derivation of the Naga, it is certain that the name was given by outsiders, the inhabitants of the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys, to mean the Naga. The name was popularized and enforced by the British colonial authorities.⁸⁶ The Nagas are concentrated in the states of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh of India and Naga Hills of Upper Myanmar.

The tribes of Manipur who are now under the Naga fold are among the early inhabitants of the hills of Manipur. The name Naga was given to them by the British on the basis of their policy of identifying and classifying the tribes of Nagaland and Manipur. Like the Kukis, the Nagas occupy different areas of Manipur hills. The Nagas of Manipur includes the Tangkhul, Mao and Maram, Jaliangrong and the Kabui.

1.8.4.1. TANGKHUL

The Tangkhuls are a sub-tribe of the Nagas, inhabiting in the eastern zone of Manipur. The Tangkhul village is a composition of 3 or more clans led by their respective leader called *Wungva* (Chieftain). In a village, families of clans live together forming separate colony of their own clan. Thus a village has 3 or more colonies and is known as *Tang*. Each village is an autonomous state with no appellate court. Only in cases involving two or more villages, the chiefs and chieftains of the villages concerned jointly decide the case. Since the village lands are divided and apportioned to each clan at the time of their settlement, the portion of land received by a clan is supposed to be their properties.⁸⁷

The Tangkhuls points to Makkhel as the ancestral place from where they migrated to their present habitat. A legend indicates their migration was from Samsok (Thungdut) in Kabaw valley of upper Burma. It shows the settlement of the Tangkhul up to the western bank of the Chindwin. Tangkhul was perhaps a name given by outsiders, but there is one view that it was derived from 'Tangkhu', one of the three progenitors. According to T. Luikham, the original name of the Tangkhul is *Wung*. Regarding the racial composition, the Tangkhul features consist of sharp semi-Aryan features and Mongoloid elements. There are two groups, the northern Tangkhuls, who use spears as their major weapon, and the southern Tangkhuls, who use bow and arrow as their weapon.⁸⁸

The Tangkhul women have no right to her father's properties. There is a saying: *Mayarnao mathameilungna Shanao mazungmuiyana* (Men are rock, women mists). Meaning once a woman gets married, she becomes a member of her husband's family, a different clan. Hence, a woman has no right to inherit her father's landed properties. But any amount of movable properties or wealth she can receive at the pleasure of their parents. There is one condition under which a woman can enjoy the right to her father's landed properties. That, a man who has no son, with the permission of his heir, can allow his married daughter to use wet rice cultivation so long as she lives. The land shall come back to her father's house at her death.⁸⁹

1.8.4.1.1. Village Council/Chieftains

The Village Council is a body of representatives from each and every clan. They are not elected. The eldest of a family, by virtue of his birthright, shall represent his clan to the Council. In the case of big villages, where many members are

required to administer the village, sub-chieftains are accepted to represent their respective sub-clans. Chiefship and chieftainship are all hereditary. Since a woman is not an heir to her father's house, her representation in the Village Council is out of the question. However, she has the right to attend the court to plead with her family members, especially, in the event of one of her sisters involved in a dispute.

The Village Council is an open *darbar*. Both men and women are permitted to speak and plead for a relative who is a party in a case. They are guided by their representative. After hearing from both parties, as well as from the members of the Council, the Chief or Headman pronounces the judgment. His order is final and binding. All villagers are kept informed of all matters relating to village affairs. Since the elders give protection to their younger brothers, they have full confidence in their leadership in the family matters also. It is true, legally women have no standing in the Village Council, nor do they have any right to inherit immovable properties from their parents. However, it is a phenomenon that the Tangkhul from of old had great respect for women. In speech and in practice, women are given the first place.⁹⁰

1.8.4.1.2 Customary Laws and Women

The Tangkhul *Long* constitutes Customary Laws for smooth administration and peaceful co-existence. The *Long* is a Federation of all the Autonomous Tangkhul Villages. While making their laws, the Village Council enacts certain provisions to upgrade the dignity of women in their society. These provisions are unique-perhaps, no other is so kind to their women folk than the Tangkhuls. Out of many, following are some of the important provisions:

(1) *Pukreila*: A woman married to a man belonging to another village (village exogamy) is known as *Pukreil*. Under their Customary Laws, a *Pukreila* is a free woman, a citizen of her father's village as well as of her husband's. Even during a conflict, a *Pukreila* can move freely between the warring villages. The law says, "You shall not harm a *Pukreila*". As such, when there arises some trouble between the villages of her father and her husband, she can go as mediator. She takes her husband's word to her father and again she brings her father's word to her husband for a peaceful solution. She can play an important role to bring about peace between the warring camps. There had been many conflicts averted through the goodwill and wisdom of a *Pukreila*.

(2) *Pukreila's Prerogative*: When two villages failed to settle a case, a *Pukreila* has her prerogative to intervene. Holding her *zeithing* (a traditional iron staff), she goes between the two lines of battle, shouting, *Shapharia! Shapharia!* (enough, enough)... At her shout, the fight ceases. There shall be no more fighting after this. And that is the end of the fight. And case is compromised. In the matter of land dispute, the verdict of the *Longwo* (long chief) comes through the intervention of a *Pukreila* which is her prerogative.

(3) *Yorla and Varei*: A woman loses her identity from the day she is married. She is to be identified as her husband's family. Yet her privilege of being a daughter of her parents remains in the life of the family. In order to reckon this unbreakable tie of a family, they adopt a special link call *Yorla-Varei*. A woman when married becomes a *Yorla* (brother's lineage) and her brother remains as *Varei* (sister's lineage). This lineage is remembered in every important function, like marriage, new building construction, obituary, etc. When there is an important function in the house of her brother, she (*Yorla*) shall bring her privileged share, ranging from ornament to cloth to buffalo. For an obituary, she

shall bring a cloth. All *Yorlas* have their due or privileged contributions according to their culture. Likewise, the brother (*Varei*) shall contribute his due share for such important functions and celebrations in the house of his sister (*Yorla*). A Tangkhul woman (*Yorla*) cannot inherit her father's properties.

(4) *Best Inheritance of a Woman*: Tangkhuls celebrate their biggest festival, called *Luir* (Virgin dance). The dance is open to only virgins. Customarily, all the virgins in the village shall join the dance. If any unmarried refused to join the dance, her character is suspected. Virgins' Dance is a secret declaration of virginity. They dance half-naked in the open field; therefore, this is the best time for the young people to select the Most Beautiful Girl of the year.⁹¹

1.8.4.2 MAO and MARAM

The Mao and Maram are the two endogamous populations of the Naga tribes of Manipur. They are mainly concentrated along the rugged hills of the Senapati district of Manipur. The Mao and Maram Nagas derive their name from the two most important villages in their area-Mao and Maram. Like the other Nagas, these two tribes share the same legend of their origin at Meikhel, a village between the Mao and Maram areas, situated at about ten miles south east of Kohima town, Nagaland. The Mao and Maram who claim to have a common origin, but perpetually feud with each other are nevertheless closely allied by inter-marriage. The two patri-oriented Naga groups are mainly cultivators and practiced both shifting and terrace forms."⁹²

1.8.4.3. JALIANGRONG

The Zeliangrong is the combined name of the Zeme, Liangmai, Rongmei and Puimei. The Zeme and Liangmai were known to the British as Kacha Naga,

whereas the Rongmei and Puimei are popularly known as the Kabui, a name given by the Meiteis of Manipur. The Zeliangrong people, according to the legend preserved in their religious hymns and folk songs, originated from a mythical cave called Taobhei; they moved to Makhel and to Ramting Kabin and then to Makuilondi. From this settlement they migrated to the south, west and north. Makhel is thus an important point of dispersal in their migration to the western Manipur and Barail range. How the name 'Kacha Naga' came to be applied to the Zeme and Liangmai by the British is unknown; whether it was the Angami word Ketsu or Ketsa meaning deep forest or from the name of a peak called *Kacha* in Zema country. Nothing is known clearly about the derivation of *Kabui*. The ancient chronicles of Manipur refer to the Kabui, Tangkhul, Anal and others as very ancient tribes.⁹³

1.8.4.4. KABUI

The Kabui is one of the sub-tribes of the Naga tribe. They are found in the states of Manipur, Nagaland and Assam. They called themselves Rongmei. They are divided into four clans: Kamei, Golmai, Gangmai, and Langmai. Each clan except Langmai is again divided into seven sub-clans, five sub-clans and two sub-clans respectively. All clans and sub-clans are exogamous. The Kabuis have a common totem (Kabui). They have their own dialect, known as Kabui, which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family.

Agriculture is the traditional and principal occupation of the Kabuis. Rice is the main crop cultivated in their field. They also grow different kinds of seasonal vegetables. Hunting all types of animal and gathering forest products are also traditional occupations. Fishing is another economic activity in which they are

actively engaged. There is a village council of elders for the smooth running of the village. The council is headed by a chief, known as *Khullak pai*. He is assisted by four other important office bearers viz *Khumbi*, *Mantri*, *Lublak* and *Changlow*. *Khumbi* is an elderly person who is in charge of the youth dormitories, three others are members of the council and they offer their services any time. The Village council is responsible for maintaining peace and welfare of the village. Familial, social and political disputes are solved by the village council.⁹⁴

Conclusion

Youth Dormitory was found among all the tribals societies in Manipur. In every tribal village, in pre-Christian days, the boys had their sleeping house or dormitory. Here all the young men of the village slept together. The Tankhuls called it '*Longshim*', the Rongmeis '*Khangehnu*', the Hmars '*Buonzawl*', the Mizo '*Zawlbuk*' the Zous '*Sawm*', and the Thadous '*Som*'. Among the Nagas, the girls also had a house or dormitory for sleeping together, but among the Kuki-Chin tribes, such places of sleeping together for the girls were not common.⁹⁵ A quick perusal would show that tribal customary laws which subsume the people's beliefs, customs, social norms, precepts, rights, and usages practiced since time immemorial, are not conducive to the interest of women indeed.

But, for few exceptions most of the customary or personal laws, particularly those relating to property and marriage, are highly oppressive to women. Although women shoulder heavy economic responsibilities commensurate with men, tribal customary laws, like those of non-tribal

societies, deny them equal rights to property. **The system of inheritance among most tribes unquestionably favours men.** In general, women are entitled only to maintenance rights and expenses for marriage, while men inherit land and all other movable and immovable property.⁹⁶

1.8.5. THE PANGANS

Muslims are called Pangals or Pangans in Manipur. They started settling in Manipur around the sixteenth and seventeenth century. The brother of King Khagemba revolted against him and went to Cachar, Assam to seek military help. From there he got many Muslim soldiers under the leadership of one General Bimbol. But he was defeated by Khagemba and one thousand Muslim soldiers were captured. King Khagemba allotted them specific areas like Lilong, Keirao, Sekta, Yairipok, Hafta etc. within the valley. They were given local Manipuri women in marriage and were allowed to settle in the state. They were also given specific yumnaks. Later, a record by the name of *Pangan Thorakpa* was maintained to record their migration, necessary and activities. But they were not absorbed into the Meitei salai structure.

The extent of inter-marriage between Muslim men and Meitei women can be seen by the names of the present Manipuri Muslims, Sahep Khanba, Tomba etc. Instead of Urdu names, which are used by the Muslims in other parts of India, they have got Meitei names. Lately, however, most of them have started using Urdu names. They also used to worship the Meiteis' god Sanamahi and have only recently started adhering to the tenets of Islam more strictly. They have now opened Madarasas, institutions for teaching Islamic scriptures. All of them speak Meiteilon, the Meitei language, and only a handful knows Hindi or Urdu.

Although the wives of their ancestors were Meitei women, the Meiteis do not now like to marry into a Muslim family. The Meitei women marrying Muslim men are looked down upon by the Meitei Hindus, but as mentioned earlier, when Meitei men marry Muslim women, they are accepted after going through conversion and a purificatory rite.⁹⁷

1.9. THEORITICAL CONCEPTUAL AND DEFINITION

1.9.1. Concept of women empowerment

Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions which both build individual and collective assets, and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context which govern the use of these assets.

Women's empowerment is a global issue, and discussions on women's rights are at the forefront of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. Empowerment is a word widely used but seldom defined. It is an active, multi-dimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. Power is not a commodity to be transacted nor can it be given away as alms. It has to be acquired and once acquired; it needs to be exercised, sustained and preserved.⁹⁸

Empowerment should not and cannot stagnate as a word of law but has to emerge and transform the individual from within. Indian philosophy has given us a wonderful term *Shakti* to explain this idea. The verb root *Shak* implies

power and energy and translates as the ability to do something. Shakti, implying power, is both static/latent and kinetic. The world principle is evolved from the meaningful interaction and union of Purusha and Prakriti, Shiva and Shakti. Moreover, Shakti is not an extra temporal entity but is said to form the life essence. As Frank Morales succinctly remarks: “Shakti is manifest as the very affective ability of all the forces of nature.” Mimamsakas view Shakti as the “inherent power of all things.” For the Naiyayika logicians, Shakti “is the function or property of any cause.”⁹⁹

Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building, leading to greater participation, to greater decision-making powers and control, and to transformative action. It is also the process of challenging existing power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power. The goals of women's empowerment are to challenge patriarchal ideology, to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetrate gender discrimination and social inequality, and to enable poor women to gain access to and control over both material and informational resources. Empowerment is not externally bestowed upon people, but instead, women need to be the agents of their own empowerment; outsiders and inside organizations can only help create the conditions favourable to women's empowerment and can support the process that works in these directions. Longwe's (1990) framework of empowerment encompasses the welfare of women, satisfaction of basic needs, access to resources, conscientization to attain gender equity, participation in the decision-making alongside men, and control, which refers to the ultimate level of equality and empowerment. Here, the balance of power between men and women is equal and neither party has dominance over the other.¹⁰⁰

1.9.2. Meaning of women empowerment

Women's empowerment is essential for the development of society. Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. As per the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the term Women's Empowerment means:

1. Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed,
2. Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the fight to control one's life,
3. Gaining the ability to generate choices and exercise bargaining power, and
4. Developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change, to create more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Thus, empowerment means a psychological sense of personal control or influence and concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. It is a multi-level construct referring to individuals, organizations and community. It is an international, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over these resources. ¹⁰¹

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines *empower* as enabling or giving "lawful power or authority to somebody to act." This definition has to be carefully considered to avoid possible misinterpretations. One, the giving of

power centres round a power head, which bestows or grants power from a position of authority. Two, “the lawful power or authority” may remain a word of law or scripture, which does not translate into reality. Expanding the dictionary meaning, an article entitled “What is Empowerment?” defines empowerment as “increasing the choices available to and capacities of the poor transforming the power structure of society. At its core, empowerment means having more control over the forces that shape one’s life.”¹⁰²

Another dimension that becomes visible is the intricate dynamics of power and gender, which dominates the current intellectual debates on empowerment. There is a need to address empowerment as a central social issue and not as women’s concern alone. Empowerment cannot be confined to a few policies made and bills passed by governments. As Shakuntala Narasinha rightly points out in her article, “Women’s Empowerment Year: Beginning with a Band, Ending with a Whimper”: “This is the crux, and till socio-cultural attitudes are addressed, there can be little meaningful empowerment for gender parity.”¹⁰³

Empowerment of women according to Sahay¹⁰⁴

1. Recognizing women's contribution, women's knowledge
2. Helping women fight their own fears, and feelings of inadequacy and inferiority
3. Women enhancing their self-respect and self-dignity
4. Women controlling their own bodies
5. Women becoming economically independent and self-reliant
6. Women controlling resources like land and property
7. Reducing women's burden of work, especially within the home, and

8. Promoting qualities of nurturing, caring gentleness, not just in women but also in men.

Women's empowerment includes both a personal strengthening and enhancement of chances and collective participation in efforts to achieve, equality of opportunity and equity between different genders, ethnic groups, social classes, and age groups. It enhances human potential at individual and social levels of expressions. Empowerment is an essential starting point and a continuing process for realizing the ideals of human liberation and freedom for all.¹⁰⁵

1.9.3. Empowerment of women: an overview

Empowerment is the process by which the disempowered or powerless people can change their circumstance and begin to have control over their lives. More importantly, empowerment means the way they think of themselves, seeing themselves not as victims of circumstance but as architects of their own destinies. They are the real heroines. Empowerment results in a change in the balance of power in the living conditions, and in the relationships. Perhaps the most important effect of empowerment is that the person says: "Now I have no fear." Empowerment is both individual and collective. Women in an informal economy are socially and economically weak and vulnerable, and it is only by the process of coming together that they can be empowered.

In the last two decades women's status in society has undergone a tremendous change. The last decade has unleashed the strength and spirit of Indian women, and now they are able to control and manage their lives to a large extent, making independent decisions covering all aspects of their lives. Although

women constitute almost one half of the population of the world, their social economic and political status is lower than that of men in most countries, including India. This is largely due to gender disparities and patriarchal mindset of the people. Women have almost always been oppressed and marginalized, and new initiatives by the UN and other women's movements have led to gender sensitization, enforcement of laws effecting lives of women for change and empowerment.

The changing social and political situation of our country offers us many serious challenges and opportunities. The most crucial among them are the challenges of poverty, exploitation and oppression experienced by the majority of Indian women. The changing times in today's world have encouraged many women to seek their own identity, value and worth of their lives, through the contributions they make to the family and society at large. Increased awareness about rights has motivated the submissive and sacrificing woman to become conscious of herself as a person with her own identity and personality. She now wants to be regarded as an individual with feelings, aspirations and desires, in fact as a *human*.¹⁰⁶

Thus, women's empowerment can be viewed as a continuum of several interrelated and mutually reinforcing components:

1. Awareness building about women's situations, discrimination, and rights and opportunities as a step towards gender equality. Collective awareness building provides a sense of group identity and the power of working in a group.

2. Capacity building and skills development, especially the ability to plan, make decisions, organize, manage and carry out activities, to deal with people and institutions in the world around them.
3. Participation and greater control and decision-making power in the home, community and society.
4. Action to bring about greater equality between men and women.

Venessa Griffen viewed empowerment as:

1. Having control, organizing further control.
2. Having a say and being listened to.
3. Being able to define and create from a women's perspective.
4. Being able to influence social choices and decisions affecting the whole society (not just areas of society accepted as women's place) and
5. Being organized and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make.

From the above view point, empowerment means being able to make a contribution at all levels of society and not just in the home. Power also means having women's contribution recognized and valued.¹⁰⁷

1.9.4. Process of empowering

Empowering of women pre-supposes a drastic, dynamic and democratic change in the perception of and expectation from women in our society. To help women attain economic independence must be the first priority for such a change. When a woman attains economic independence, she naturally becomes the mistress of her own body and author of her own decisions. She even can take free choice of her sex life, and no one can force her or use her for their

pleasure and benefit. A scientific perception of women's needs is essential for the process, which leads to empowering. Empowering of women is necessary for sustainable development of a community.

Sustainability implies a state of balance and equilibrium in factors related to human life which can be social, political, financial environmental and even spiritual. It is the state of all those factors that influence the process of growth of a human being, and his/her holistic environment has to advance in unison but independently yet supporting each other. In the case of women, equality, social justice and freedom have dynamic roles to achieve such sustainability. But the nation of sustainability often becomes the victim of unsustainable tradition and political opportunism. If a human being is forced to live in an inhuman and degrading situation, sustainable development becomes unattainable. Hence, corruption, nepotism, violence, inequality, exploitation and oppression are counter-productive to sustainable development.¹⁰⁸

1.9.5. Strategies of empowering women

The process of empowerment involves not just an improvement in physical and social conditions, but also equal participation in decision-making processes, control over resources and mechanisms for sustaining these gains.¹⁰⁹ Given below are the some of the important strategies of empowering women suggested by two scholars. According to Sahay, women can be empowered through:

1. Empowerment of poor women

Empowerment of poor women is the means to poverty alleviation. The goal of poverty eradication can be effectively achieved if poor women could be organized into groups for community participation as well as for assertion of

their rights. Any strategy of sustainable development relating to poverty eradication has to involve the large number of poor women. Social mobilization and building organization of the poor are essential prerequisites for poverty alleviation. Self-Help Group formation with an accent on saving, credit and financial resources for development is an effective strategy for empowering women.

2. Education and training

One of the most critical components in the development of a society is the investment in human development. The South Asian countries are the poorest, most illiterate, malnourished and least gender-sensitive. The Human Development Report on South Asia (1998) shows that South Asia has the lowest adult literacy rate (49%) in the world, which is lower than that of Sub-Saharan Africa (57%). In India Public Primary education facility has been expanded and national literacy shows an increase of 12% between 1991 and 1997. Participation of women in educational programs has grown faster than that of men. Female literacy increased two and half times faster than male literacy between 1970 and 1995.

However, these achievements are small as India still accounts for 30% of the adult illiterates all over the world, where 24% of girls of primary age are still not in school compared with 16% of boys. Poverty and other economic and social pressures continue to be major challenges to the achievement of education for all. Keeping girls out of school is costly and undermines development. Poverty can be effectively tackled by educating girls. Educated

women keep their families healthier, show concern for their children's education and nutrition.

3. Political participation

There is low representation of women at all levels of political institutions. Women still face major obstacles in seeking higher positions in society. Political participation is a human right, recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women are poorly represented at different levels of political life and decision-making. Thus, there is widespread neglect of women's priorities by politicians and bureaucrats. As per Human Development Report's 1999, women hold only 12% of the world's parliamentary seats and only 8.7% of those in the least developed countries. In India, the process of political elected bodies has helped in the wider mobilization. On many occasions elected women have provided leadership for organizing women and addressing and fulfilling legitimate demands such as widow pensions, gas connections, etc. There is growing realization among women that local elections are a means to bring positive change in their lives.

In different parts of the country, the SHGs have jointly put women candidates up for election in local bodies such as Zila Parishad, Gram Panchayat, etc. Women are motivated to change the tradition. Their political campaigns often emphasize solving issues that affect daily lives like safe drinking water, schools, health centers, roads, etc. Some women have taken the agenda further by displaying a mature understanding of the contexts in which the political economy functions. In our society men, having rigid attitudes, resist the

political empowerment of women. There is a feeling that women should only contest reserved seats and not general seats.

In some parts of our country there are some changes, for example, women in the village of the hill state of Uttarakhand are waging their own political battle of assertion and articulation of their identities. Several NGOs working in the area try to educate women about voting behaviour and election procedures. Elected women members learn to negotiate their newfound positions in an inherently male-dominated system, fighting adverse institutionalized practices like corruption. Women face many obstacles while contesting election such as sabotage threats, boycott and pressure from family. However, women on gaining the political power can bring rapid change in the lives of other women and attain equality.¹¹⁰

Measures suggested for women's empowerment according to Nagalakshmi are wide-ranging, but primarily it focuses attention on rejecting all restriction, controls, limitations, values etc., on the grounds that these are imposed on women only by the patriarchy and are the revelation of male dominance. Some of her suggested measures are as follows:

1. Since women are vulnerable to violence because of their female sexuality, both in society as well as in home, adequate safeguards must be ensured. As a value this has been promoted by males, in their own interests, since this would ensure that the children of a woman are born to the correct father. A number of restrictions are imposed on females, which is improper. All measures and restrictions are manifestations of violence against women, which curtails female sexual-expression so that women will remain faithful to their husbands.

2. Empowerment of women is an essential ingredient in protecting women's right and has to be looked at from a holistic perspective. Violence against tribal women and girls should attract more public notice, as an issue of social concern to realize the dream that the 21st century would be the women's century.
3. A parliamentary committee, on empowerment of tribal women has to be set up to serve as an effective monitoring mechanism on measures like:
 - (a) Early finalization and adoption of national policy for empowerment of tribal women.
 - (b) Organizing women into self-help groups.
 - (c) Initiation of a women's component plan to ensure that not less than 30% of funds or benefits flow to women, from the development sectors.
 - (d) High medical care should give priority to reproductive child health care.
 - (e) Universalizing the ongoing supplementary feeding program and mid-day meal scheme.
 - (f) Easy and affordable access to education of tribal women and girls.
4. There is an urgent need for equipping women with necessary skills in modern emerging trades which could keep them economically independent.
5. There is a strong need to bring about change in the social construction of women in general and the tribal women in particular.
6. The majority of tribal women workers are not members of unions, yet these women have a positive attitude towards them. The major constraints being family situations, occupational, environmental social, cultural and traditional factors.¹¹¹

1.9.6. Empowerment of tribal women

The issue of empowerment as an idea is quite a new concept, and the concept of *Empowerment of tribal women* has been contextualized and acquired new connotations in recent years among various scholars such as social scientists, policy planners, developmental activists and also politicians. The concept, throughout the world has its root in the women's movement. It is since the mid-1980s that this term became popular in the field of women's development.

Looking at the history, we can see that marginalized groups such as workers, peasants, women, dalits, especially tribals, had no place in the historical process of development. Moreover, the rulers of our country never bothered about their welfare.¹¹² In India, the sixth five-year plan (1980-85) was a landmark for the cause of women. It is here that the concept of women and development was introduced for the first time. It was realized that no more piece-meal strategies would work, but an integrated approach would deliver the desired goals.¹¹³

'Empowerment' is a word of our times – a word that promises much to all those who have until now been kept outside the circle of power. It is a word that has entered the vocabulary of the women's movement and almost one might say, been appropriated by it. The word and its use marks a movement forward, which means going a step ahead of the documentation, the analysis and the debating of women's problems, of the struggle to give women back their rightful place in the human society.¹¹⁴

In its simplest form, empowerment means the manifestation of redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and male dominance, which is both a process and result of the process. It is transformation of the structures or

institutions that reinforces and perpetuates gender discrimination. It is a process that enables women to gain access to and control of material as well as information resources like, modernity, feminism and empowerment.

In India, tribal communities do not come under any particular homogeneous category and widely differ among themselves in certain aspects such as livelihood, various languages they speak, physique, geographical regions, mode of living, levels of development, etc. The unique similarity among the tribes is that they live in different geographical locations and general social backwardness, especially when compared to non-tribes.

There had been a gender bias among ethnographers who have overlooked the importance of females in shaping the primitive social arrangements. Whatsoever knowledge these ethnographers have gathered about females is through males, there is nothing in relationship, which is genetic, and it is always the shared experiences, which shape the structure. Indian history specifies the traditional and modern position by the way the women's question is projected in the dominant Indian discourse.¹¹⁵

Is it possible to empower ourselves without disempowering someone else? Can there be power for one without exploitation of another? For example, the struggle between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, at once both a joke and a tragedy, spells this out most clearly. A woman receives power when she becomes a mother-in-law, only because she has the daughter-in-law completely in her power. This is a human phenomenon.¹¹⁶

Women are not able to the opportunities given to them under the constitution. Though the constitution of India has a concern to guard the rights and privileges of women by emphasizing special attention to the status of women, it also confers equal rights and opportunities to men and women in the political, economic and social spheres.¹¹⁷

The impact of technology on them is not simply a question of their position in terms of participation; rather it has much to do with the precise definition of tasks within the production and their relative value. The impact is also less positive and more negative as any technological change generally means unemployment and marginalization for the majority of them. They have been marginalized or neglected in each stream of thought as the modernized forces and institutions strengthening masculinity. However, the power of monoculture is being questioned due to the emergence of new social forces.¹¹⁸

Tribal women have limited access to those provisions and needs that assure good quality of life to individuals such as education, health and financial assets. Their role and influence in decision-making, both at home and outside are largely restricted with a greater share given to men.¹¹⁹

For empowering women, merely giving equal rights with men would be no good to them. Their basic problems will remain, by and large, unresolved unless some fundamental changes are brought about in social and political systems responsible for the continuance of gender inequality. Political reservation and provisions of jobs to some middle class women are not sound methods for empowering them. A concerted attempt has to be made to evolve strategies for political empowerment for the majority of poor and illiterate women, in rural

and urban areas. The 73rd amendment act is a landmark in the history of efforts for empowering women. In this regard the state should intervene through legislative and policy programs as an indispensable measure.¹²⁰

Empowerment of marginalized groups involves not only the process of creation of political space for these groups by the state and civil society, but one can say that it is a process of liberation from man-made bondage through sustained struggle and resistance. It also represents the hopes and dreams of marginalized groups for a social environment free of inequalities disfavoring them politically, economically, and socially. In order to include tribals, especially women, in the development process, it is important to include them and rewrite history.¹²¹

What women need is the strength to deal with the problems of daily life, a sense of having the power to deal with everyday problems, as well as large ones. The power to make their own decisions, without being constrained by traditional ideas of honour or sacrifice, an ability to see beyond these ideas, to see things with their own minds. To have power is to know, it is to take responsibility for oneself, primarily, then for others. Without understanding, without knowledge, there can be neither power nor freedom – the right kind of freedom and power, that is.¹²² Thus, one can suggest that there is a need to improve the position of tribal women through local empowerment, so that they can take their decisions within their social ranges.

1.9.7. Qualitative Indicators of Women's Empowerment

1. Increase in self esteem, individual and collective confidence.
2. Increase in articulation, knowledge and awareness levels on issues affecting the community at large, and women in particular such as women's health,

nutrition, reproductive rights, legal rights, literacy etc., depending on the programme.

3. Increase or decrease in personal leisure time and time for child care.
4. Increase or decrease in work loads of women as result time and time for child care.
5. Changes in the roles and responsibilities in the family and in the community.
6. Visible increase or decrease in levels of domestic violence and other forms of violence perpetrated on the women and girl child.
7. Visible changes in women's participation levels examples are, more women attending public meetings, training programmes and their participation in other events related to their lives.
8. Increase in bargaining/negotiating power of the women as an individual in the home and community as well as in collectives of women.
9. Increased access to and ability to gather information and knowledge not only about the project, but also what affects their lives.
10. Formation of cohesive and articulate women's groups/collectives at the village level, district, block, state and national levels.
11. Positive changes in social attitudes amongst community members towards discrimination against women and the female children.
12. Awareness and recognition of women's economic contributions inside and outside the household.
13. A woman's decision-making over the kind of work she is doing. Is her income and expenditure in her control or is she still subservient to male members in the family?

We must remember that the world conference on women (Beijing, 1995) could be taken as the culmination point for the process of empowerment. It has provided a broad-based activity schedule, to the national, regional and global agencies.¹²³

1.10. STATUS AND ROLE OF TRIBAL WOMEN

1.10.1. Status

The concept of the status of women has involved more contradiction than consensus. Diverse views of status have been given by social anthropologists and sociologists. At the conceptual level, as far as modern sociology and social anthropology go, the term status has included all culturally prescribed rights and duties inherent in social positions. Initially, status referred only to the *ascribed* one. But lately the *achieved* status has also been given due place in sociological and anthropological parlance. Likewise, the concept of status is also connected to *role*. Ralph Linton, the eminent American Anthropologist, treated role as the more dynamic aspect of status. And within this perspective status and role cannot be dissociated.¹²⁴

Status denotes position in terms of rights and obligations to society. A general trend in the literature on the status of women has been to compare it with that of men. This indicates that their status is based on role and it is understood only through the rights and roles of their male counterparts. Generally, the status of women has two dimensions:

- (i) The extent of control enjoyed by women over their lives, and
- (ii) The extent to which they have access to the decision-making process and effectively in position of power and authority.

Besides these two, certain indicators such as level of literacy, employment, political participation, decision about marriage, management of domestic affairs, etc. are also adopted to assess the status of women. It is obvious that a precise and complete assessment accounts for both qualitative and quantitative factors. It is also necessary to look into both ascribed and achieved statuses of women in order to understand this complex issue of women, particularly in tribal societies. Tarcott Parsons (1951) identifies six attributes of status which are both ascribed and achieved. They are:

- (i) Membership in a kinship unit
- (ii) Personal qualities
- (iii) Achievement
- (iv) Possession
- (v) Authority
- (vi) Power

Ralph Linton has made a distinction between achieved and ascribed status. In general, the criteria of ascribed status must be birth or biologically hereditary qualities like sex and age. But in a socially defined role, which accompanies such a status, there may be very important elements of expected achievement. In the opinion of Linton, status and role are concepts serving to connect culturally defined expectations with patterned behavior and relationships, which comprise social structure. He further observes that each person in society inevitably occupies a multiple status and that for each of these statuses, there is an associated role. In the backdrop of the above discussion, it is possible to generalize that in determining the status of women in any society, there are four important factors to be considered, namely, social status, economic condition,

political empowerment, and psychological condition. The status of tribal women in the North-East may also be seen in terms of these four factors:

A. Social Status

- (i) Social standing as mother, daughter, sister, wife, etc.
- (ii) Extent of control enjoyed by women over their lives in social matters like marriage, divorce, family and inheritance.

B. Economic Condition

- (i) Extent of control enjoyed by women in property rights e.g., to own property, to manage property, to sell property and to inherit property.
- (ii) Occupation and livelihood: to work for a salary and to have control over income and distribution of work in the family.

C. Political Emancipation

- (i) Extent to which women have access to decision/policy making.
- (ii) Extent to which women are effectively empowered in position or authority.

D. Psychological Condition

- (i) Attitude of the society towards women.
- (ii) Mind-set of men and women towards women.

Role and status are two sides of the same coin. According to Linton, “there are no roles without status nor status without roles-the roles represent the dynamic aspect of status.” However, Bierstedt disagrees. According to him, though there is no status without a role, and no role without a status, and though both status and role are usually correlative phenomena, it is possible to have one without the other.

1.10.2. ROLE

Role is the behavioral aspect of status. Status is occupied but role is played. A role is the manner in which a given individual fulfills the objectives of a status and enjoys its privileges and prerogatives. A role is what an individual does in the status he/she occupies.¹²⁵

It is generally believed that the North-East tribal women enjoy a high status because their societies are egalitarian, they have no purdah system, there is no restriction on women's movement, food habits, attire and widow remarriage, and when a women is troubled or when she is ill-treated by her husband, she is supported by her parents, brothers and clan members, etc. For instance, Firer-Haimendorf writes:

Many women in more civilized parts of India may well envy the women of the Naga Hills, their high status and their free and happy life and if you measure the cultural level of the people by the social position and personal freedom of its women you will think twice before looking down on the Nagas as savages.¹²⁶

Although it is generally believed that the status of tribal women is high, men in their own societies do not treat them as their equals. The customary laws of the various tribes of the region are also clearly in favor of men, who continue to subscribe to them in order to retain their superiority vis-à-vis women in their own societies. This is one of the most unfortunate aspects of tribal people in the region, and factors like education, occupation, and religion do not seem to have had any success towards overcoming such gender bias among men. Images of women in tribal societies of the region are rather negative. They are often equated with animals or birds and conceived of as having less intelligence or wisdom.

Thus, we find proverbs among the Mizos, which say that women's wisdom cannot extend beyond the bank of a river; that a wife and an old fence can be replaced at any time; and an unbeaten wife and an uncut weed of the field are both unbearable. They consider women's words as having no value because "a crab's meat is not counted as meat, so also a woman's word cannot be counted as words." In traditional Garo society, women are ridiculed with the saying that just as a goat is without teeth, so a woman lacks brain. Among the Nishis of Arunachal, a man's social status is reckoned in terms of the number of wives and mithuns he possesses.

The Mayon of Manipur consider women as having no principles because they do not have a permanent clan, for their clans change into that of their husbands when they marry. This kind of attitude towards women reflects their status in the family and society on the whole. In all tribal societies of the region, notions such as the following reflect the basically patriarchal society:

- (i) Birth of a male child is auspicious.
- (ii) Man is the provider and protector of society.
- (iii) A woman is subordinate to her husband.
- (iv) Birth of a female child is welcomed for the reason that she will help her mother in household chores and serve her brother.

Further, a wife is usually not associated with any decision-making process involving money. For example, in the case of the Arunachal Pradesh all matters relating to purchase and disposal of any family property or those relating to bride-price, etc. are decided by men only. It is also believed that in tribal societies, girls are free to marry whoever they like and parents simply agree to

their will. But facts reveal that among some Naga tribes, the opposite is true. This is also true in the case of the Thadou-Kuki women. Parents among the Angami and Konyak Naga tribes and even among the Nishi tribe of Arunachal arrange marriages. The girl's parents demand huge property as the bride-price for their daughter. The girl has no option to choose her life partner. If she refuses her parents' choice, her family discards her. Women rarely have property rights.

As a daughter, a woman is not entitled to own any ancestral property. If a woman is the only child, the ancestral property will be given to her father's immediate male relatives. In terms of political empowerment, tribal women, whether belonging to matrilineal or patrilineal society, were not allowed to take part in the deliberation of the village council nor were they allowed to address or even stand before the village crowd, not to speak of assuming the office of chief or village headman. Even in the Khasi-Jaintias society, women were not allowed to enter any *dorbar* or council because politics was considered solely men's affair.¹²⁷

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CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2. SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF INVESTIGATION

Man is considered to be a social animal. There is no human being in this world who can say that he does not belong to a society or any human group. Inter-personal relationships are what mark a society and as the societies go on developing; these inter-personal relationships among men also undergo changes. Where there is interaction of various individuals of different upbringings and varied lifestyles, there is bound to be problems encountered by everyone. Here, the role of the sociologist becomes very significant, as it is his prime responsibility to study the various challenges faced by the individual in the process of his socialization. The sociologist generally does not tend to prescribe a standard pattern of living for the humans, rather he studies about the reasons behind the great variety of differences that exist between individuals and between different ways of life and thus may portray man and his relationship with the society in an unbiased manner .

In earlier days, technological advancement was at a very rudimentary level. Many societies were isolated geographically, socially and culturally, leaving very little scope for advancement. However as men began utilizing the natural resources coupled with his skills, knowledge and manpower he began moving towards what we call civilization and modernization. Today, many societies have gradually given up a primitive lifestyle and adopted a modernized life style. However, we observe that many societies that have advanced technologically still lag behind in the race to modernization because of the adherence to the age old cultural values. Not that there is anything wrong in adhering to cultural values, but in the process of the formation of any human society there comes a point in the life of the individual as well as the society where culture, once given birth to, tends to have an existence of its own in fact it supersedes the individual; this according to sociology is termed as the super organic nature of culture.

Somehow, from the time the history of the world began, the male always occupied the primary position in a majority of the human societies. This is also quite evident in the animal society. Throughout the world, we observe that though men and women have more or less equally contributed to the successful continuation of society, it is the man who generally has the upper hand in almost all the aspects of life. Thus sociological research, which today has become more scientific in nature studies the various societies formed by the humans and does an in depth analysis of this evident disparity between the man and the woman; the working of same culturally values differently on them and also the changes brought about as a result of women either going against set cultural values or utilizing the same to bring about a revolution.

Today, human society can be studied scientifically, thus almost all sociological research has a scientific edge to it. Social research has significantly contributed to a detailed and overall understanding of the human being and his relationship with the society that he is part of. But, however scientific our approach to the study of human societies, it is not an easy task to predict social behavior and expect to find a standard pattern of behavior to exist among the humans, because human nature is very elusive and ever changing. This aspect of the human nature often brings a lot of obstacles in the unbiased and clear understanding of human nature. Investigation in social context is a time, labor and money consuming affair. However, these hurdles have never deterred the sociologist from continuing his quest for an in depth knowledge of the human nature.

According to P.V Young, “Social research may be defined as a scientific undertaking which, by means of logical and systematized techniques aims to: (1) Discover new facts or verify and test old facts; (2) Analyze their sequences, inter-relationships, and causal explanations which are derived within an appropriate theoretical frame of reference; (3) Develop new scientific tools, concepts and theories which would facilitate reliable and valid study of human behaviours.”¹

The relevance of this sociological investigation lies in the fact that it is an in depth study of the processes of empowerment among the woman with special reference to the women of Manipur. The importance of social research has been summarized in the following few points.

1. To have a clear understanding of the various sociological processes that either contribute towards or degenerate social progress/growth of any society
2. To analyze the bearing of socio-cultural factors on the life of an individual and how the factors contribute to the overall development of the individual.
3. To view the bearing of norms and a formal system of government on the individuals and the group. To understand how social processes can either bring about disharmony or establish social control and also the adherence or deviance to them.
4. For social planning such that every human group or society moves towards modernization thus elevating the standard of living of the people.
5. To analyze the working of cultural norms on men and women and to see how these factors work differently for them such that we can gain an insight into the life of the weaker section of society- the woman.
6. To improvise the methods and the tools that are utilized in social research such that, better and more scientific means can be adopted to study and gain a holistic understanding of man as a social being.
7. To realize the significance of research that is scientifically motivated and which will contribute for the further advancement of social sciences.
8. To gain an insight into the life and culture of different groups of communities thus help us to understand man in an unbiased manner, taking into account the different cultures and ways of life that enable us

to understand and accept the different enculturation processes that each is subjected to.

2.1. OBJECTIVES OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Redman and Mory define research as a “systematized effort to gain new knowledge”. Some people consider research as a movement from known to unknown. Social research tries to rediscover every aspect of man’s evolution as a social animal and every moment even adds new knowledge about the behavior of man.

Research refers to the systematic method consisting of:

1. Enunciating the problem
2. Formulating a hypothesis
3. Collecting the fact or data
4. Analyzing the facts and
5. Reaching certain conclusions either in the form of solutions towards the concerned problem or generalization for certain theoretical formulations.

Social research has gone a long way in studying the various socialization processes, the functioning of different social structures, to study the varied patterns of interrelationships in the society and how social systems need to be reorganized and restructured in dealing with them.

2.2. NEED FOR TRIBAL RESEARCH

The tribal population of India, according to the 1991 census, was 67.76 million. And this number is growing at a very fast pace. With the growth in their population, their problems are now becoming the forefront of government concern. In India some of the important features of the tribals are: most of them live in isolated terrains; the main resources of their livelihood are agriculture and gathering forest produce; they do not cultivate for profit; they still rely on barter system; they spend greater part of their earnings on social and religious ceremonies; and a large number of them are illiterate and are victimized by

unscrupulous forest contractors and moneylenders. For many years the tribals were considered to be the primitive and backward segment of society. Many still live in forests and hills without having more than a casual contact with the so called civilized and modernized neighbors. Many anthropologists and sociologists are of the belief that it is not correct to impose alien values and beliefs on the tribals but to allow them to live in their own way without any interference from outside forces. Thus, for a long time pre-independence of India, the tribals were more or less ignored. However as time passed by and due to the increasing pressure of population and vested interests of the invaders many outsiders began settling in tribal regions. This brought about a lot of problem and as such gave rise to unrest, exploitation and feelings of deprivation, thus leading to agitations and movements among the tribals. There are a very few individuals or organizations that really worked or are working for the welfare of the tribals. This is the main reason why many tribal communities are still not susceptible to change and are suspicious of outsiders.

The constitution of India has laid down strong machinery for safeguarding the interests of the scheduled tribes and other backward communities, in the form of setting up a commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The state governments have separate departments to look after the welfare of these communities and have also been spending a sizeable amount on the welfare of dalits and tribals. A number of voluntary organizations also promote the welfare of dalits and tribals. Their welfare is also given special attention in the Five Year Plans. The tribals also are provided adequate representation in the legislative organs at different levels as well as reservation in services and educational institutions.

However, in spite of all these measures, governmental, non-governmental and individual, the tribals are still suffering from poverty, indebtedness, illiteracy bondage, exploitation, disease and unemployment. The condition and status of women is even more at a rudimentary level.

Hence, a thorough social research that is scientifically maneuvered is very essential to probe into the socio-cultural, economic, religious, political aspects that effect and shape the destiny of these deprived sections of society and more specially, the deprived category of women who belong to the various tribal communities of India and with special reference to the woman of Manipur.

2.3. PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

Critics of the Indian family system say that women in the Indian society have from time immemorial been victims of discrimination. They haven't enjoyed an equal platform with their male counterparts. They have not only been deprived at the society level but also in the family. It is not uncommon to come across individuals from all strata of society, not expressing happiness at the birth of a girl child. In fact there are sections of societies in India that even kill the girl child before she could come into this world. She may not even have any share in her father's property. Ideologies, institutional practices and existing norms in society have contributed much to their harassment. In spite of the legislative measures adopted in favor of women in our society after independence, the spread of education and women's gradual economic independence, countless women still continue to be discriminated and harassed. In the light of this dismal picture, the condition of the rural women is even more pathetic. Illiteracy, cultural and religious oppressions have made their condition even more pitiable. Comparatively, in some sections of the urban areas, women are considerably aware of their rights and privileges. They have learnt to be assertive and accept new roles for themselves. They have developed optimism and a hopeful approach to life. My in depth survey of the life of the women of Manipur has shown that they too are oppressed, first of all as women and secondly as tribal women. This has probed me to do an in depth analysis of the various factors associated with their condition and whether these factors have contributed to their empowerment or not. A comparative study of the condition of non-tribal and tribal women in Manipur has also thrown light on the

working of factors differently for both these groups and has gone to prove that the condition of the non-tribal women is much better as compared to the tribal woman.

Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India, clearly contended that while women participation in the nationalist upsurge was crucial, the women of India have an additional task, and that is to free themselves from the tyranny of manmade customs and laws. They will have to carry on this second struggle by themselves for man is not likely to help them. This is even truer for the women of Manipur, who have to bear the whole burden of struggle for women emancipation themselves.

2.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Women's empowerment is a crucial issue facing women as a whole and Manipur women in particular. Today as they themselves have become better aware of the need and as they struggle to reaffirm their indigenous identity, rights, values and dignity as human beings and have become determined to stand against the threat to their existence perpetrated by ideologies of sexism, colonialism, materialism and individualism.

Thus, for the women of Manipur, the struggle for gender equality is to be launched not only within the confines of the home and the community but also at the state and national arenas and platforms where negotiations for socio-economic cooperation and understandings are accomplished. Women have no contribution as they have no control over their lives and natural resources. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, clearly points out that if an ancestral treasure lying buried in a corner of the house unknown to the members of the family were suddenly discovered what a celebration it would be for the occasion. Manipur women's marvelous power is lying dormant. If the women of Manipur wake up they will dazzle the Nation.

2.5. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The main aim of my study of the women of Manipur was to realize the following objectives:

1. To study the concept of empowerment and its various dimensions among different communities in Manipur.
2. To study the Status and process of Empowerment among the tribal and non-tribal women of Manipur.
3. To bring to light the reality and causes of the existing social inequality between men and women in Manipur with a view to compare the structure of both the tribal and non-tribal societies of the state.
4. To understand women-men equal participation in developmental processes in Manipur.
5. To analyze women's movements in Manipur to fight for their rightful contribution in the society.
6. To analyze the status and role of men and the influence of patriarchal values
7. To find out if the process of empowerment is strong among the women of Manipur.

2.6. HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis (or hypotheses) is a tentative statement about what is predicted .In other words hypothesis is assumed to true unless proved otherwise. **The prime hypothesis of this study can be stated that by and large the women of Manipur especially the women belonging to the tribal communities of Manipur are comparatively less empowered than the women belonging to the non-tribal sections of the state, due to the various prominent socio-cultural, economic, religious factors that contribute towards this process.** It's been almost fifty years since India became free from the tyranny of invaders and has gradually moved towards industrialization and modernization, and is now in a neck-to-neck race with the developed countries however the condition of women is very slowly showing improvement in an upward trend and this is very true for most of the tribal woman who still lives an alienated, male dominated, ignorant environment;

unaware of her potentials, skills, and equal abilities to compete with her male counterparts.

Thus, my study not only probes the area of empowerment among the woman of Manipur, it also searches the other different factors that are directly or indirectly connected with the condition of the woman involved in the empowerment process.

Therefore, the various other hypotheses that I have also deeply delved into are as follows:

1. Customary and legal laws like male inheritance, the root causes of inequality among men and women in tribal societies of Manipur.
2. The culture of Manipur society, the customs and patterns of behavior, are not different as far as tribal and non-tribal women are concerned. However the process of empowerment is comparatively different among them.
3. Status of tribal women is comparatively lower than that of the non-tribal women in Manipur.
4. Women's position and degree of empowerment is defined by gender and gender-relations in both tribals and non-tribal societies in Manipur.
5. Level of literacy along with higher education is a powerful and multi-prolonged force in improving women's status in Manipur, especially among the tribal community.
6. Conscientization with regards to gender equality is low among women as seen in their educational aspirations for girls and boys in Manipur both tribal and non-tribal women.

STUDY AREA

The present composition of the population of Manipur may be broadly classified under five main groups: (1) The Meiteis, (2) The Scheduled caste Meiteis (3) The Kuki-Chin-Mizos (4) The Nagas and (5) The Muslims. Manipur consists of nine districts having numerous blocks and villages. The state is broadly divided into two areas - the hilly terrains which are mainly inhabited by the tribal communities and

the valley which is the habitation of most of the non-tribal communities. Out of the nine districts of Manipur, I have selected four districts of Churachandpur, Senapati, Bishnupur, and Imphal East. Among these four districts Bishnupur and Imphal comprise mostly of the non-tribal population whereas Churachandpur and Senapati are predominantly populated with tribal communities.

2.8. CRITERIA AND METHOD OF SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

Since my study was aimed at the process of empowerment of the women of Manipur, significant number of my respondents comprised of woman generally between the age group of 18-60. I had adopted the following criteria while selecting the required number of respondents from the sample demarked, for the purpose of my study:

1. Number of respondents- the number was adequate enough to gather the required amount of information for the purpose of study.
2. Gender of the respondents- the study comprised mainly of women respondents; however male respondents were also carefully selected such that bias could be ruled out to a great extent.
3. Age of respondents - the age of the respondents was such that they could understand the questions posed to them and could disseminate the relevant information connected with topic under study.
4. Marital Status of respondents- most of the respondents were either married or of marriageable age. However a small percentage also consisted of unmarried individuals, divorcees and widows.
5. Representation as per area under study- adequate representation was given from all the areas under study and that this sample group was largely representative of the entire woman population of Manipur. Also, adequate representation from both the groups that is the tribal and the non-tribal was given.
6. Educational level of the respondents- adequate representation from the literate population of the group under study was made, however the non-literate group was also considered, as they could highlight the problems that they undergo due to

illiteracy. Thus, for a comparative study both the literate and the non-literate populations were selected that proved quite significant for the study.

7. Occupational status of the respondents- adequate representation taken from employed, non-employed as well as self-employed groups. This was to prove the significant relationship between occupation and the process of empowerment.

2.9. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population under consideration constituted the tribal as well as the non-tribal women of Manipur. The sample that was representative of the women of Manipur was carefully selected from the four main districts under study namely Bishnupur, Imphal East, Churachandpur, and Senapati. The respondents, mainly the women who were aged between eighteen to sixty years and who were active in all aspects of life, were selected for the purpose of my study.

2.10. SAMPLING

Sampling is the selection of part of an aggregate or totality known as population, on the basis of which a decision concerning the population is made. Thus we can say that a finite subset of statistical individuals in a population is called a sample and the number of individuals in a sample is called the sample size. The sampling unit is the individual respondents that formed the sample size of my population of the women of Manipur. The criteria that were considered while doing the sampling was as follows:

1. The sampling units were drawn in a scientific manner.
2. The appropriate sampling technique was used. In this case the sampling method that was employed was stratified random sampling where past data or some other information related to the character under study was used to divide the population into various groups or strata such that units within each group are as homogenous as possible and the group means were widely different as possible. This classification was done keeping in mind that proper classification of the population into various strata was done and there was suitable sample size from each stratum.

The advantages of choosing the sample, using stratified random sampling were as follows:

1. More representative - It ensures any desired representation in the sample of the various strata in the population. It over-rules the possibility of any essential group of the population being completely excluded in the sample. Stratified sampling thus provides a more representative cross-section of the population and is frequently regarded as the most efficient system of sampling.
2. Greater Accuracy- Stratified sampling provides estimates with increased precision. Moreover, stratified sampling enables us to obtain the results of known precision for each stratum.
3. Administrative Convenience- The stratified random samples are more concentrated geographically. Accordingly, the time and money involved in collecting the data and interviewing the individuals may be considerably reduced and the supervision of the field work could be allocated with greater ease and convenience.
4. Since my population was quite heterogeneous, sampling problems differed markedly in different parts of population for instance literates and non-literates; people living in ordinary homes or large sized homes; employed and unemployed or self employed etc., In such cases it was easier to deal with the problem through stratified sampling by regarding the different parts of the population as stratum and tackling the problems of the survey within each stratum independently.

2.11. DATA COLLECTION –TYPES AND SOURCES

For the purpose of the study two main sources of data were used:

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

Primary data is one, which is collected by the investigator for the purpose of a specific inquiry or study. Such data is original in character and is generated by surveys conducted by the individuals.

Following methods were widely used for collection of primary data:

1. Observation- it involves recording of actions and is performed by either a person or some mechanical or electronic device. Observation is less versatile than

communication since some attributes of a person may not be readily observable, such as attitudes, awareness, knowledge, intentions and motivation. However, in my study the method of observation was quite useful especially in observing the plight of the tribal women as they struggled with the difficult terrain to complete their daily chores as well as various aspects of their social and cultural life.

2. Questionnaire – this is an important tool to for gathering primary data. Poorly constructed questionnaires can result in large errors and invalidate the research data therefore significant effort was put into constructing a good and meaningful questionnaire.

3. Schedule –It is like a questionnaire, however, the basic difference between a questionnaire and a schedule is that a schedule is normally filled in by the researcher or someone called an enumerator appointed by the researcher. This method was also employed as the lack of reading and writing was prevalent among many respondents.

4. Interview Method - The Interview method is a very effective tool for amassing relevant information directly from the respondents. Every interview has got its own balance of relevance and withholds information. Interview is defined as an effective, informal, verbal or non-verbal conversation initiated for scientific purpose and focused on planned content area. It is useful where an individual is not educated enough to give any kind of written information. Moreover the interview does not alienate the respondent from the researcher. Interviews can consist of open-ended questions as well as closed-ended questions. Interview sessions can capture the emotional upheavals and indifferences of the respondents thus enabling the researcher to understand things in a holistic manner. However, the interview sessions may also bring in bias as the respondents behavior may be affected by his or her perception of the interviewer. In my study the personal interviews were very useful and most of the respondents allowed themselves to be interviewed with ease. Open-ended and closed-ended questions were employed during the interview sessions. Field visits were made and interview sessions conducted with the respondents in the village/town itself.

Unstructured interview method was used which allowed the creation of a congenial environment that allowed an easy flow of effective communication. However this method has its limitations. The diversity of responses acquired through personal interviews makes analysis of the data difficult. Therefore data is collected by using the tool of interview with the help of schedule.

II. SECONDARY SOURCES OF DATA

Secondary data is that which has been already collected by some other individual or agency. Secondary data can be obtained from journals, reports, government publications, publication of professional and research organization and so on. Relevant information on the statistical information of the tribals was obtained from the Tribal Research Center (Pune), Tilak Maharashtra University Library (Pune), Alochana Library (Pune), Gokhale Institute Library (Pune), Manipur University library (Manipur), and the Census Book of India 2001. Manipur Census handbook (series 14) was also used for collecting the secondary information.

2.12. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Analysis of data is done with the help of computer software. Qualitative data is analyzed with the help of tabulation and evaluated in descriptive writing. In the present study, researcher used SPSS software to analyze the data. Before the analysis the data was edited so that the errors could be corrected or omitted.

2.13. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

During my study of the women of Manipur, I came across certain hurdles that delayed my study to a certain extent. Moreover since I needed to contact woman from both the urban as well as the rural areas, it became difficult at times and expensive too. Most of the woman of the tribal communities as well as the women living in urban areas were either engaged in work in the fields or fetching water or working in schools or offices thus it was difficult to meet them and interview them in during the day time.

2.14. CHAPTERISATION PRESENTATION

The data collected and analyzed is arranged according to chapters. Thus keeping the objectives of the selected topics in mind, the data collected has been presented in eight chapters:

Chapter I- Consists of relevant information about the background of the state and the people of Manipur.

Chapter II -Consists of Methodology and the sources of data collection and Review of Literature.

Chapter III- Consists of the Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents

Chapter IV - Consists Family Factors and women empowerment

Chapter V - Consists of Cultural Factors and women empowerment

Chapter VI - Consists of Occupational and Economical factors and women Empowerment

Chapter VII - Consists of Health Status and women Empowerment

Chapter VIII - Consists of Religious and Political and women Empowerment

Chapter IX - Consists of the Conclusion and Suggestions

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.15. Related literatures

As literature on women in general and the tribal women in particular is voluminous, the present study focuses mainly on the women of Manipur which is the field of study that embraces all walks of life of both tribal and non-tribal women. However, the thrust is uniformly the same, the inferior status of women in one form or the other, under various pretexts and their consequences.

Robert J. Gregory in his article on *Tribes and Tribal: Origin, Use, and Future of the Concept*, has written that the term “tribe” has originated around the time of the Greek city-states and the early formation of the Roman Empire. The Latin term, “tribus” has since been transformed to mean, “A group of persons forming a community and claiming descent from a common ancestor”. The range of meanings however, has grown broader even further over the intervening years, for example, “Any of various systems of social organization comprising several local villages, bands, districts, lineages, or other groups and sharing a common ancestry, language, culture, and name” also notes that a tribe is a group of persons with a common occupation interest or habit and a large family. Today, the range of groups referred to as tribal is truly enormous. Not everyone who has a distinct ethnic identity however, can be deemed to be a member of a tribe.² This is exactly what happened in Manipur within the tribe there are sub-tribes such as the Kukis, the Nagas and so on.

Gregory further stated that the mainstream, of course, was under elite command and control, and the members within conformed and complied with the customs, style of life, and culture of, or dictated by, the proverbial powers. The tribes, on the other hand, were people with special attachments to land, kinship ties, a unique culture, certain religious beliefs, particular activities or material possessions that differentiated and separated them from the mainstream. The tribes were in subordinate roles, for they had less political power and less access to resources, technology and other forms of power.

Tribals lived differently because of their unique history, culture, ancestry, beliefs, and ways of life. Their knowledge of plants, animals, and ways to survive led them to hold wise ideas about how to relate to Mother Earth. Tribes were often scattered about in less preferred locations, and they followed distinct behaviour and beliefs when relating with the majority culture. Further, many tribes had a deep attachment to particular pieces of land, a bond dating from pre-colonial days. That strong link to the land and forest areas was key factor in maintaining tribal status.³

The book, *Women in Patriarchy: Cross-cultural Readings*, is an anthology of twenty three pieces – short stories, essays, extracts – which tell their own story. Covering a period of two centuries and more, they bring together a history of women's struggles across national boundaries and articulate their emotional boundaries and articulate their emotional intellectual responses to patriarchal control and imposition. As each struggle leads to a new one and another frontier is opened, women have changed their strategies and moved from reasoning to protest, from silence to articulation, from insanity and ostracism to self-assertion and confidence. In the process they have also had to explore their strengths and weaknesses, their sexualities and relationships and negotiate the barriers of colour and race.

These narratives by women of the first world as well as third world nations look at childhood, old age, loneliness, and work with bold strokes of comedy, irony and radical ideology. It seeks to accord visibility to the third world, cross geographical and political barriers, bring together the parallels, focus on the difference and extend the boundaries of knowledge and understanding.⁴ Being patriarchal society women in Manipur are also facing the same problems and struggles which we are going to study in detail in the following chapters.

R.C. Hiremath in his book, *Women and Gender Issue*, argues that though gender equality is a matter of fact, there are still many issues that plague the development and empowerment of women. Early women activists and feminists built up the

women's liberation movement and ultimately gained many positive factors in their favour. This resulted in many old issues gaining public prominence and new ones caused by the emancipation of women and their entering into the mainstream of social and political life. The book discusses the various issues women face in their march towards equality. The prevalence of male attitudes, generally called male chauvinism, still results in some women in many countries relegated to a second-class status.

The reasons for this, the issues that have cropped up, and a well-reasoned and logical conclusion, form the basis of this book. The chapters reveal the various issues that are discussed such as challenges faced by the modern feminist, Women's liberation and criminality, Women's access to the mainstream, The nature of feminism, Are women unable to participate in success?, Feminine sensibility, Gender stereotype sensitivity, Justice and gender equality, Women and the culture of terror, love and the intellectual woman, rape as means of male domination and father's place in the child's life.⁵

Lakshmi Kumari in her book, *The Role of Women in Society*, perceives the role of woman as an evolutionary force with unlimited dimensions, which makes her a social anchor par excellence to steer the value system in everyday life. She is a true home-maker as a secure family unit makes for a secure society. Her true emancipation lies in playing this role to perfection, at all levels emotional, intellectual and spiritual.⁶ This perception is seen very relevant to women in Manipur as we are going to study in detail in the following chapters.

Gupta and Gupta in their book, *Role of Women in the Twenty First Century*, opined that women and their problems have acquired growing importance in our social milieu, over the last two decades. Hence, after realizing the significant role of women, it is desirable that a greater emphasis be given for their all round development and as such imparting education and providing employment to this vast segment of population. The plight of marginalized sections and poor women is significant.

It is therefore, necessary to understand the scientific basis of women development so that public opinion can be more informed and teachers, social workers, activist, can contribute in large measure towards adequate attention of women in our country. It covers diverse aspects of the subject and discusses complexity of problems faced by women. This is a multi-disciplinary investigation into various aspects of the pressing socio-economic and political problems facing Indian women. It explores that how after integration women into development will solve problems caused by development plans and policies which have neglected or been detrimental to women.⁷

Sushama Sahay, in her book, *Women and Empowerment: Approaches and Strategies*, clearly points out that, the empowerment of women by their increased participation in all aspects of political, social and economic life has become one of the major goals of democratic and participatory movements, as well as women's organizations throughout the world. Beyond offering an understanding why empower women, concept and framework for women's empowerment, it seeks to discuss the approaches and strategies for empowerment.⁸ Women from all sections of communities in Manipur are also now collectively fighting a battle for their rightful existence.

In the book, *Progressive Women and Political Identity*, the author deals with progressive women and their political identity. It gives a critical account of women's participation in politics and politicalization of women issues. Women's liberation movement has concentrated on the women's oppression which includes the sexual division of labour, control of sexuality and the relation of reproduction, access to education, jobs and power over our lives. These issues set an agenda for gender analysis which should produce strategies for change. The feminist movement in India raised several questions – What it is to be a woman? How our femininity and our sexuality have defined for us and how we might begin to redefine them for ourselves? They also include complain against the objectification of women as sexual object for male consumption, against pornography, rape and other

form of violence against women within and outside the family. Today, gender theory has responded in a strange ways to this political agenda, as can be seen in gender approach to the family.⁹

R.K. Tandon in his book, *Status of Women in Contemporary World*, stressed that the status of woman refers to the position women are granted as individuals in the social structure, defined by their designated right and obligations. The author explores the status in terms of a role, or the pattern or behaviour expected of the occupant of the woman. The diverse roles she performs in society are those of a daughter, a wife, a mother and a career woman. In order to have a global picture of women's status, the author makes a quick review of some of the developed, developing and under-developed countries in terms of the position occupied by women in different social structures, and tries to determine ways and means to enhance their position through the most powerful medium education.

Even the western woman has also lived, as the subordinate member of the two sexes, and has been biologically and physically regarded as the weaker sex who, at best, can either be protected or neglected. This relationship between woman and man has been accepted - civilization after civilization. She has been labeled the last of the human beings on earth to challenge civilized life for achieving humanity towards her. Women have been invisible in the history of human life for many centuries.¹⁰

S.K. Khan in his book, *Women and the Human Rights*, propounded that it has been recognized that the right to live in a peaceful and secured environment is fundamental to human well-being. Without them, the development of just, equitable and healthy society cannot take place. In totality, peace and security require the fulfillment of social justice, recognition of dignity and worth of human individuals and the equal rights of men and women and of large and small nations. An assessment of the status of women has to start from the social framework. The term 'woman' covers women from varied strata of society. The author hoped that covering a wide range of information sources and services in women's studies in

India will serve as a basic reference tool not only for library professionals and researchers but also for students, academics, activists and all those interested and involved with women's issues in India.¹¹

A.K. Pandey, in his book, *Gender Equality: Development and Women Empowerment*, states an individual's self-conception as being male or female, as distinguished from actual biological sex. For most persons, gender identity and biological characteristics are the same. There are, however, circumstances in which an individual experiences little or no connection between sex and gender. In transsexualism, for example, biological sexual characteristics are distinct and unambiguous, but the affected person believes that he or she is- or ought to be – of the opposite sex. Gender identity is not fixed at birth; both physiological and social factors contribute to the early establishment of a core identity, which is modified and expanded by social factors as the child matures.

The women's movement questioned certain social institutions and traditional values, basing many of its arguments on scientific studies suggesting that most supposed differences between men and women result not from biology but from culture. Many women objected that the English language itself, by reflecting traditional male dominance in its word forms, perpetuated the problem. Successful efforts to reform the language included the introduction of the title Ms. as an alternative to Miss or Mrs., the substitution of gender-neutral for gender-based terms, such as firefighter for fireman and flight attendant for stewardess; and the avoidance of the male pronoun he (for example, by the use of a phrase such as *he* or *she*) when referring to persons who may be either male or female. The women's movement also sought to foster changes in male-female relationships within the family, including the sharing domestic roles and the avoidance of gender stereotyping in children's toys and books, television programs, and other media. An increasing number of women chose to use their maiden name after marriage, either in place of, or in conjunction with, their husband's name. Much attention was given to consciousness their shared abilities, experiences, and problems.¹² How far have these ideas percolated to the subordinated strata of society is the question.

Haleh, in his book, *“Women and Empowerment Illustrated from the Third World”*, raised questions such as: what is empowerment? Is it power over resources? Is it the ability to create ‘effective demand?’ Is it about the access to resources and how they are controlled, politically or economically by NGOs, by political parties, by the state? Do political parties facilitate, or do they channel energies away from empowerment? To what extent is empowerment explicit or implicit? Is it important to evaluate the degree to which, in deferent circumstances the state has been seen as a provider of resources? The answer to these questions may be different in different places and at different times. There certainly is a different emphasis on different priorities when it comes to understanding what empowerment means to the women in the different case studies analyzed in this volume.

Defining empowerment as a process, and some thing which can not be done to/for women, but which has to be their own, raises serious questions for development agencies. Is there a role for enablers or for any kind of interventions in the empowerment process? What is the relationship between micro-level processes and macro-picture? Does empowerment in one sphere of activity lead to empowerment in others? Can empowerment ever be a measurable outcome?

The author focuses on the meaning and understanding of power and empowerment. He argues that the dominant feminist understanding of empowerment should be a dynamic one, which conceptualizes power as a process rather than a particular set of results. Then ‘power to’, ‘power with’, and ‘power from within’ would come to construct differing sets of meanings for empowerment. Empowerment is a process that cannot be done for women, but has to emerge from them.¹³

In the book, *Women Education and Social Empowerment*, Manta states that women education and social empowerment has been an area of debate and serious concern for the last two decades. As far as India is concerned, social empowerment of women and their education had been wrangled by many social taboos. We have been witnessing “The Women Bill” being tossed around on the floors of both the

houses of parliament for a couple of years passed. This goes on to show that even the politicians, underplay the women's cause as they are also a part of the social system, which sees to it that the women education and social empowerment stay at the stagnant phase

This book unveils the real problems being faced by women in all the spheres of life. Although virtually in all the area women have imprinted their mark as not being inferior to men in any way, still the majority of women is not free from the shackles of many social evils. The dowry system is still prevalent in India, cutting across the social strata, child marriage still take place in interior parts of the country.¹⁴ Blind faith, witchcraft, magical rituals affect the uneducated poorer and tribal women

In their book, *“Empowering Women For sustainable Development”*, Leelamma and Devasia testify to their continuing scholarly engagement with the perplexities of fashioning, in a non-revolutionary perspective, a just society in India. Their enterprise is all the more demanding in that they turn their engagement in this volume to the problematic of “empowering women” in the context of “sustainable development.”

The discerning reader will find in this book a message of hope. The book abounds with examples of success stories, narratives in which “low” caste, “illiterate”, “powerless” slum women – whether Poonabai of 200 huts in slum in Siraspath, or Kalabai from Telugupura testify to the possibilities of the reversal of imposed powerlessness by well conceived community action programmes. All these little narratives reveal potentials of the so called powerless to be self-reliant; and as they unfold, we are also privileged to witness how their movement ‘grows’ from combating local despotism of a ration-shop to access to other basic needs and finally to ensuring democratic accountability (recourse to courts for slum dwellers rights or coercing corporators to provide basic amenities). In the process, we learn that empowerment simultaneously moves along the axis of social organization and consciousness.

Empowerment of women and their struggle to achieve economic independence and freedom through meeting their needs without compromising the ability of others to meet their needs is the key issues of discussion. The endeavor enunciates the potentialities of women, their aspirations, sufferings and achievements. It also vividly narrates the struggle of women against societal structures, system, corruption, formidable inequities and their own degradations.¹⁵

In the book, *Hinduism And Women*, Malladi Subbamina points out the important aspect of Hindu culture and its attitude towards women. She said some people flamboyantly proclaim that women enjoyed complete freedom and full equality with men during the Rig-vedic period. However, the conclusion becomes inevitable after careful consideration and examination of the mores and the customs of that period that the freedom talked about is limited and the equality boasted of is restricted, and later followed the fall of woman.

And by about 300 B.C. marriage has become a necessary for women. The ceremony like 'Upanayanam' symbolizing the new birth is denied to her. It has become her bounden duty to marry. Her childhood, her education, all turned to the single aim of preparing for her marriage. Marriage tie can push the woman into a state of slavery or it can contribute to the development of her personality. She slides into the position of the slave in her married state. The wife has to consider her husband as god, serve and worship him in spite of the fact that he is devoid of character, that he is lustful and that he does not possess any semblance or worth. Loyalty to the husband is proclaimed but loyalty to the wife is not considered. The woman is to live for her lord the husband. There shall not be any other person in her life. She shall not have any individuality. Her personality is to be merged in the personality of her husband.

The author tackles these issues in this book. She does not opt for 'superiority of women propounded by the great astronomer and scientist Varahamihir nor does she accept the secondary role of women as ordained by Manu. She advocates equal and

fruitful partnership of women with man. In her view the women have to depend upon themselves for their all round development and social, economic, political and cultural advancement. She hoped that Hindu women will not and shall not lag behind in this pursuit of women's liberation.¹⁶

In his book, *Status of Muslim Women in India*, Hajira throws light on the various situations which colour the profile of Indian Muslim women. The author has taken care of the past and present conditions of Muslim women. As a result, a social forecast for their future is possible. Historical perspectives of the contemporary situation create a linkage between the past and the present. Another innovative feature is a paper on the participation of Muslim women in Panchajati Raj. The reader, therefore, gets a fairly good idea about various development strategies adopted by the state and their impact on Muslim women. Two papers have also been devoted to legal problems and Muslim Personal Law. The approach of these papers includes a deep sensitivity of the author towards the sufferings of Muslim women without diluting the objectivity.¹⁷ Condition of Muslim women in Manipur are no better.

'Count Us Equal: The Ministry of Women in the Church of South India', Kenneth Gill made a systematic and comprehensive survey and study of the ministry of women in the Church of South India. Christian women in India and elsewhere are crying out for justice and equality, it is more so to women of the 'Church of South India' in general and the 'Theological Trained women' in particular. These women are struggling for the affirmation of human dignity as well as for a meaningful participation in the Church and Society. They are equally trained with men, but their right of ordination was denied in the church just because of their gender.

After 15 long years of debating, ordination of women was passed in 1970, but it took some years to implement and it was only in 1976 that the first three women were ordained. There are only 20 ordained women in service till in January 1990. The author comments that women have the particular gifts of patience, healing and

reconciliation and are better and able to handle disputes than men.¹⁸ Status of women in religion among the tribal women in Manipur is studied in Chapter VIII.

The book, *Tribal Women and Development*, has discussed about tribal women, their position, involvement, participation, restraints, roles and activities concerning various tribal life-designs. At the conceptual level, as far as modern sociology and social anthropology go, the term status has included all culturally prescribed rights and duties inherent in social positions. Initially status referred only to the “ascribed” one. But of late “achieved” status has also been given due place in sociological and anthropological parlance.

In the tribal society, sex ratio is favorable; there is no bride burning; there is high participation of women in economic activities; infant mortality is low. All of this has a lot to do with the tribal ethos, which recognizes the equal role of women. There is no gaining in saying the fact that the status of women in North-East is higher than in middle India and south. Even in the patrilineal system they enjoy a measure of influence and visibility, which is not to be found elsewhere. Of course, in the matrilineal societies of the North-East they continue to remain owners of the property even though its management is in the hands of the males. In the polyandrous communities of the Toda and the Jaunsar, women continue to enjoy a measure of freedom in material matters, even though they do not control land. It is recognized that the status of tribal women in a tribal society is a little better than that of their non-tribal counterparts.¹⁹

In the book, *Tribal Women and Forest Economy Deforestation: Exploitation and Status Change*, Walter and Geeta studied the role of women in the forest dweller economy. According to them, at every level women contribute more to the forest economy than men do. They are the main providers of food but due to the policies taken by the government and deforestation, they become marginalized.

The entry of external commercial-industrial forces and the transfer of forest and other natural resources to their control that has caused the crisis in the lives of the

tribals have been affected by government policies that favor the commercial-industrial interests at the cost of the forest dwellers. They have destroyed tribal source of food, fuel, medicines and fodder in order to get higher profits. An immediate consequence of this state of affairs is deterioration in the status of women in all fields: social, economic, cultural, and physical.

On the other hand, a few persons among the tribals have taken over from non-tribal middlemen, occupations such as small time money lending and have started exploiting other tribals. The consequent weakening of the mutually supportive tribal community has more negative effects on women than on men.²⁰

Gavit Attarchand in his book, *Nehru-Tribal and women Welfare*, points out that for Jawaharlal Nehru the exploitation of any form was never acceptable. His concern for women, tribals, children and backward classes reflected this. His concern for religious minorities in India also showed liberal attitudes. Nehru was humanist and his dream was to wipe out tears from every eye and the frustrating sense of pain and weariness from every limb. He never thought of his plan as 'plan' only but thought of them as a growth, a development, and a realization of values. Scientific socialism held a moral appeal for him.

According to Gavit, 'Woman is the builder and moulder of a nation's destiny. Though delicate and soft, she has a heart for stronger and bolder than man. She is the supreme inspiration for man's onward march-an embodiment of peace, love, piety and compassion. Ostensibly then the position occupied by women in society determines the degree of development of that particular nation. It is undeniable that the problem of removal of poverty and rising of the standard of living, so urgently needed, can not be tackled effectively unless women do not participate fully. No country can progress properly when half of its population is ineffective and redundant.'²¹

The book, *Primitive Tribal Women: Health Status*, is the outcome of a study funded by Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. The primitive tribes constitute

a sizable number among tribal populations. These people live in remote and hilly regions with a little contact with people from plains. They venerate every aspect of life. Shifting Agriculture is the main stay of the population. They depend on minor millets as staple food. They are very hardworking people, sincere, and trustworthy.

Due to small amount produce from agriculture they have remained poor. Consequently they are anemic, and suffer from diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and infertility. Personal and menstrual hygiene of women is in a bad state and suffer from white discharge and several menstrual problems. Many women and men have been widowed due to deaths resulting out of malaria. They lack electricity, proper health care and transportation. Primary schools and ashram schools are located at distant places therefore most of the tribes are illiterate.

Primitive tribes are highly receptive and amenable for discussions on several of their problem. Usual surveys may not help in identifying their problems. Informal discussions and interviews will reveal their cultural life. They need continuous interaction with people from plains to develop their life.²² Tribal women in Manipur are hard-working as the primitive tribal women were. Discussions on various health related problems are studied in chapter VIII.

In their article "*Indigenous Medicinal Substances and Health Care: A study among the Paite Tribe of Manipur, India.*" Nemthianngai and Sangmitra A. point out that people living in tribal areas often faced obstacles in accessing basic health care services due to remoteness and backwardness of the areas in which they live. Understanding the health care needs of tribal people in these difficult circumstances with special focus on utilization of tribal indigenous medicinal substances is significant for devising comprehensive programs. Most of the people among this particular tribe prefer towards indigenous medicine or home made remedies and traditional healers at the primary stage of their illness. Thus, scope of indigenous medicine becomes important. People's belief in indigenous medicine can play a vital role in implementing Government programmes on improving on improving

and promoting Indian system of medicine in rural areas and at the same time recognizing the local tribal medicine.²³

Chhay & Kumar in their book, *Status of Tribal Women in Maharashtra: Executive Summary*, highlight that the Scheduled Tribe population in Maharashtra is 73.18 lakh, which is 9% of the total population in the state. Maharashtra ranks fourth among the states in India having large tribal populations. There are 47 tribes in Maharashtra spread over in 47 tehsils of 14 districts. The tribals in Maharashtra are no better than that of the tribals in Manipur.

According to the report made by Chhaya & Kumar, tribals in Maharashtra are marginalized physically and socio-economically. They depend on forest resources for their livelihood. They are mostly engaged in occupations like settled cultivation, hunting, gathering, fishing, and animal husbandry, trapping of birds and animals. Some have taken up pastoralism, terrace cultivation and horticulture. And others are involved in basket weaving, mat weaving and toddy tapping. They have neither been integrated in the mainstream successfully, nor are they able to retain their autonomy and identity despite various laws, proclaiming their special status under the constitution.

They have also propounded that Tribals in Maharashtra are often exploited by the moneylenders; they grabbed the tribal land and making them pauperized despite the laws, which ban the sale and purchase of the tribal land to non-tribals. During last two decades they are threatened with displacement of a mass scale because of the development projects such as dams and forest management undertaken by the state, negating its own proclaimed objectives of protection of traditional rights of these indigenous people.

As per the statistics compiled by Walter about the displaced persons in India between 1951-1990, the tribals appear to represent almost 50% of the population. It is quite disproportionate to their number in the total population, which is around 95

percent. They seem to be the most vulnerable lot because of their geographical location and also because of lack of voice.

According to Chhay & Kumar, the Mahadeo Koli and the Kokna in Maharashtra have emerged as the most developed tribes, who have reasonable land. The status of women in those communities appears to be a little better, in terms of literacy. However, among Kokna, the bride price is replaced by dowry, which is reverse indicator and consequence of integration in the mainstream society. Settled agriculture and increased productivity would be the most desirable development strategy for them. Seasonal migration could be definitely reduced in their case, which disturbs the education of children and also has some correlation with drunkenness. Migration offers substantial income to land-less family. Among Gonds very little migration takes place, because of their socio-cultural milieu.

Although the Gram Panchayat has been in force for last decade, the traditional tribal Panchayats still exist and they deal with the community matters could be two or three tribal Panchayats depending upon the concentration of that particular tribe in that village. All the problems with marriage, divorce and custody of children are dealt there, and rarely these matters to the court, except the issues about property and land ownership.

As per the Indian Constitution, tribal laws are treated as their 'personal laws' and they are not codified. There prevail 182 tribal customary laws in India. Some aspects of these laws are quite pro-women and hence many feminists take the position that until the time secular, uniform civil code does get established there is not need of bringing the tribal women under the purview of the existing laws, which are modeled on the Hindu Code Bill.

However, it has to be noted that women are not allowed to sit as juries in this Panchayat. The data shows the 69.5 per cent women reported that tribal Panchayats exists in their village. 24.3 per cent said that women too could become a jury. Subordination women could be also noticed from various bans or stigmas about

certain actions by women. Ploughing is not strictly allowed for women. Stepping in certain temples is banned for them.

The custom seems to be having an origin in the hunting practice and the planning of expedition, which was used to be men's prerogative. The trees around these temples, known as sacred groves were not allowed to be cut down since it was supposed to be place of god. 47.2 per cent women said that this custom still continues to operate among their tribe. There was unanimity about the ban on attending any religious function or carry out any ritual during menstruation.

Another important aspect of the tribal culture is their well-publicized alcoholism. It seems to be a common practice to assume that their traditional liquor habits have led them to become alcoholics of the modern times. It appears that women too drink liquor as a part of festivals and also rituals. Older women are likely to drink more than younger women. There are certain taboos about consumption of liquor during certain periods such as pregnancy and breast-feeding.²⁴ Unequal treatment toward tribals as whole and tribal women in particular is common. Women indulged in unhealthy habit such as drinking alcohol, chewing tobacco or pan is studied detail in chapter VIII.

In his book, *The Burning Caldron of North-East India*, Ghurye is immensely convinced that the tribals of North-East India were different in Culture and everything from the tribal groups of hither India. The tribes of this belt were never a part of the mainstream of the socio-political history of India until about a century before India acquires Independence. He points out that it is because of the "isolationist policies followed by the erstwhile British administrators who later became 'advisor' to our intellectuals, anthropologists and administration that persisted in the 'isolationist' anthropological approach" to the tribal problem.

Therefore, the tribal people of North East must be brought out of their isolation into the mainstream of Indian nationalism. There is a crying need for the easy transportation and communication with the region as well as between the region

and other parts of India. Ghurye added that the situation in the erstwhile tribal areas of the North-East is pretty serious and explosive.

On that very important international frontier of the country, the tribal states were evidently planning for a complete and hostile separation from India. In the context, China's claim that Arunachal Pradesh belonged to her figured in the statement. China's claims on "border fantastic" appearing as the heading of the messages of a reporter of the "Times of India" in its issues of May 6, 1979 poses a grave danger. It appears to be on the peak of a volcano, which may erupt at any time and breaks the integrity of the county.²⁵ How far the center pay attention to the need of the North-East Indian development is the question of the hour?

Studies on *Social Stratification in the Tribal Milieu of the North-East* drew attention to some scholars of the (AnSI). For instance, Saha studied the nature of stratification in the Imphal valley with a view to understanding how a caste-like system of stratification emerged and operated in a frontier area of Indian civilization. He carried out an in-depth field investigation to see to what extent the system of inter-ethnic hierarchy in Manipur valley conformed to the varna-jati model in the rest of India. The study revealed that the inter-group hierarchy in Manipur Valley did not fulfill certain basic requisites of the varna-jati hierarchy. It was indigenously developed as an interlineate hierarchy, which was further strengthened by the institution of kinship.

The AnSI also undertook a project titled 'Society and Culture among the people of Himalayan Border Area: Structure and Change' in 1972 in order to generate anthropological data from a number of Himalayan tribes on whom there was little or no anthropological information. It was felt that the Himalayan tribes should be thoroughly studied so that relevant information on their social and economic aspects and trends of change would be available.

While doing so (studying about the Himalayan tribes) special emphasis was given to the following aspects:

- (1) Ecological adaptation of the people to the peculiar Himalayan environment.
- (2) Socio-cultural implications of the locations. Himalayan villages are not only located at the frontiers of Indian civilization, but often also between nations and civilizations.
- (3) Trends of socio-economic changes since Independence. The study, with 1947 as the base line, proposed to go into details of the process and mechanism of change and its impact on the traditional life of the people.

As a part of the project, studies were initiated on tribes like the Khamti, Singpho, Kaman, Mishmi, Wancho, Tangsa, Apatanis, Nishi, Hill Miri and the Adi (Arunachal tribals). The studies showed the important roles played by a few tribes as bridge and buffer communities. It was revealed that a tribe could function as a bridge community between two other tribes and as a buffer community in respect of some other tribes. The strategic locations of the villages in the border areas were found to have played an important role as bridge or buffer communities. The tribes of Upper Subaniri Valley for instance, had played the role within the international border.²⁶

Raghuvir Sinha in his book, *Religion and Culture of North-Eastern India*, observes that Religion is that cultural tradition in continuity of a people that makes them live their life with a disquestioning belief and a sense of absolute dedication to some unforeseen superhuman element controlling their destiny, yet remaining beyond their reach. It pervades most of the human thoughts, and advancement in science has not depreciated its value; it has, in fact, made people realize the role of religion more profoundly.

Thus religion becomes all the more important to a tribal who live nearer to nature, and whose life is largely influence by its overwhelming forces. Religion becomes a part of their life and is interwoven in their socio-religious beliefs and rituals. They approach religion not as something different from themselves, but as an expression of their own inner realization of some invisible supernatural force controlling the course of nature in the same way as it influences their mind and thought.

The religion discovered in the North-Eastern cultural region is different from what it is in other parts of tribal India. They have some elements of religion in common, such as naturism or animism propelling a belief in the hierarchy of function of gods, duties and spirits, reigns over them in a kind of kingdom and in a soul substance hovering round their life.²⁷ The traditional religion of tribals in Manipur, their beliefs and practices were by and large similar with the rest of the tribals in North-East Indian.

Chatterji in his book, *Status of women in earlier Mizo Society*, has presented a significant study of the status of Mizo women. He points out that the Mizo women have high status and are more open than their mainline counterpart. There are no social evil practices like bride burning due to dowry or sati. They are not confined only within the four walls of the house, but are free to go out of the house to work in order to meet their daily needs.

The economic activities in all over Mizoram reveal that women run almost all shops, like bookstores, stationeries, textiles, drugs and a variety stores and also vegetable markets and tea stalls. And also their contribution in activities such a road making , brick lying, shifting cultivation etc. is in no way less than that of men.

Even in education, right from the elementary schools to colleges, it is found that boys and girls are studying together in almost equal numbers and their teaching staffs represent both sexes in adequate proportion. Their neat and tip-top dresses, stylish hairdo, their engagement in time at the shop appear to point out that they belong to the richer section of the society and this in turn establish that the role of women in middle and high middle class families is indeed a very significant one. He concludes that the Mizo women enjoyed not only equal treatment with men but also were given by the society the highest measure of security and respect for their free will.²⁸ Though there may be no practice of sati or dowry and appear to have

freedom for women among the tribal community however, whether they have high status in the society is a big question.

V.M. Rao in his article, "*Pattern of Workload and Participation in Decision Making among Tribal Women of Arunachal Pradesh*," writes, that Tribal women in Arunachal Pradesh take decision related to childcare, children's education, type of feast to be prepared, purchase of utensil and clothes, and agricultural activities. Thus, decisions related to major issues are taken by husband, while decisions on activities within the house are dominated by the women.

Men dominate in taking decisions on number of children to bear, arranging children's marriage, taking or giving loans, sale or purchase of animals, settlement of disputes, social visits, and to some extent noting child care is essentially a female activity. Liberty to women in spending money is, nevertheless, limited to domestic purposes.

Thus, decision making in important activities is decided by the husband. In other words, where there is social prestige men dominate, while decisions associated with responsibility and duties of use value are left to women. There is a positive relationship between levels of education and decision making by self, and there is positive change among women.²⁹ Tribals in Manipur are no exceptional in this case.

Changing Phase of Tribal Area of Manipur, Ghori traces the development progress of the infrastructure of the tribal area of Manipur from the pre-independence period to the present. In doing so, it not only takes into its purview the socio-economic disparities, which existed earlier, but also the enormous efforts, which have led to the improvement of the life style of the tribal population of Manipur.

While it reflects on the progress made during the Five Year Plans, it does not underscore the glaring fact that it has still along way to go. It not only highlights the national responsibility but also the social responsibility thereby implied, by giving top priority to the material progress of the tribal population. It also focuses

attention on the main lacunae of the tribal population, ignorance and lack of social consciousness; and exhorts the administrators to remove the dogmas and widen the mental horizons of the tribal population through education. It also emphasizes the need for the initiation of sustained welfare programs for the overall development of the tribal population.

Ghori added that there is a great disparity between the hills (the tribal areas) and the valley (the Meitei areas). The hill areas are more backward and neglected by the policy makers of the state. The formulation of schemes and their implementation has not always been satisfactory. Lack of proper communications has been a big constraint for development in the tribal areas. There is an urgent need for building up a network of good roads connecting all important centers as there are no railway links in this state.³⁰ Building proper network, transport and communication within the state and especially for the hill areas is an urgent the need of day.

Similarly, Ghost and Ghost in their book, *Women of Manipur*, studied about women of Manipur belonging to various communities, their unique talent of creativity and their hard work. They broadly divided the Manipur women into two groups:

- (1) Those settled in valley (the Meiteis),
- (2) Those settled on hills (the tribals).

The Meitei women have valor to fight social evil, to create revolution and can protect the interest of the motherland to fight war if the country faces such eventualities. For instance, during the 80s and 90s, the “Nupi Lal” (women’s war) revolted against alcohol and drugs addiction, which was widespread throughout the state.

The Meitei women hold a high and free position since all the internal trade and exchange of the produce of the state being managed by them. They opted to have markets at convenient spots by the roadside, where numbers of woman congregate at an early hour, whiling the time away with gossips and light work, and attending

customers. These women also weave their own clothes and their contribution in dance is also greatly recognized.

Ghosh and Ghosh further divided the later into three, the Old Kukis, the New Kukis and the Nagas. Women are look at high esteem in all these tribal groups. The economic activities and physical contributions of the tribal women enhance their position. They are good weavers and weave varieties of fabrics for their own clothes and for their family and sell the surplus.³¹ Active participation of women in Manipur in economic activities is studied in Chapter VI.

Jotsna Chatterji in his book, *Customary Laws and Women in Manipur*, highlights that it is the customary laws and cultures that shape women image and their status. Since the family is patriarchal, controled and governed by man and the first son is the successor and descendant of the father, he has complete authority over the family property. Therefore, he has to protect his younger brothers and sisters in every walks of their lives. The daughter has no right to inherit even if she is the first-born child of the family. She has no right to her father's immovable properties but any amount of moveable properties and wealth she can receive at the pleasure of her parents at the time of her marriage.

However, in some cases, father distributes his properties to all his sons and daughters equally before he dies so that no one suffers after his dead, but these are exceptional. In some tribes, the girl has to marry the boy chosen by her parents who fixed the bride-price as well. After the death of her husband, she is a widow and returns to her parents if she does not have any child. Women have no place in village authority and decision-making process in the society. This inequality between men and women is due to the customary law-the bride-price.³² Respondents' opinion about customary laws especially on inheritance right, dowry, bride price, mehr is studied in detail in chapter V.

In her book, *The Role of the Thadou Kuki women in Christian Home*, Phavei observes that the coming of Christianity brought changes in the Thadou-Kuki

society, specially the position of women. She has presented a significant role, which Kuki women have played in their homes. Home is very important for a person because it is where one begins his/her life and ends. At home, a Thadou-Kuki woman plays role as a mother and a wife. She is responsible to mould the family especially the children to grow not only physically but also spiritually. A part from the house holds chores family worship and entertaining guests are her responsibility. It is in her hand to build up a successful Christian family. She concludes, "Where there is a spiritual mother the family always prospers."³³ In the preceding chapter VIII, we will find in detail about how women play important role in the family as well as in the Church.

SUMMARY

This chapter has two parts: Research Methodology and review of previous literature. In the first part, social relevance of investigation, problems, significance, need of tribal research, objectives and hypothesis are studied. Study area, population of the study, sampling method and tools of data collection, Chapterization are also given in detailed.

In the second part several previous literatures on related topic are reviewed. The status of women refers to the position women are granted as individuals in the social structure, defined by their designated rights and obligations. Tradition India had seen a woman only as a member of the family or a group-as daughters, wives and mothers- and not as an individual with an identity or right of her own. As there is no previous comparison study between women of the tribal and non-tribal communities in Manipur, the researcher has interested to study on this particular area.

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CHAPTER III

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

3. INTRODUCTION

Empowerment of women is greatly influenced by many factors such as the social and cultural environment, economic condition, health, religious and political environment. Since the tribal culture appears to be more open than the non-tribal culture, it is generally believed that tribal women have more freedom to enjoy life than the non-tribal woman. In non-tribal communities where joint families exist and which are patriarchal in nature, women tend to have lesser freedom and normally occupy only a secondary status in the family. To a great extent she is under the control of her husband or in-laws and has to depend on them for the fulfillment of all her needs. Generally woman is not considered to be the key decision maker in the family and this is true in most parts of India.

Today, we see that women have become more independent and are more aware of their rights and privileges, and this awareness is attributed to education. Women understand that they too can become self-reliant and independent. Self reliance is one of the main steps towards empowerment. Marriage in India is considered to bring security and an identity to a woman. In some of the families woman performs the role of an advisor but it does not become obligatory on the part of the family to follow the advice. A comparative study of the rural and urban communities has shown significant differences when it comes to woman empowerment. It is observed that women in urban areas have access to more opportunities to education, choosing a career and employment, which to a great extent strengthens their status in the male dominated society.

Women have tremendous potential for development however they do not have adequate opportunities to exhibit their potential and talents. Considering the living conditions of women in Manipur, whom I have studied, it appears that they do not

have much opportunities to education and information due to which they are quite unaware of their rights and privileges.

Marital status of women makes significant changes in overall status of women in different areas. The role and status of a woman before marriage and after marriage are totally different. Before marriage, she is more or less controlled by her parents and after marriage she is obligated to her husband and in-laws. If a woman is educated she may enjoy a better status and earn more respect in the family as well as in the society. However, we see significant variations in different communities. The status of women is comparatively lower in tribal communities than the non-tribal communities. However, among the Muslims for instance, women do not have much power of choice. Women are meant to serve the family and do all the household work. They are totally dependent on the husband or family for their needs. Therefore, considering these various factors and the socio-cultural situations, that have an important bearing on the status of women and their empowerment, it would be significant enough to delve into the socio-cultural background of the respondents.

This chapter deals with the detailed information about the respondents i.e. their age, their area of residence, rural urban differences, marital status, mother tongue, sub-castes, religion, educational qualification, occupational pattern and family type that have a very significant bearing on the status and also the empowerment of the woman of Manipur whom I have studied.

3.1. AGE OF RESPONDENTS

In the Indian scenario the age of an individual especially for a girl child defines her boundaries, privileges and position in the family and society. Her well-being depends on whether things happen to her at the right age. Among the non-tribal communities in India a girl child must get married at the right age and form a family. In many societies it is a taboo to keep a girl at home without marriage after a certain age. Even today where woman have more freedom of choice whether to get married or remain single, unmarried woman are still not looked at with much

respect. There is always a speculation as to why a woman or a girl hasn't got married as yet. Woman many times gets restricted in pursuing education or a career because of her age; as she has come of marriageable age. After marriage too, many woman get burdened with duty of bearing children and taking care of the family as such they have to sacrifice their desires of acquiring education or becoming career woman at the altar of their family well-being. However when we compare a woman belonging to the urban area with that of a woman coming from a rural area we see that the average age of girls at marriage in cities is higher than the corresponding age in villages.

Thus I find it very important to relate age with the empowerment of women. My study of the woman of Manipur has shown that there is a significant relationship between the age of the woman and her empowerment. Table no.3.1. shows distribution of the respondents according to Age.

TABLE NO.3.1.

Distribution of the respondents according to age

Sr. No.	Age	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Below 20	4	2.5	1	.7
2	21-24	5	3.1	17	12.1
3	25-28	25	15.6	27	19.3
4	29-32	25	15.6	28	20.0
5	33-36	14	8.8	20	14.3
6	37-40	25	15.6	16	11.4
7	41-44	13	8.1	11	7.9
8	45-48	15	9.4	15	10.7
9	49 and above	34	21.3	5	3.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

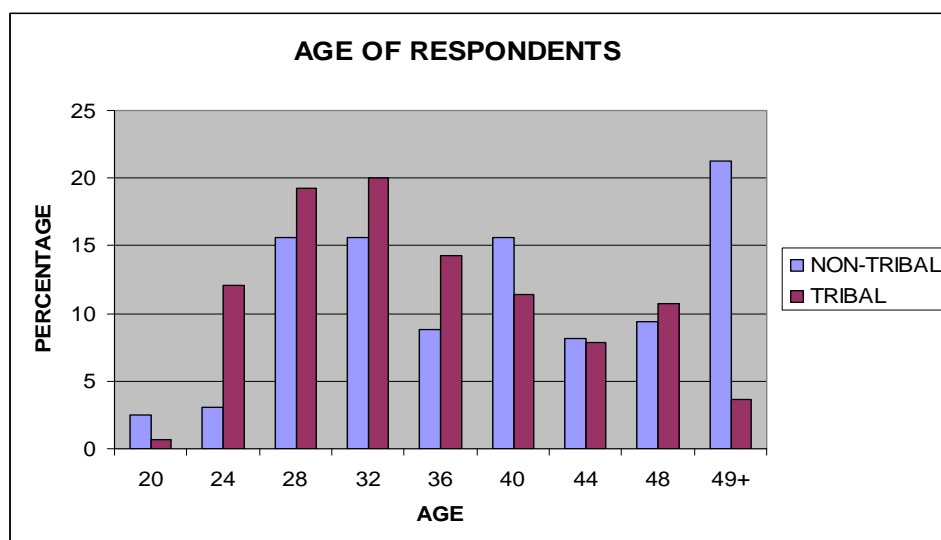


Table no.3.1. depicts the overall age of the respondents that ranges between 20 to 49 years. However, majority of respondents fall within the 28 to 40 years age-group. The respondents below 20 years belong to non-tribal communities rather than the tribal communities. The percentage of respondents falling within the age group of 21-24 years comprises 12% from the tribal community whereas a meager 3% within this category are the non-tribals. The respondents belonging to the 25-28 age group comprise about 19% from tribal community whereas about 16% are the non-tribals. Between the age ranges of 29-32 years comprises 16% from non-tribals and 20% of the respondents belonged to the tribal communities. The percentage of respondents falling within the age group of 33-36 years comprises 14% from the tribal community whereas only 9% are from the non-tribals. Respondents above the age of 49 years were observed more in non-tribal communities than the tribal communities. The overall picture shows that barring some variations, the overall distribution of respondents is more or less equal among tribal and non-tribal communities.

3.2. RURAL URBAN STATUS

Along with the growth of population in the last few decades, India has witnessed massive shift of the population from rural to urban areas that are also considered to be centres of civilization and culture. The urban centres provide opportunities to

achieve one's aspirations. Today, the future of our country is linked with the growth of cities and metropolitan areas. Therefore urban areas provide individual diverse opportunity to act, to express himself and to develop his potentialities. Urban communities are much bigger in size than rural communities. The availability of job opportunities on one hand and the materialistic as well as educational, medical and recreational facilities on the other hand attract people to cities.

Generally, the status of women in the urban areas is higher than that of rural women. Urban women are comparatively educated and liberal. Many women in the urban areas balance very well between a career and family life. As such they are not only aware of their economic, social and political rights but also use this awareness to protect themselves from being humiliated and exploited.

My study of the women of Manipur has proved that woman in tribal communities have lesser exposure to education and opportunities to exhibit their potentials and hence this has had negative impact on their empowerment. Many women belonging to tribal communities are skilled in various crafts such as weaving, basketry, knitting, cane work agriculture and so on. They have subdued in them good entrepreneurs but they do not have the privilege and moral support from family and society to bring out this entrepreneurship in them to become good business women.

TABLE NO.3.2.

Distribution of the respondents according to **urban/rural status**

Sr. No.	Rural/urban	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Rural	19	11.9	126	90.0
2	Urban	141	88.1	14	10.0
	Total	160	100.0	160	100.0

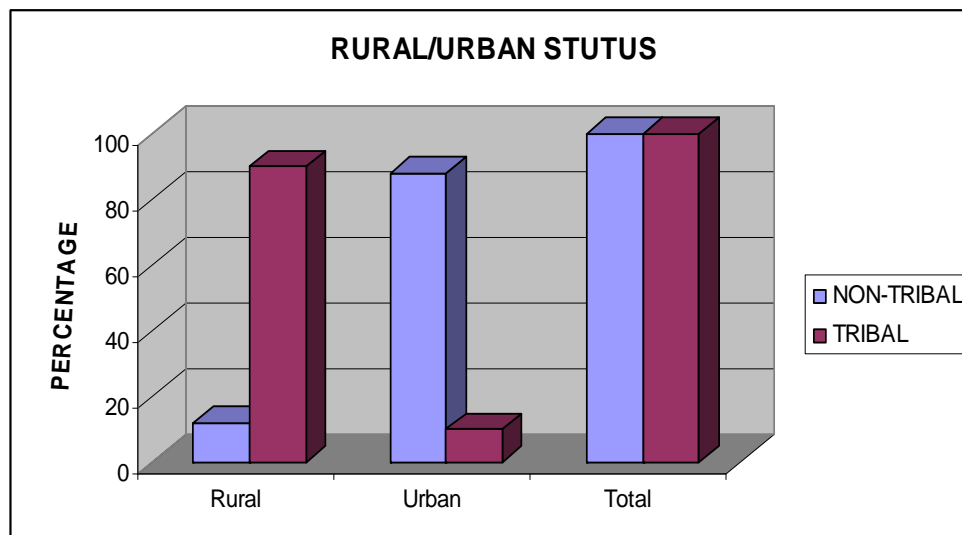


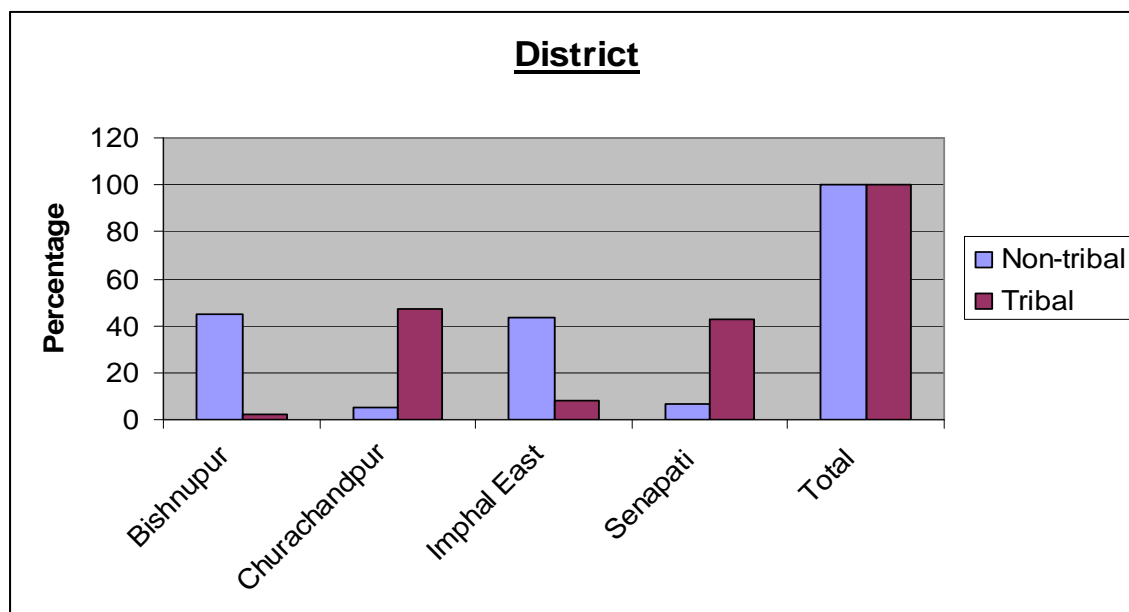
Table No.3.2 depicts that 90% of the respondents belong to tribal communities while 10% belong to non-tribal communities.

3.3. REGIONAL LOCATION OF RESPONDENTS

For the purpose of this study, a total of three hundred respondents were selected from four districts of Manipur, such as Bishnupur (75), Chaurachandpur (74), Imphal East (80), and Senapati (70). Among these four districts Bishnupur and Imphal East comprise mostly of the non-tribal population whereas Churachandpur and Senapati are predominantly populated with tribal communities. The socio-economic conditions of all four districts are more or less the same; the reason being a lag in basic infrastructure due to difficult hilly terrains, which has effected the overall development of tribal communities. Since Imphal is the capital of Manipur it is comparatively more urbanized and developed as compared to other districts of the state. The details about the districts of the respondents are collected and given in table no. 3.3.

TABLE NO.3.3.Distribution of the respondents according to **district**

Sr. No.	District	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Bishnupur	72	45.0	3	2.1
2	Churachandpur	8	5.0	66	47.1
3	Imphal East	69	43.1	11	7.9
4	Senapati	11	6.9	60	42.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



As stated earlier, the districts in the valley are mainly occupied by the non-tribal communities whereas the tribal communities are predominated in the hilly areas. The sample is selected on the basis of pre-dominance of the communities. Bishnupur and Imphal East are the two districts from where about 88% of the non-tribal respondents were selected. On the other hand, Churachandpur and Senapati districts are exclusively tribal dominated. About 88% of the tribal respondents have been selected from these two districts.

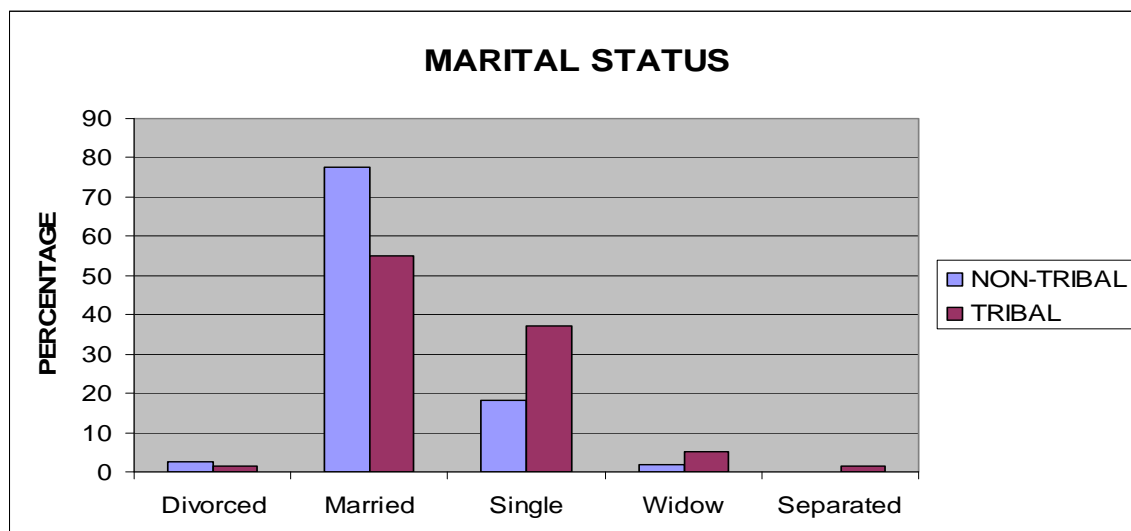
3.4. MARITAL STATUS

Earlier, we have seen that age plays a significant role in the empowerment of women; so also, marriage is a very important landmark in the life of a woman. Marriage to an extent effects the empowerment of women especially in a country like India where culture predominate every significant aspect of an individual's life. In the state of Manipur where the woman's status is greatly changed by marriage, empowerment is either encouraged or weakened depending on how liberal the family is into which the woman or girl is wedded. In many families woman do become key decision makers however, it is the senior male member in the family that ultimately takes the final decision. My respondents comprise mainly of married woman, compared to the singles who are fewer in number, and the widows and the divorcees are much lesser. Since majority of my respondents comprised of married women I was able to analyze and find out how marriage has effected their empowerment.

TABLE NO. 3.4.

Distribution of the respondents according to **marital status**

Sr. No.	Marital status	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Divorced	4	2.5	2	1.4
2	Married	124	77.5	77	55.0
3	Single	29	18.1	52	37.1
4	Widow	3	1.9	7	5.0
5	Separated	00	00	2	1.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



The above table depicts the marital status of respondents. 78% of the respondents belonging to the non-tribal communities and 55% of the respondents belonging from the tribal communities are married. There is variation in the proportion of married respondents in the tribal and non-tribal communities. Among my respondents, about 3% were widows coming from non-tribal communities while 5% came from the tribal communities. The number of widows is more in the tribal communities. The overall picture shows that about 18% of the respondents are not married in non-tribal communities whereas in tribal communities 37% are not married.

3.5. MOTHER TONGUE OF RESPONDENTS

Just as the Indian society is known for its diversity in culture, tradition, customs etc. it is also known for its diversity in language. No country in this world has so many different languages spoken as in India. In fact, every culture and every community is known by the language it speaks. Therefore we see that language greatly influences the culture and life of the individual. Different tribal communities have their own dialects that are different and limited to particular sub-groups of that community. The local dialect varies from tribe to tribe. However many cultures do not have a written script for their language or dialect. Therefore, it is generally observed that though there are number of languages (local), hardly

few of them have scripts. Very few languages have succeeded in developing their own scripts. In tribal communities though there is a large variation within the region, the script of their language remains common in all. In this study, the details about the language and the mother tongue were collected and given in table no.3.5.

TABLE NO.3.5.

Distribution of the respondents according to **mother tongues**

Sr. No.	Mother Tongue	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Manipuri	160	100.0	00.0	00.0
2	Rongmei	0	0	24	17.1
3	Tangkhul	0	0	20	14.3
4	Thadou	0	0	65	46.4
5	Others	0	0	31	22.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is observed from the table above that, though Manipur is a small state, it exhibits great diversity in language which differs from tribe to tribe. Manipuri language is commonly used for the non-tribal communities whereas in tribal community there are various dialects used. Rongmei dialects constitute 17%, Tangkhur dialects is of 14%, Thadou dialects is of 46% and other tribal dialects constitute 22% of respondents of the tribal community. Except Manipuri, none of the other languages have their own script. They use the English alphabets. Therefore, there is hardly any spread of these dialects in other states especially to the neighboring states. Thus Manipuri becomes the main language for the non-tribals whereas for the tribals dialects differ from community to community.

3.6. SOCIAL STRATIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

The people of India are broadly categorized into four main groups namely the General category, the Scheduled Castes(SC), the Scheduled tribes (ST) and Other

backward communities (OBC). For the welfare of these groups especially the scheduled castes, tribes and the other backward communities, the central government has provided a lot of opportunities, through various number of schemes that aim to their development, such as reservations for employment and opportunities to study in various educational institutions. Many of the states belonging to the north-eastern region of India where tribal domination is more, the women do avail of these privileges and opportunities given by the government. However, due to cultural restrains and also less value given to education, as well as early marriage, many women are restricted in availing of these opportunities. This does have a negative impact on their empowerment. But the picture isn't that bad, after all, there are a good number of tribal communities that have their own cultural pattern of empowering woman in various fields. The details about the caste and the category of scheduled tribes are given in table no.3.6.

TABLE NO. 3.6.

Distribution of the respondents according to **sub-type of the tribal community**

Sr. No.	Sub-tribe	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	160	100.0	00	00.0
2	Kuki	00	00	65	46.4
3	Naga	00	00	44	31.4
4	Others	00	00	31	22.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

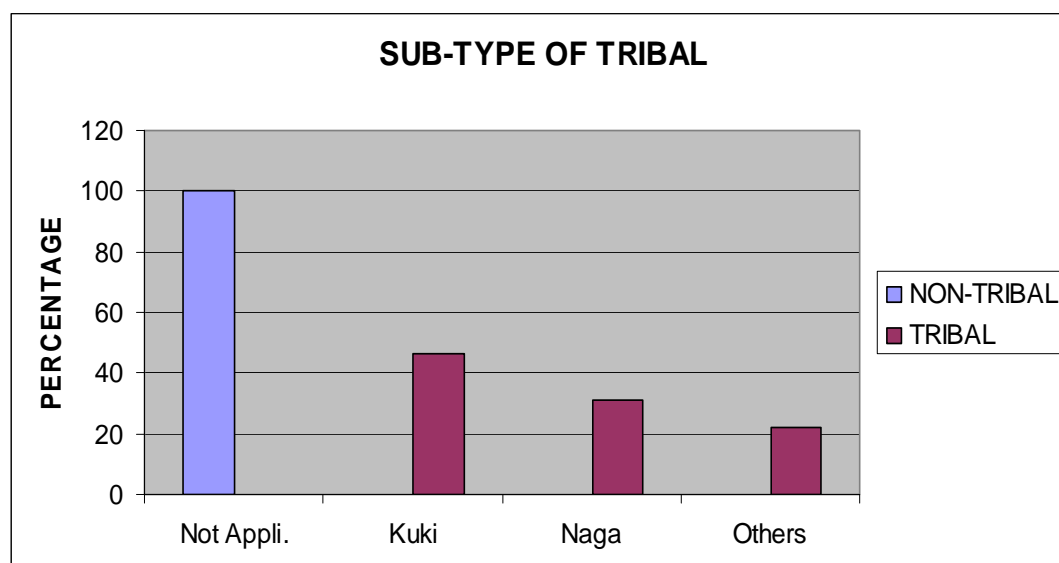


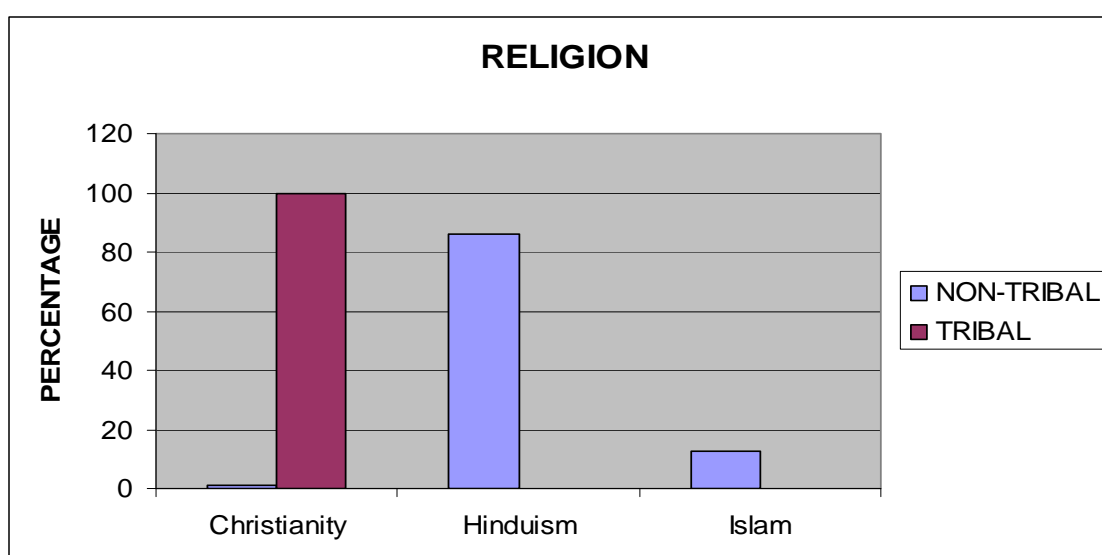
Table no. 3.6 shows that among all the other tribes the Kukis and the Nagas are the predominant tribal communities in Manipur. They constitute about 77% of the total sample. 22% of the respondents are belonging to other tribal group.

3.7. RELIGION OF THE RESPONDENTS

India not only exhibits diversity in language and culture, it also has numerous religions which play very important roles in the life of the individual. Religion we can say controls the life of every person. India is an abode of many religions that range from nature worship to polytheism and monotheism. In India the majority are Hindus, followed by Muslims, Christians, and so on. Every religion prescribes a standard of norms to be followed by everyone. Religion even decides the boundaries that are different for a man and a woman. In fact there are many religions that restrict a woman's freedom and also her participation in various religious activities. Therefore religion can become an inhibiting factor in women empowerment. The broad classification of respondents according to their religion is given in table no.3.7.

TABLE NO.3.7.Distribution of the respondents according to **religion**

Sr. No.	Religion	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Christianity	2	1.3	140	100.0
2	Hinduism	138	86.3	00	00
3	Islam	20	12.5	00	00
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



The above table shows that there are three main religious communities in Manipur such as, Christians, Hindus and Muslims. Among non-tribal communities about 87% of respondents belong to the Hindu religion followed by 13% of Muslims. As for the tribals we see that they are a significant 100% Christians.

3.8. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

Education is one of the main tools for the progress of any nation. Hence, it plays a significant role in the process of development. Education provides quality to life. There has been a sustained effort to raise the quality and accessibility of education at all levels since we have received independence. Many states of India have achieved a landmark when it comes to literacy rate. Among some of the top ranking

states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat etc. some of the states belonging to the north-eastern regions where tribal dominance is more, also have ranked well in terms of high literacy rates, for instance Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh and even Manipur. Since 1950's the number of recognized primary and high schools have increased many-fold. The enrollment in schools has also increased. However, the problem of illiteracy among women in our country is still quite imminent, and the condition among tribal women is even more pathetic. In most of the tribal communities the level of education is extremely low, their literacy level comprising not more than 35%. Extremely low awareness about the values and usefulness of education, early marriages, and poverty are some of the reasons why tribal woman are less educated and given lesser opportunities to education.

As for the North-Eastern regions, the various commissions that have been setup by the government to study the problems of tribals have contributed tremendously in bringing to light their problems, as well as of those communities too, that are isolated from the mainstream of society due to cultural and geographical barriers. Special provisions have been made for their educational upliftment, and also to raise their standard of living through various schemes and policies. However, very few avail of these benefits. Thus we see women empowerment is greatly impaired due to lack of educational facilities. The detailed information about the educational level of respondents are collected and given in table no.3.8.

TABLE NO. 3.8.

Distribution of the respondents according to **educational qualification**

Sr. No.	Educational Qualifications	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Illiterate	9	5.6	17	12.1
2	Primary	19	11.9	16	11.4
3	Secondary	29	18.1	26	18.6
4	Under Graduate(UG)	31	19.4	21	15.0
5	Graduate	48	30.0	38	27.1
6	Post Graduate(PG)	24	15.0	22	15.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

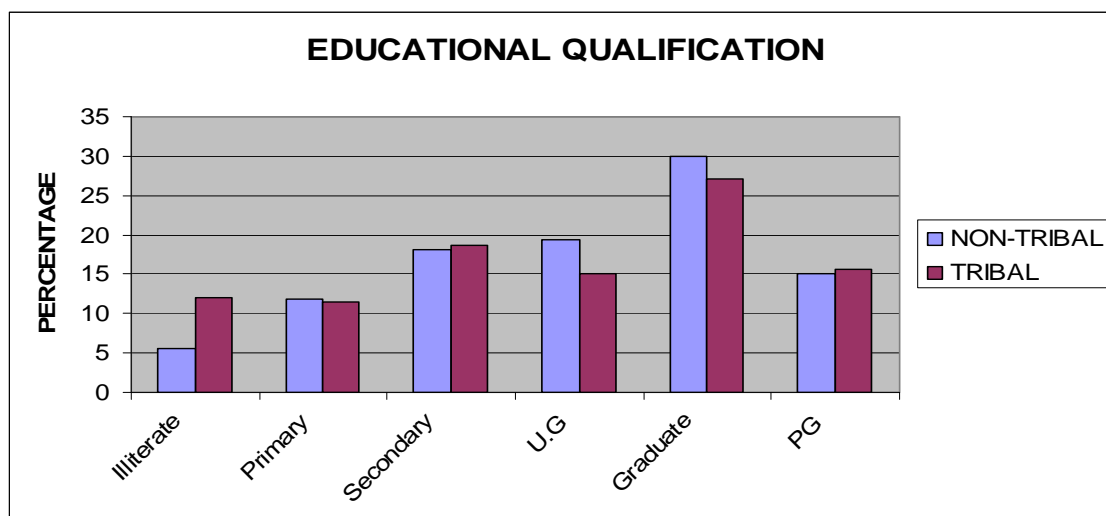


Table no.3.8. depicts a significant difference in the educational qualification of the tribal and non-tribal communities. Illiteracy and at the most education up to the primary level is dominantly seen in the Tribal communities, whereas among the non-tribals the level of education increases as the proportion of respondents also increases. The proportion of illiterate women are more in the tribal communities as compared to the non-tribal communities, this consolidates the fact that illiteracy is more among tribal women.

As regards to the primary and secondary level of education, the proportion of respondents in both level are not much different in both tribal and non-tribal communities. 11% of the respondents in non-tribal communities have education up to the primary level whereas in tribal communities the proportion is 12%. 18% of the respondents belonging to the non-tribal communities have education up to secondary level whereas only 11% of the respondents in tribal communities have education up to the secondary level. 15% of the respondents are in the undergraduate level in the tribal communities, whereas in the non-tribal communities the proportion is about 20%. The level of graduates in tribal communities is much lesser than in the non-tribal communities. However, it is interesting to note that at post-graduate level the proportion of both communities are equal. This statistical analysis proves to us that the overall educational qualification of the respondents the non-tribal communities is much better than among the tribal communities.

3.9. OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS

The caste oriented society in India, is mainly identified by the occupation that a particular caste holds. In earlier days, the Indian society had different caste groups having something known as traditional occupation which was handed down as a legacy from one generation to another within the same family. Today some of the leading business tycoons would have most probably started their business as family business. With increasing urbanization and industrialization the Indian society has moved on from being caste oriented to class oriented. Most of the urban areas are classified on the basis of class. However, the scenario is different in rural and the tribal areas of India, where industrialization is not imminent; they are still restricted to cottage industries or family business (we can also call it as hereditary occupation). Most of the north-eastern states do not have any large industrial establishments. The reason behind this is because of geographical constrains and even poverty; the economy practiced is mostly subsistent economy. Most of the people engage themselves in cottage industries such as animal husbandry, agriculture at a primary level, weaving, basketry etc. Therefore, we see that there

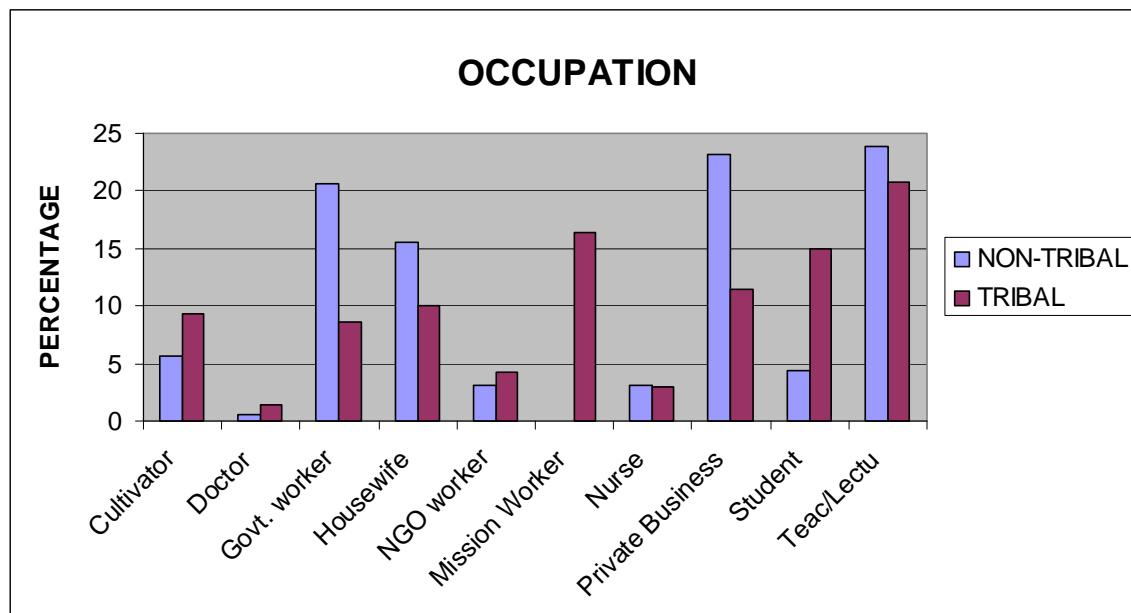
are no major industrial sectors which can provide employment opportunities to the people. Moreover hilly terrains make it difficult for major investments. Some of the people are engaged in trading or petty business enterprises.

In today's society we see that the occupation that an individual holds, determines his status. Occupation provides social status and economic stability to the individual. The white collar occupation always empowers individuals to be financially independent and able enough to take their own decisions for the well being of the family. Women engaged in these fields are comparatively more empowered due to their financial positions. When a woman is financially independent she is assumed to be empowered for taking her own decisions or allocating the family resources as she wishes. On this background the information collected about the occupational pattern is given in table no. 3.9.

TABLE NO. 3.9.

Distribution of the respondents according to **occupation**

Sr. No.	Occupation	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Cultivator	9	5.6	13	9.3
2	Doctor	1	.6	2	1.4
3	Govt. worker	33	20.6	12	8.6
4	Housewife	25	15.6	14	10.0
5	NGO worker	5	3.1	6	4.3
6	Mission Worker	00	00	23	16.4
7	Nurse	5	3.1	4	2.9
8	Private Business	37	23.1	16	11.4
9	Student	7	4.4	21	15.0
10	Teacher/Lecturer	38	23.8	29	20.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table no.3.9. that 6% of non-tribal and 9% of tribal respondents are cultivators. Significantly 21% of non-tribal respondents and only 9% of tribal respondents reported that they are working in government sectors. 23% non-tribal and 11% tribal women respondents are entrepreneurs. Teaching is the other profession that 24% non-tribal and 21% tribal respondents are engaged in. Significant numbers of tribal respondents are working in mission organizations. Negligible proportions of respondents are in the medical profession in both the communities. Thus, we see that a very small percentage of respondents are engaged in professions that require educational qualification when it comes to the tribal communities.

3.10. NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS

The size of the family generally depends upon the kind of occupation followed by the individual or family. Mostly within the tribal communities, where cottage industries are prevalent which are more or less like family business, more hands are required to do the work hence the number of family members tend to be more, whereas in case of persons employed in government sectors, NGO sectors or in private sectors, tend to opt for nuclear type of family setup. Some communities, exhibit a joint family system or extended family setup. Hence, in such kind of

families, the number of family members is always high. There is a traditional concept that larger the family higher the economic status. It is also observed that the children are well taken care of and the aged are given respect and security. Therefore in view of socialization of a child or care for senior citizens a larger family size is generally more beneficial. However, since the last few decades, it is seen that the joint family setup is gradually degenerating and giving way to nuclear type of family setup. The information about the number of family members is collected and given in table no. 3.10.

TABLE NO.3.10.

Distribution of the respondents according to **number of family members**

Sr. No.	No. of family members	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	1-3	20	12.5	10	7.1
2	4-5	28	17.5	39	27.9
3	6-7	52	32.5	38	27.1
4	8-9	24	15.0	30	21.4
5	10+	36	22.5	23	16.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

The above table shows the broad classification of family members based on their numbers, among the tribal and non-tribal communities. It is seen from the table that about 13% of the families of non-tribal communities and 7% of that of the tribal communities have less than three family members whereas 28% tribal communities and 18% non-tribal communities have families with four to five family members. 32% of the respondents in the non-tribal communities and about 27% of the non-tribal communities have six to seven family members. Large size of families is predominantly observed in non-tribal communities having more than 10 persons. In tribal community 16% of the respondents have family member more than 10

members and 21% respondents have 8 to 9 members in the family. This clearly shows that the non-tribal communities have large families comparing to that of the tribal communities.

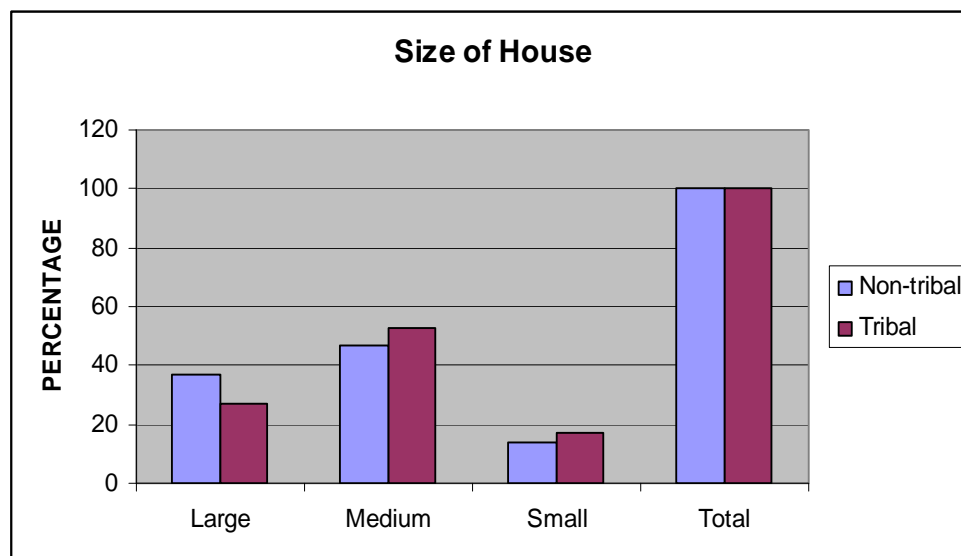
3.11. SIZE OF HOUSE

Size of the house and number of rooms in the house is an excellent indicator of the economic condition of the family. People who are financially well to do can afford large sized houses with six to seven rooms along with all basic amenities. On the other hand, people who do not have steady flow of income or economically poor cannot afford a good quality house and they naturally may have either small or medium sized house with three to four rooms. Some of the houses in rural areas are made up thatch, bamboo or wood which is easily available to them. However, one can also find that there are people in the rural areas who are advanced economically in life live in good houses. Among the urban areas most of them have the well-built pakka houses where almost all the basic amenities are available. The detail about the size of house and total number of rooms available in the house is given in table no.3.11&12 respectively.

TABLE NO.3.11.

Distribution of the respondents according to **size of house**

Sr. No.	Size	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Large	59	36.9	39	27.9
2	Medium	77	48.1	76	54.3
3	Small	24	15.0	25	17.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



The above table shows that about 37% respondents in non-tribal community reported that they have large sized houses, whereas only 27% respondents in tribal community reported that they have large sized houses. More than half of the respondents in tribal communities i.e. 54% and 48% respondents in non-tribal communities reported that they live in medium sized house. Almost equal number of respondents in both communities 15% non-tribal and 18% tribal community reported that they live in small size house. Thus with observation of the kind of houses the respondents live in it can be inferred that large sized houses are typical of the non-tribal respondents than the tribal respondents.

TABLE 3.12.

Distribution of the respondents according to **number of room**

Sr. No.	No. of room	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	1-3	24	15.0	25	17.9
2	4-5	76	47.5	75	53.6
3	6-7	42	26.3	29	20.7
4	8 and +	18	11.3	11	7.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

In continuation of the earlier table this table (Table no.3.12) also shows that the houses of tribal respondents have lesser number of rooms while those of non-tribal communities have large number of rooms in their house. There are 15% respondents of the non-tribal communities and about 18% of respondents in tribal communities reported to have 1-3 rooms. About 48% of non-tribal respondents and 54% respondents of tribal community have reported that they have an average 4-5 room in their house. There are 26% non-tribal communities having about 6 to 7 rooms while only 20% tribal respondents have reported that they have 6-7 rooms in their house. There are about 11% respondents of non-tribal community and 8% respondents of tribal community have reported that they have about 8 or more rooms in their house. Therefore it is observed that houses of non-tribal communities have more number of rooms as compared to that of the tribal communities.

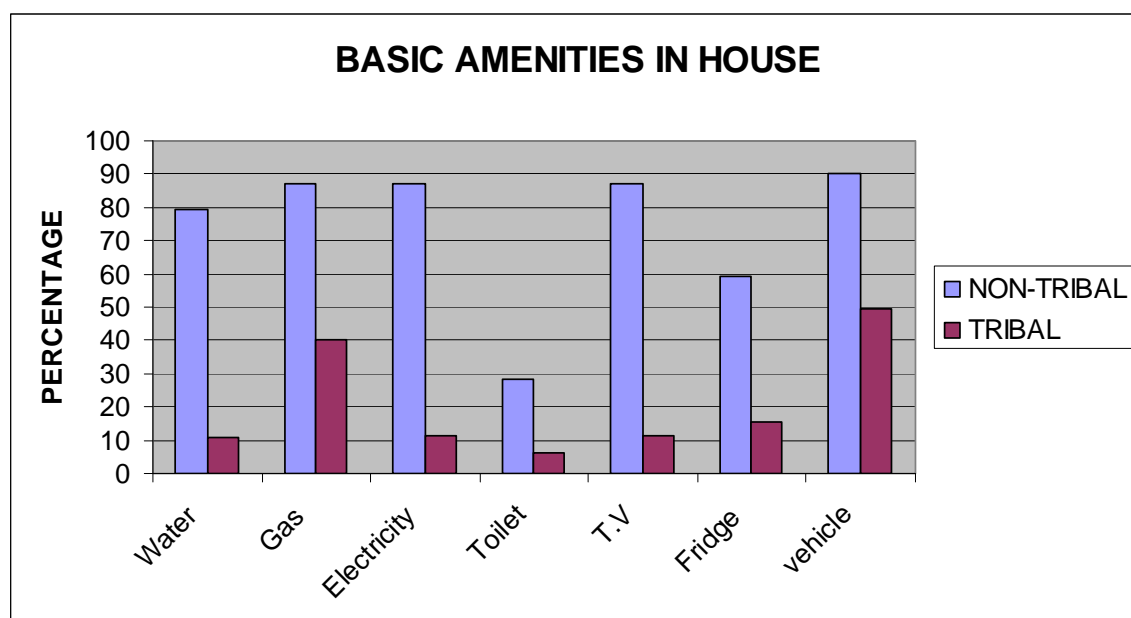
3.12. AVAILABILITY OF BASIC AMENITIES IN THE HOUSE

A house that is well equipped with the minimum level of basic amenities is very necessary for a healthy living. There are some guidelines given by the UNO about ventilation, type of walls, roofs and flooring that every house must adopt. These guidelines also provide directions for proper lighting and ventilation, rooms per person, drainage system, toilet facilities, better flooring, good surroundings and proper arrangement for safe disposal of domestic waste which are crucial indicators of a healthy lifestyle. Proper regulation of waste water, hygienic disposal of human excreta are very important at the individual, family and community level. Thus in this case, generally the housing conditions of the non-tribals are better than the tribals. Some of the basic items like television, refrigerator, vehicle etc. are the indicators of economic condition, and also indirectly related to the empowerment of women. A woman who is financially independent is interested in maintaining good house automatically purchases these items. However women who are financially dependent are not able to afford such kind of amenities due to their low economic condition. The details about the availability of basic amenities in a house are given in table no.3.13 (a).

TABLE NO. 3.13 (a).

Distribution of the respondents according to **availability of basic amenities at home**

Sr. No.	Amenities	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Water	127	79.4	15	10.7
2	Gas	139	86.9	56	40.0
3	Electricity	139	86.9	16	11.4
4	Toilet	45	28.1	9	6.4
5	T.V	139	86.9	16	11.4
6	Fridge	95	59.4	22	15.7
7	vehicle	144	90.0	69	49.3



According to the table above it is clearly seen that there are respondents who do not possess or do not have any access to the basic facilities that are needed for the survival. Large difference is observed among the tribal and non-tribal communities. About 80% non-tribal respondents have access to water for drinking and for

domestic use whereas only 11% of tribal respondents have this water facility. This is a clear indicator that most of the non-tribal communities lack the basic facilities required for maintaining a decent standard of living. In this regards the non-tribal communities are much better off.

Cooking gas is available for 87% of the non-tribal respondents whereas only 40% of tribal respondents have access to cooking gas facility. 87% of non-tribal community respondents have electricity at home whereas only 11% respondents of tribal community have electricity.

As regards to the toilet as a basic amenity a very pathetic condition has been observed. Proper toilet facilities are available in only 28% of the non-tribal communities and only 6% in the tribal communities. This again clearly shows that the tribal community are grossly lacking in basic services needed for survival and even in the non-tribal community it needs to be improved.

Television, refrigerator and vehicle are not the vital for the survival however they are considered significant for maintaining a decent standard of living. The importance of television is to have access to the outside world and vehicle would be quite indispensable for moving easily from one place to the other. Television sets are seen in 87% of non-tribal respondents homes whereas only for 11% respondents in tribal communities possess a Television set. About 60% of non-tribal communities possess refrigerators whereas only 5% respondents possess refrigerator among the tribal Communities. 90% of the respondents from non-tribal communities have reported that they have their own vehicles whereas only about 50% tribal respondents reported that they have their own means of transportation.

Thus briefly summarizing, these facts it is observed that there is a comparative difference in the availability of the basic amenities for non-tribal and tribal communities. It is observed that the non-tribal communities have a better access to basic amenities as compared to the tribal communities. This indicates that the non-tribal communities are economically better off than tribal communities.

The availability of the basic amenities at home has a significant impact on women empowerment. When it comes to urban women they have the potential to purchase a house of their own and provide the family with not only the basic amenities of life but also provide a luxurious lifestyle. However a tribal woman may not be able to even provide the family basic necessities of life, as she is always financially and socially dependent on her family or her husband. Therefore one can consider that between the non-tribal and tribal communities the women of the non-tribal communities are much better equipped thus are more empowered than the tribal women.

3.13. AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT ON FETCHING WATER

Most of the rural areas, where tap water or bore wells are not available at home, people especially the women folk have to bring water for drinking and domestic use from the river or pond. Usually such sources are located in the outskirts of the village or far away from the village. As most of the women are engaged in domestic activities, it is their responsibility to fetch water. It usually takes about thirty minutes to as long as many hours to carry water from the river or pond to the house. Thus women spend considerable time in fetching water for family use. They have to carry water on their head or back and this is quite hazardous as they live in hilly and difficult terrains. But in spite of these difficulties that the womenfolk face they have no other alternative. However, women in urban areas comparatively do not have much problem in this regard, as they have tap water available at home from the municipal corporation. Detailed information about the time spent in fetching water is collected and given in table no.3.13 (b).

TABLE NO.3.13 (b).

Distribution of the respondents according to **the amount of time spent on fetching drinking water in a day**

Sr. No.	Time spend	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	9	5.6	00	00
2	Up to 30 min	9	5.6	46	32.9
3	Up to 1 hr	9	5.6	45	32.1
4	2hrs	00	00	9	6.4
5	NRSP	133	83.1	40	28.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

The above table gives us information about the time spent for fetching water from various sources. About 33% respondents of tribal communities spend up to thirty minutes whereas only 6% respondents of the non-tribal community spend about thirty minutes to bring water home. 32% respondents of tribal community spends up to one hour, and about 6% respondents of non-tribal community spend one hour to fetch water for the family use. About 7% respondents of tribal community have to spend about two hours fetching water for drinking and domestic use. Therefore it is observed that women belonging to the tribal communities have to spend more time and energy to fetch water for drinking and domestic use as compared to the women of the non-tribal communities.

3.14. AVAILABILITY OF SANITATION AND DRINKING WATER AT HOME

As discussed earlier, the urban settlers are mainly the non-tribals who have better access to drinking water and other sanitation facilities provided by the municipal corporation. But the people in rural areas do not have easy access to these facilities. A lot of waste water from the homes is disposed in an unhealthy manner on roads or pathways which pose major health problems at the community level. Drinking water and sanitation are the two important aspects for the maintenance of health for

the individual and the community. The present situation about these aspects are collected and given in table no.3.14.

TABLE NO.3.14.

Distribution of the respondents according to **availability of basic facilities**

Sr. No.	Facilities	Non Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Drinking water	155	96.9	53	37.9
2	Sanitation	139	86.9	109	77.9

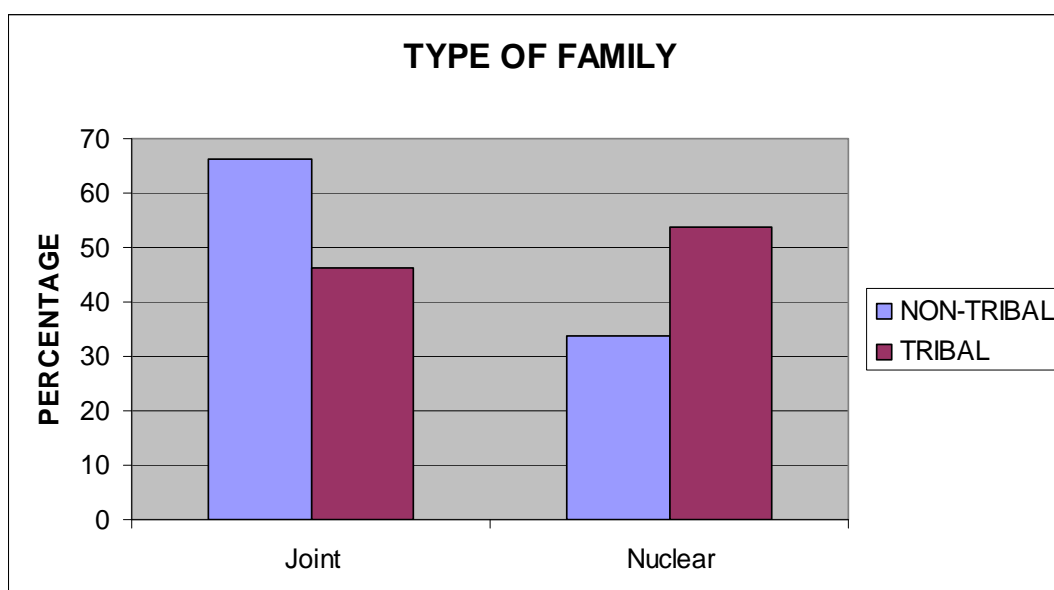
In continuation of the earlier table the above tables also indicate that there is a significant difference in the availability of the basic facilities such as drinking water and sanitation. Sanitation is available in 87% of the homes of the non-tribal respondents whereas there are only 78% respondents of tribal communities that have minimum access to these facilities. Availability of drinking water is reported almost by all the respondents of the non-tribal communities whereas only 38% respondents in tribal communities reported that water is available to them. Thus it is observed that drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities are much better off in the non-tribal communities.

3.15. TYPES OF FAMILY

There are two main types of family systems observed in the Indian society i.e, the nuclear family and the extended or joint family. The type of family is related to the total number of family members and occupation of the family. As discussed earlier, there is a variation in total number of family members as well as occupation among the tribal and non-tribal community. The non-tribal communities mostly depict a joint family setup whereas the non-tribal communities are not completely the joint family type. It is generally assumed that families having cottage business or domestic manufacturing unit may have joint family system. Details in this regard is collected and given in table no.3.15.

TABLE NO.3.15.Distribution of the respondents according to **type of family**

Sr. No.	Type of family	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Joint	106	66.3	65	46.4
2	Nuclear	54	33.8	75	53.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



The above table indicates that 66% respondents of non-tribal community reported that they have a joint family setup whereas compared to the non-tribals, in tribal community the proportion of joint family type is comparatively less which is only about 46%. However, the proportion of nuclear type family in tribal communities is comparatively higher than the non-tribal community. Only 35% respondents in non-tribal community reported to have nuclear family setup and about 54% respondents in tribal community reported to have nuclear family setup. It is observed that among non-tribal community respondents, most of the families are nuclear and greater numbers of joint families are observed among the non-tribals.

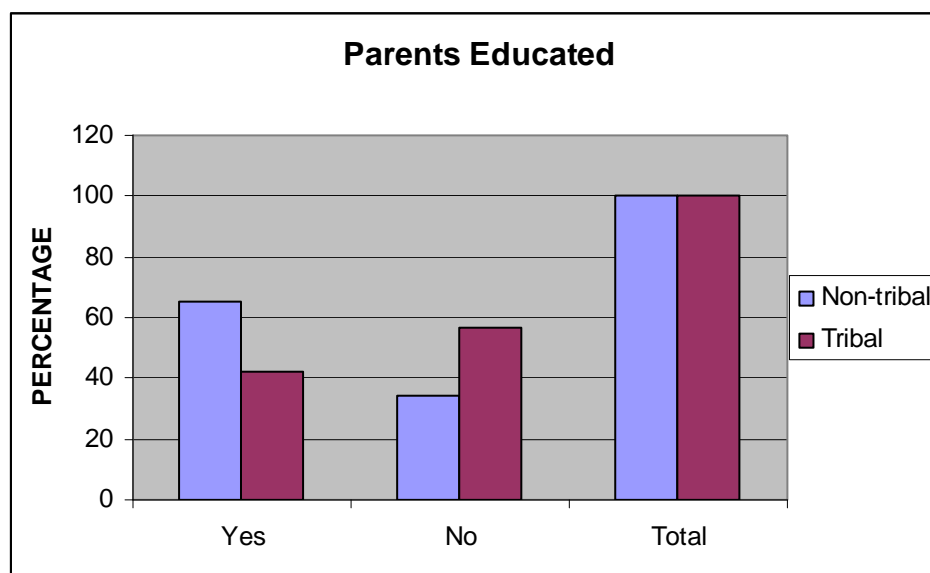
3.16. EDUCATION OF PARENTS

It's a known fact that education of the present generation depends upon the educational background of the earlier generation. If the earlier generation is educated the next generations automatically get educated because parents know the importance of education. It is quiet obvious that the educated parents will take proper care of their children's education. They will not only take care of children's education but also will give proper attention towards the overall development of their children. In the process of empowerment of women education plays a very significant role in shaping and molding a woman's life. In such situation, educated mother is a living role model for her children. Detailed information about education of respondents' parents is collected and given in table no. 3.16.

TABLE NO.3.16.

Distribution of the respondents according to **education of respondents' parents**

Sr. No.	Education of parents	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
2	Yes	105	65.6	60	42.9
1	No	55	34.4	80	57.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table above that about 57% of respondents' parents of the tribal community are not educated whereas the proportion among the non-tribal community is 34%. 66% respondents of the non-tribal community and 43% respondents in tribal community reported that their parents are educated. This indicates that for most of the respondents in tribal community are the first generation to have education. However, for the non-tribal community about 66% respondents belong to the second or third generation to have education. Thus it can be safely concluded that educated parents are observed in non-tribal communities as compared to the tribal communities.

3.17. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS' HUSBAND

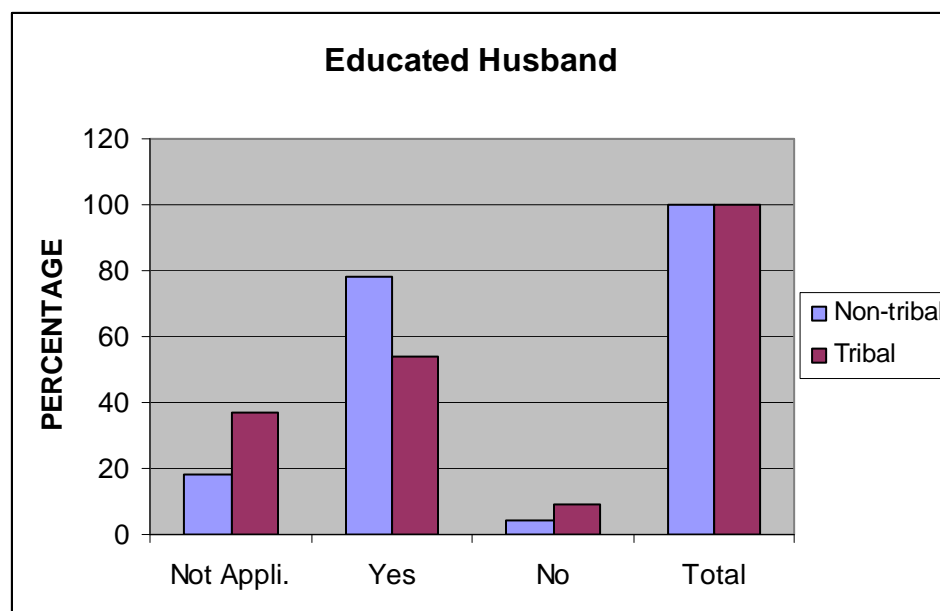
It is quite obvious that an educated girl will definitely prefer to have an educated life partner. The level of education for women has been considerably improved since the last two decades, as the government is making sustained efforts for improving educational level of girl child. However, thousands of girls are still not privileged to receive the facilities provided by the government to obtain education. In some parts of urban India the government has provided facilities such as free education for the girl child up to a certain age or standard. Some schools also provide educational scholarships for the girls who excel in their academic field. Certain scholarships and job opportunities are also provided due to excellence in the sports and science field.

However many a girl child often finds it difficult to pursue her dreams of achieving great heights either because parents are apprehensive as to whether their highly educated daughter will be able to find a suitable life partner? And for others it is because of the heavy expenses that involved for the higher educations especially for the professional courses.

TABLE NO.3.17.

Distribution of the respondents according to respondents' **husband being educated or not**

Sr. No.	Education of husband	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Yes	125	78.1	75	53.6
3	No	6	3.8	13	9.3
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



The above table shows that 78% of the respondents' husbands of the non-tribal community are educated whereas only 54% respondents have educated husbands in tribal community. 4% of the respondents in non-tribal communities and 9% of respondents belonging to the tribal community reported that their husbands are not educated. From this, we can assume that an educated husband may provide better opportunities for the overall development of the family and also plays a key role in the empowerment of the women.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter the researcher has discussed all the significant details pertaining to their personal information and also has analyzed the factors associated with the empowerment process. The process of empowerment for women is an ongoing process that greatly depends upon the social, economical physical and cultural environment surrounding them. Moreover one important factor that also plays a very crucial part in the empowerment process is how much a woman herself allows the process of empowerment to take place in her life. Respondents' marital status, mother tongue, caste, religion, educational level and occupation are some of the important indicators which are closely associated with empowerment process.

As regards to the age of the respondents, majority of them are in between 25-40 years of age. As regards to the rural urban differences majority of the non-tribal respondents are settled in urban areas whereas majority of the tribal communities are from rural areas. There is hardly any difference in marital status but early marriages are observed to be practiced more commonly among the non-tribal communities. When it comes to language, Manipuri is the prominent language of non-tribals whereas Rongmei, Tangkhul and Thadou are some of the major dialects spoken by the tribals. The Kukis and the Nagas are the two prominent tribal communities among tribal respondents.

As regards to education, respondents in the non-tribal communities are more educated as compared to tribal respondents. Illiteracy and education up to primary level is seen more among the tribal respondents. With regards to the family members, the family size of the non-tribal community is comparatively larger than the tribal community family. A clear difference is also observed in the number of rooms in the house among the tribal and non-tribal communities. The respondents of the non-tribal community have large sized houses and also large number of rooms. Availability of basic amenities at home is seen more among the non-tribal community whereas in the tribal communities, basic amenities are grossly lacking. Tribal women have to spend considerable amount of time in fetching water for their homes compared to the non-tribal women. The joint family system is seen

prominently in non-tribal community whereas in tribal community nuclear family setup is observed. Respondents' parents of non-tribal community are more educated than the tribal community. Education of husband is observed to be more in non-tribal community whereas among the tribal community respondents' husbands' education is comparatively less.

CHAPTER IV

FAMILY FACTORS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of women largely depends upon the kind of atmosphere a woman is able to have in her home and family. Educated women are independent and able to contribute and participate in their own well being as well as their families. They can take their own decisions, plan their career and opt for any kind of job they are interested in. In such situations women have more freedom and space to develop and use their skills and abilities.

Women in culturally advanced or enriched families are able to take initiative in various matters related to over all development of themselves as well as their family. The atmosphere in the family and relationship within family members are closely associated with the process of empowerment. It is known fact that parents or senior members of the family have more control over the family members within the frame work of the cultural setup. Love, affection, friendly relations, faith, confidence, etc are closely related to empowerment process. Openness and healthy relations always help in enhancing the process of empowerment and improving the status of women within the family as well as in the community at large.

Open discussions on various issues related to family matters always help women to take active part in decision making process. In this process her participation and contributions are recognized by the family members. Age of women is also associated with empowerment process, during childhood or adolescence period she is controlled by parents and siblings. After marriage though she is controlled either by the husband or in-laws, she has more responsibilities and participation in family matters. Age gap between husband and wife also affects the overall relationship between the spouses. If the husband is more or less of the same age the interaction becomes easier and there may be a healthy relationship between husband and wife.

When the age gap is too high the dialogue between husband and wife or with other individual of family may become more difficult.

There are, at times obstructions in developing a healthy relationship between the family members. As each member of the family has a specific role to play and responsibilities to shoulder. However, these respective roles and responsibilities make significant impact on the process of empowerment. Senior members in the family usually make all the decisions pertaining to family matters and this is observed more in the joint family setup. However in the joint family setup women may not enjoy a better status or nor have much say in the family matters. On the other hand, within the nuclear family there are better chances where woman can participate in decision-making process.

It is observed that within the tribal community the status of women is generally low. She always remains behind the shadow of the husband or in-laws. Usually the husband takes all the decisions and she has to follow the orders of husband. In spite of the significant role in the family she always remains either neglected or is less attended.

Even in Indian society as a whole woman is expected to play secondary role in all matters. Therefore, there are several restrictions not only from the family side but also from the community. After marriage she is expected to stay with her husband and husbands' family. This is the usual practice of a great part of the communities of Indian society. In such a situation her web of social relations changes drastically. After marriage she is mostly controlled and governed by husbands' family. Her role is restricted to taking care of family members and senior persons in the family. In some families she is not even allowed to keep in touch with her own parents. In families where there is a domination of either husband or in laws, her voice is totally suppressed under the garb of cultural practices.

To produce, to rear and care for the children is the sole and main duty and functions of an Indian married woman. Many times she is ill-treated by the family and the

community at large. Due to such conditions she cannot use her potentials and skill to develop herself and this suppression always leads total dependency on her husband. Empowerment process is concerned with all these matters. In view of this, the information related to various factors within the family and its relationship with empowerment is described in this chapter.

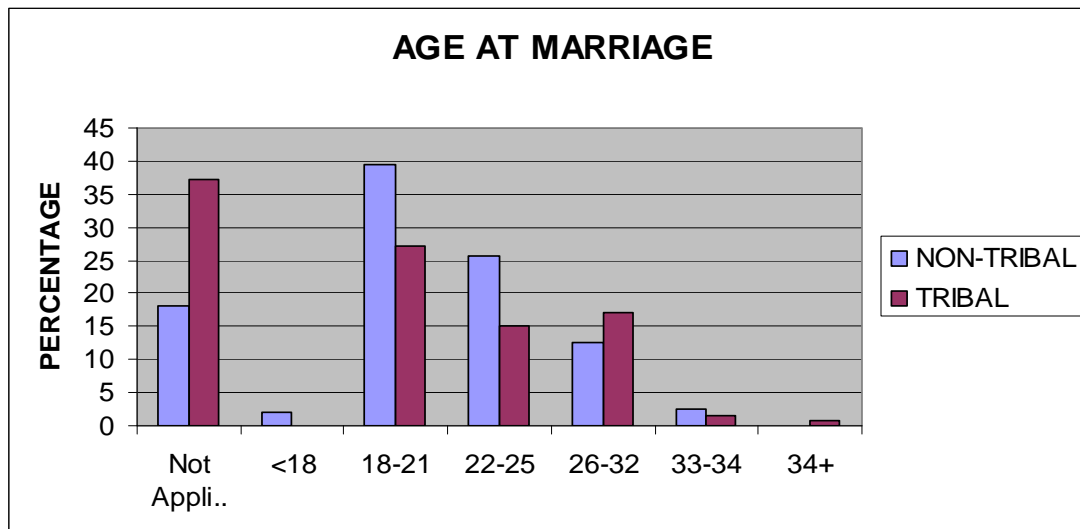
4.2. AGE AT MARRIAGE

There is a large variation in the age of marriage in different communities. It is general believed that in advanced communities age at marriage is comparatively higher than in the backward communities. Though legally, the age of marriage is prescribed at 18 years, many girls are married when she still hasn't attained 18 years of age. Physiologically the age group between 21-24 year is the most appropriate age of marriage as it is expected that after marriage she will have a child within one or two years. Therefore, this age-group is considered as the most appropriate age to bear a child. In the study of the population, the age at marriage of the respondents is given in table no. 4.1.

TABLE NO.4.1.

Distribution of the respondents according to **age at marriage**

Sr. No.	Age at marriage	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	<18	3	1.9	00	00
3	18-21	63	39.4	38	27.1
4	22-25	41	25.6	21	15.0
5	26-32	20	12.5	24	17.1
6	33-34	4	2.5	2	1.4
7	34 and above	00	00	1	.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table above that the age at marriage that has taken place ranges between 18 to 32. There is a significant difference as regards to age of marriage among the different communities. The overall picture shows that the age at marriage is high among the respondents of the tribal communities whereas in non-tribal communities the respondents' age at marriage is comparatively lower. 2% respondents from non-tribal community have reported that the age at marriage is less than 18 years. 27% respondents of tribal community have reported their age at marriage is between 18 to 20 years and about 32% of respondents have reported they married between the age of 22 to 30 years. As regard to non-tribal community about 40% respondents have reported that their age at marriage is between 18-21 years followed by 25% respondents who reported that they got married between 22-25 years. Only 13% of the respondents have reported that their age at marriage was 26 to 32 years. Interestingly, we find from the above table that the age of marriage is higher in tribal community and lower among the non-tribal communities.

4.3. DIFFERENCE IN AGE OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

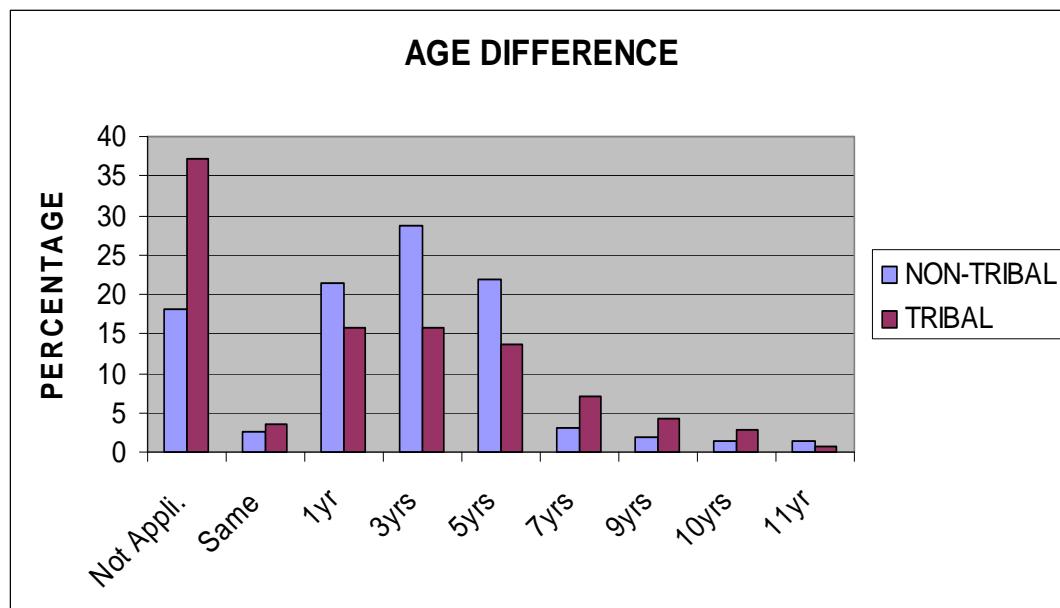
Biologically it is preferable that there should be a difference of two to five years of age between husband and wife. However, one finds that in some families the husband is much senior than the wife or vice versa. This gap between them always

creates problems in the perception of their own status. There is a feeling of superiority among males and inferiority complex among women. In such cases, it often leads to serious adjustment problems. They cannot establish a working relationship with each other, or they cannot exchange their thoughts, cannot consider the views and ideas of each other. Such situation creates difference of opinions in family and hence gives birth to problems even at the community level. If both of them are more or less of equal age they pay respect to each other and therefore it becomes easier to adjust and live happily. If the age difference is too much there is more chances of family conflict. The information related to the difference in age between husband and wife is given in following table no.4.2.

TABLE NO.4.2.

Distribution of the respondents according to **age difference**

Sr. No.	Age difference	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Same	4	2.5	5	3.6
3	1yr	34	21.3	21	15.7
4	3yrs	46	28.8	22	15.7
5	5yrs	35	21.9	19	13.6
6	7yrs	5	3.1	10	7.1
7	9yrs	3	1.9	6	4.3
8	10yrs	2	1.3	4	2.9
9	11yr	2	1.3	1	.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



The above table shows the difference in age between husband and wife. The overall picture shows that the large difference exists in the tribal community, and same age also observed among the non-tribal community. About 4% tribal community and 3% non-tribal community respondents have reported that their age was the same as their husband's at the time of marriage. 16% tribal community and 21% non-tribal community have reported that they have one year age difference. About 29% respondents of the non-tribal community and 16% respondents of the tribal community have reported the age difference to be 3 years. 22% respondents of non-tribal communities and 14% respondents of tribal communities have reported 5 years age difference. There is a considerable proportion i.e., about 13-14% respondents who have reported the difference in their age is more than 7 years. Thus from this information, it can be concluded that the age difference between husband and wife is more among the tribal communities. This may have a negative impact on the empowerment process of women when husband is considerable more aged than that of the wife. He always dominates his views and ideas and imposes them on the wife. Naturally, the wife does not get adequate exposure or opportunities to develop her own potential.

4.4. RESIDENTS OF IN-LAWS

After marriage a girl's residence becomes patrilocal, and this is the general practice seen in most parts of India. Mostly the women or the girl live with her husband's family. To have in-laws in the family, may have some benefits and some demerits too. The In-laws, to a great extent play a significant role in controlling family matters in various fields. When there is a difference of opinions or if there is conflict between husband and wife, the parent-in-laws generally take lead to resolve these differences with mutual understanding through discussion. However, today's scenario is different. As there is a segmentisation of joint family systems due to the migration of some of the family members for want of employment the impact of the In-laws in the affairs of the house or between the husband and wife has comparatively weakened. One can observe that in-laws are staying at their own house while their son has migrated from their native place to some other place. Naturally in most of the cases in-laws are not staying with son or daughter-in-law. The detailed information in this regard is collected and given in table no.4.3.

TABLE NO.4.3.

Distribution of the respondents according to **accommodation of in-law/s with respondents**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	94	58.8	66	47.1
2	No	66	41.3	74	52.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that more than half of the respondents of the tribal communities do not stay with their in-laws. Whereas in non-tribal communities about 60% of respondents have reported that they stay with their in-laws. This is an excellent indicator of joint or extended and nuclear type of families. Joint family system exists in non-tribal community. Whereas in tribal communities it is the

custom that only the eldest son and his family stay with parents and younger ones move out from the parent's house and make independent families after marriage. Therefore, nuclear type of family is more prominent in tribal communities. In some case, even in the non-tribal community joint family is slowly breaking away due to family member/s migrating to urban centers in search of job opportunity and better living.

4.5 (A). PREFERENCE FOR JOINT/NUCLEAR TYPE OF FAMILY

As discussed earlier, today the family is gradually degenerating from joint setup to the nuclear setup due to the pressures of urbanization and the desire to improve the standard of living. Hence increasing employment opportunities education and a modernized attitude towards life is attracting the people towards the urban areas. Hence, joint family system is gradually degenerated into nuclear families. Generally it is also observed that nowadays a marries woman always prefer nuclear type of family for reasons of economizing the family budget and have lesser burdens of taking care of more members. As the saying goes "Small family is happy family". Thus we see that mostly women who are well educated and have a career tend to prefer a nuclear family setup. The details in this regards is given in the table no.4.4

TABLE NO.4.4

Distribution of the respondents in terms of **preference for nuclear family**

Sr. No.	Preference	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	48	30.0	32	22.9
2	No	93	58.1	56	40.0
3	NRSP	19	11.9	52	37.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

In continuation of the earlier table ,we see that about 12 % of the respondents of non-tribal community and 8% respondents of tribal community have not given their

views on whether they prefer nuclear family or not. 30% of the respondents of non-tribal community and 23% respondents of tribal community have reported that they give preference for nuclear family. Whereas 58% respondents of non-tribal community and 40% respondents of tribal community reported that they do not prefer nuclear family.

4.5 (B). CHANGE IN THE RESIDENCE AFTER MARRIAGE

After marriage, a girl leaves the house of her parents and goes to the house of her husband. Here whether this change is from rural to urban or from urban to rural has been studied. The detailed information in this regard is collected and given in table no.4.5

TABLE NO.4.5

Distribution of the respondents according to **change in the residence after marriage**

Sr. No.	Change residence	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	From rural to urban	17	10.6	16	11.4
3	From urban to rural	16	10.0	00	00
4	No change	98	61.3	72	51.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

The above table shows that more than a half of respondents have reported that there is no change in place of residence after marriage. About 10 to 11% respondents of both communities have reported that they changed their place of residence from rural to urban areas. However, only 10% respondents of non-tribal community have reported that they have changed their place of residence from urban to rural areas. Thus we can say the even after marriage most of the respondents haven't had a change in the place of residence, whether form rural to urban or urban to rural.

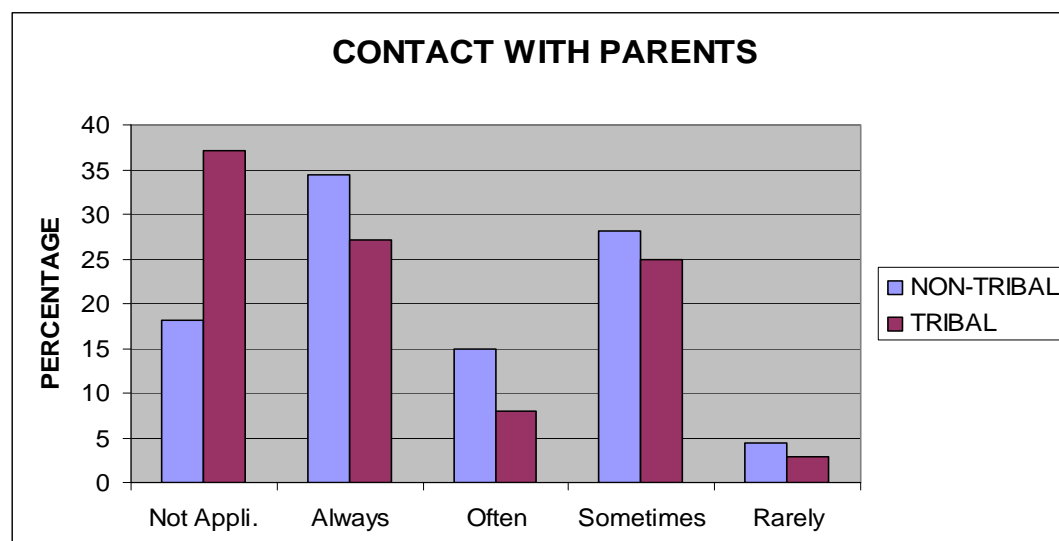
4.6. CONTACT WITH PARENTS

My study of the women of Manipur has shown that a woman still maintains contact and her relations with her parent's family after her marriage. However, the contact with parents mainly depends upon the distance between parents' village and girl's husbands' village (place). If the parents are living nearby the contact becomes easier and if the distance is too far it becomes very difficult. It is also to be noted that in some families a married woman is controlled by the husband/in-laws and not given freedom to contact with her parents. How far girls are keeping contact or communicating with her parents is given in table no.4.7.

TABLE NO.4.6.

Distribution of the respondents according to **contact with parents**

Sr. No.	Contact with parents	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Always	55	34.4	38	27.1
3	Often	24	15.0	11	7.9
4	Sometimes	45	28.1	35	25.0
5	Rarely	7	4.4	4	2.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table no.4.6. that among the non-tribal communities the respondents maintain a regular contact with their parents with varying frequencies. However in tribal community they have less contact with their parents. 27% respondents of tribal community and 35% of non-tribal respondents have reported that they have continuous contact with their parents after marriage. About 8% tribal community and 15% non-tribal community respondents have reported that they have often contact their parents. 28% respondents of the non-tribal and 25% respondents of the tribal community reported that they contact their parents only sometimes. About 4% non-tribal and 3% tribal respondents have very rare contact with their parents. Thus, it is observed that the respondents of the tribal community have less contact with their parents as compared to non-tribal community. This is mainly due to cultural practices follow at community level which is closely associated with empowerment process.

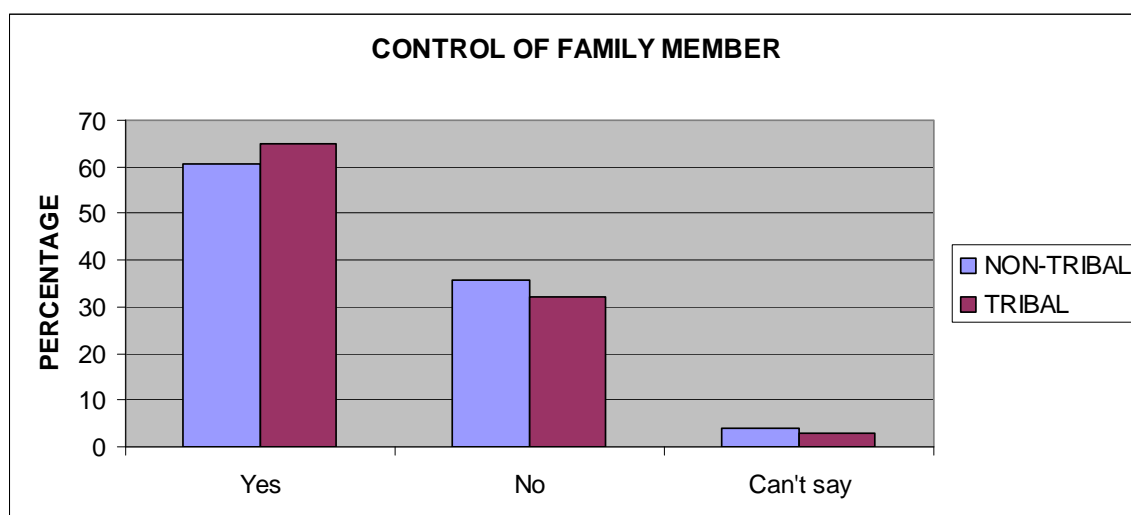
4.7. CONTROL OF FAMILY MEMBERS

In any society throughout the world, the family is considered to be the basic unit of society. Society has a strong stable structure if family structure is strong and stable. At family level each individual is closely related by blood. Each family has its own culture and each member follows the norms of family culture. Cultural practices make relationship within the family strong because the behavior of the members is controlled by these cultural norms. Every individual in the family have their own specific role to play and accordingly they have specific responsibilities. The empowerment process of women in the family is directly related to the environment in the family. If the environment is healthy and interactive, then it becomes very conducive for women in such families to be empowered. Before marriage either parents or siblings are controlling her and after marriage either her husband or her in-laws. These controls may be for education, employment, moving out of family etc. the details about the control of family member and the controlling person is given in following tables no.4.7&8.

TABLE NO.4.7.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about
control of family member

Sr. No.	Reasons	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	97	60.6	91	65.0
2	No	57	35.6	45	32.1
3	Can't say	6	3.8	4	2.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the above tables that women from both the communities reported that they were being controlled by the family members or the community as a whole. Almost equal proportion of both the community 61% non-tribals and 65% tribal community are of the opinion that they are being controlled by family members. 36% respondents in non-tribal community and 32% respondents of tribal community reported that they are not being controlled by the family. A small number 4% in non-tribal and 3% tribal respondents were not able to answer whether they are controlled or not by their family members. This controlling issue is directly linked with the status of women or girl child in the family.

TABLE NO.4.8.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **person in control**

Sr. No.	Person in control	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Father	15	9.4	21	15.0
2	Husband	50	31.3	51	36.4
3	In-laws	29	18.1	6	4.3
4	Parents	3	1.9	13	9.3
5	NRSP	63	39.4	49	35.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

In continuation of the last table, the above table shows that the respondents who have expressed that they are controlled by the family members have stated that father, husband and in-laws are the main persons who keep control over them. About 10% respondents in non-tribals and 15% in tribals have reported that father is the main controlling person whereas 31% in non-tribal and 36% among tribals have expressed that husband is the main person. As compared to non-tribals and tribals the family controls especially the male members i.e., the husband or the father. There is significant difference about the control of in-laws. Among Non-tribals 18% respondents whereas in tribals 4% respondents have expressed that in-laws are controlling them and the family matters. About 40% respondents in non-tribals and 35% among tribals have not responded to this question. Thus we can conclude that in most of the tribal communities the male members are in control of the family affairs whereas among the non-tribal communities this is not very relevant. Among non-tribal communities it has been observed that the in-laws are more in control as compared to that of in the tribal communities.

4.8. REACTIONS ABOUT CONTROL

It is natural for the individual to react either positively or negatively, on being controlled. If the atmosphere in the family is healthy and interactive a girl child or

daughter-in-laws enjoys these controls and makes there own development. One point here to be noted is that there are some positive and negative effects on the person being controlled. During adolescence, small child is unable to decide for itself what is good and what is bad. The child can not realize the implications of his/her behavior in family or in society. If family controls are within the limit of tolerance level it helps in development of various aspects. Thus there is a positive effect on the individual who is being controlled .But if these controls are very strict and very strong the individual cannot explore his/her own potentials, therefore it may adversely affect on the development of an individual. In Indian society, there are several restrictions and controls within the family setup and these controls are easily tolerable. Individual’s opinion and a reaction about the reactions of control is given in table no.4.9

TABLE NO.4.9.

Distribution of the respondents according to **reactions about control**

Sr. No.	Reactions of controlling	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Can't say	4	2.5	00	00
2	Good	45	28.1	33	23.6
3	Happy	1	.6	4	2.9
4	Secured	2	1.3	6	4.3
5	Not happy	29	18.1	37	26.4
6	Frustrated	8	5.0	2	1.4
7	Suppressed	3	1.9	3	2.1
8	uncomfortable	5	3.1	6	4.3
9	NRSP	63	39.4	49	35.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that in non-tribal community about 28% of respondents reported that these controls are good for their development, while in

tribal community about 24% respondents expressed these controls are good for the individual. There are 18% respondents in non-tribal communities who are not happy about the control whereas in tribal community 27% respondents are not happy with these controls. Very few proportions of respondents have expressed security due to this control. About 5% of respondents in non-tribal have reported they feel frustrated whereas 2% of respondents in tribal community have expressed that they feel frustrated. Suppression is one of the outcomes of family controls reported by 2% of the respondents in both communities. Women feel uncomfortable if these controls are quite strong.

About 3% to 4% of respondents of the tribal community and non-tribal community have expressed that they are uncomfortable due to the control imposed by the elders of the family. About 40% of respondents in non-tribal and 35% respondents in tribal community have not given any response. The overall picture shows that more respondents of non-tribal community feel that these controls are good for development whereas more respondents from tribal community have expressed that these controls are not good for development hence, they are not happy with these controls. About 3 to 4% respondents from both communities feel very uncomfortable. It is significant to mention here that the respondents of the non-tribal communities are more comfortable with these controls than the tribal communities.

4.9. DIETARY PRACTICES

A usual practice, most commonly followed in many traditional and culture bound homes in India is that of women generally having their meals after all the family members, especially the male members have eaten. This practice is seen mostly in the joint family setup. The Indian woman always feels that her Husband, his kin and her children must be served and fed first. Meals are taken mostly two times a day, morning meal and evening meal. However the practice of breakfast is observed in the families which are economically well off or in the families where the male persons are working. Some very orthodox and culture bound parts of the

Indian society also follow a practice where the woman eats the leftover or in the same plate that her husband has eaten. This they believe increases the love and affection between the husband and wife and also points to her faithfulness and subjugation to him. There are many men in the Indian society feel that it is mandatory that the family members do not bother whether sufficient food is left for women. If the food remained is less, she manages within that limited food. The prolonged condition of this situation develops malnutrition among women folk. Therefore several health problems are observed among the women. Anemia is one of the prominent problem is the outcome of this situation. In tribal community and non-tribal community significant differenced do exists as it totally depend one economic condition of family. The details about the meals per day and eating practices with the family members or after the family member is collected and given in table no. 4.10.

TABLE NO.4.10.

Distribution of the respondents according to having **meals per day**

Sr. No.	No. of meals per day	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Two meals	151	94.4	134	95.7
2	Three meals	9	5.6	6	4.3
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above equal proportion 95% each of the respondents in both the community reported that they eat two meals in a day. 6% respondents in non-tribal and 4% respondents in tribal community reported that they have three meals a day. This clearly shows that in women two meals in a day is a usual practice in both the communities

The practice of eating either with family member or after family is also given in table 4.11.

TABLE NO.4.11.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about having
food with family members

Sr. No.	Food with family	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	After family eat	2	1.3	00	00
2	With family	158	98.8	140	100.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table that almost all women either in tribal community or non-tribal communities have their food with all family members. This clearly shows that as far as food diet or food is concern women are treated equally along with all other family member in brief there is no difference in tribal community or non-tribal communities about dietary practices. This shows that women have equal status in family.

4.10. DIALOGUE WITH HUSBAND

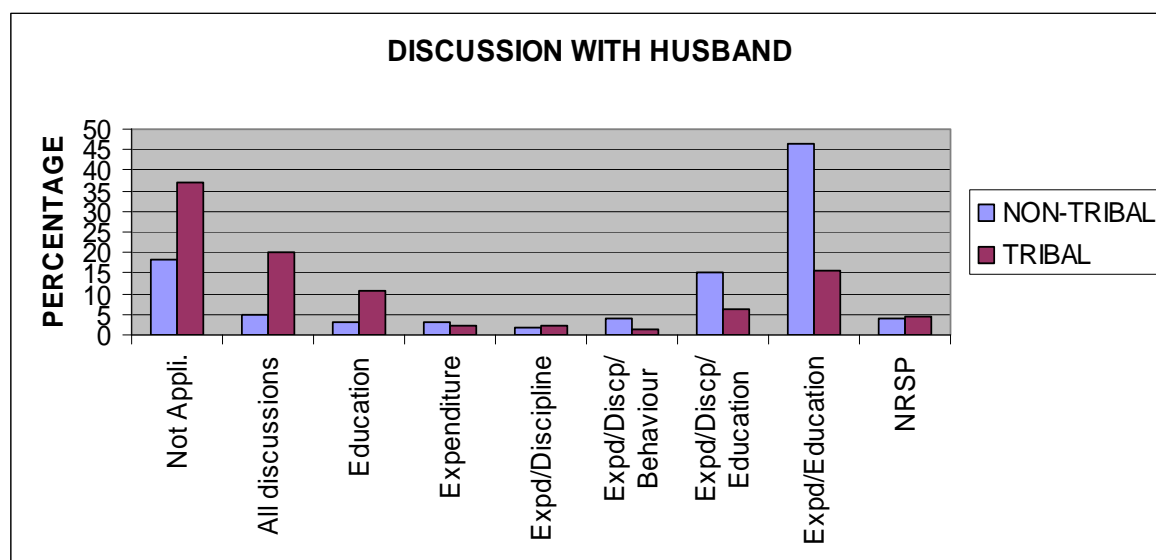
A healthy communication between members in the family especially between the spouses is very important for establishing a healthy family and solving various family matters. All decisions should be taken with mutual understanding and convenience of other. Educations of children, family expenses, family discipline, asset, procurement, employment are the main areas where mutual understanding is needed. Taking care of children and senior citizen should be dual (husband & wife) responsibilities. Needs of the family and prioritizing of needs is an important aspect of healthy interaction in the family.

A working woman naturally takes care of the domestic expenses however, for other major family matters she takes her husband's consent. Since most of the people belonging to the tribal community maintain a low socio-economic status they may not be able to save as they have to spend most part of their earnings on meeting their basic needs that is food, clothing, shelter, education and health. Hence there is

very little room for a dialogue between husband and wife in regards to the matters concerning the economic affairs of the home. Both husband and wife give priority to meet the basic needs only. With this background, the detailed information collected about the discussion with husband on various family matters such as education, domestic expenses, discipline of children etc. and tabulated in table no.4.12.

TABLE NO.4.12.
Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **discussion with husband on various family matters**

Sr. No.	Discussion with husband	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	All discussions	8	5.0	28	20.0
3	Education	5	3.1	15	10.7
4	Expenditure	5	3.1	3	2.1
5	Expd/Discipline	3	1.9	3	2.1
6	Expd/Discp/ Behaviour	6	3.8	2	1.4
7	Expd/Discp/ Education	24	15.0	9	6.4
8	Expd/Education	74	46.3	22	15.7
9	NRSP	6	3.8	6	4.3
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table that about half of the non-tribal respondents are discussing about domestic expenditure and the education of their children or the expenses of the education. About 15% respondents in non-tribal community have reported that the husband and wife discuss about the various areas, such as disciplining children, family expenditure and the education of their children. With regards to the respondents of the tribal communities it is seen from the table that 16% of respondents discussed the matters related to domestic expenses with their spouses and education of their children followed by 20% of the respondents discussing every matter with their spouse.

There is a comparative difference between the respondents of the tribal and non-tribal communities, when it comes to reciprocative relationship in respect to discussion of significant family matters. The major areas discussed among the respondents of the tribal communities are education and family expenses and its related matters, whereas among non-tribal communities the family expenditure and education are the prime areas of discussion.

Thus in my observation, I can say that, the tribal women have more freedom of having an ongoing dialogue with their spouse on various matters of expenditure whereas among the non-tribal respondents, domestic expenses and education are the prime matters of discussion.

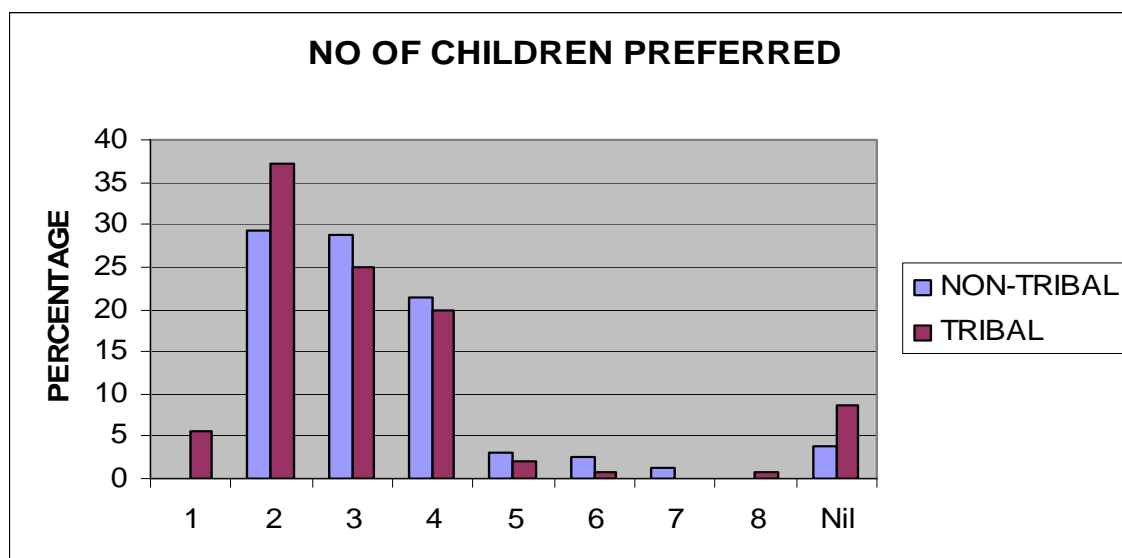
4.11. PREFERENCE FOR NUMBER OF CHILDREN

To have a child is a natural desire of every married individual, perhaps it is a natural law. Each living animal produces its next generation and hence the chain of living animals continues to exist on the earth. Every individual tries to have a child or children for their next generation. Children are considered to very important for the family. In fact in most parts of India, it is generally believed that the male child is the one who carries the lineage of the family forward. In tribal communities the size of family is comparatively large. There are many reasons to that may be due to fact that many tribal communities are not well educated on the benefits of having a small family, and even many tribal people are not aware of the birth control, family planning and contraceptive methods to avoid having more children. Generally, the tribal people and by and large believe that children are a gift from God hence having more children is a sign of prosperity and God's blessings on them.

The Manipur government is putting considerable effort to see that adequate and proper health facilities reach up to the grass root level with special attention to the tribal communities. During the last 60 years considerable changes have been observed in the family planning practice among tribals however, the overall situation among tribals as well as non-tribals remains more or less the same. The information on the perception behind the number of children to have is collected from the respondents of the tribal as well as the non-tribal groups and presented in table no.4.13.

TABLE NO.4.13.Distribution of the respondents according to **number of children preferred**

Sr. No.	No. of children	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	1	0	0	8	5.7
2	2	47	29.4	52	37.1
3	3	46	28.8	35	25.0
4	4	34	21.3	28	20.0
5	5	5	3.1	3	2.1
6	6	4	2.5	1	.7
7	7	2	1.3	0	0
8	8	0	0	1	.7
9	Nil	6	3.8	12	8.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table above that, 37% respondents of the tribal community and 30 % respondents of the non-tribal communities expect two children. 29% respondents of the non-tribal communities and 25% respondents belonging to the tribal communities expect minimum three children. About 20% respondents of both

communities are expecting minimum of four children. There is a clear-cut distinction between tribals and non-tribals about the number of children they expect. In contradiction to what was said earlier the respondents of the tribal communities expect lesser number of children than the non-tribal communities. Thus from what we see in **table no 41.3**, we can conclude that the non-tribals prefer a large number of children. The point to be noted is that there are about 7% respondents from the non-tribal communities who expect five to seven children where as this proportion is comparatively very low among the respondents of the tribal community. There are a significant number of respondents who do not expect any children. About 9% of the respondents in tribal communities and 4% respondents of non-tribal communities do not expect any children; the reason behind this may be due to their low economic status. However, respondents of both communities are expecting two to four 4 children.

4.12. EXPECTATIONS ABOUT NUMBER OF SONS

As mentioned earlier, the male child is considered to be very important, because in the Indian culture it is generally believed that the male that carries the name or the lineage of the family forward. This desire for a male child has brought about a lot of gender discrimination and this has resulted in increasing female foeticide and infanticide in many parts on India. It is very sad to know that the well to do, highly educated people prefer only the male child. Hence, each couple expects to have a male child. Even among women folk they expect male child rather than a female child. Naturally the preference is given for son. In Manipur where patriarchal system exists a male child is always the preference. In this view detailed information related to the preference for son (numbers) and daughters (numbers) is collected from the respondents and presented in table no.4.14&15.

TABLE NO.4.14.Distribution of the respondents **according to having number of sons**

Sr. No.	No. of sons	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	0	6	3.8	12	8.6
2	1	136	85.0	113	80.7
3	2-4	12	7.5	9	6.4
4	5 and more	6	3.8	6	4.3
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that about 80% to 85% of the tribals and non-tribals are expecting at least one son, while 7% to 8% of families in both communities expect minimum 2-4 sons. There are hardly 4% families in both communities expecting more than 5 sons. This clearly shows that among the tribal and non-tribals minimum at least one son is expected. About 9% of tribal community respondents have reported they do not expect a single son whereas in non-tribal community respondent about 4% respondents have reported they do not expect any male child. The overall picture shows that among the tribal communities the respondents expect minimum one child.

TABLE NO.4.15.Distribution of the respondents according to having **number of daughter**

Sr. No.	No. of daughters	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	0	6	3.8	12	8.6
2	1	143	89.4	123	87.9
3	2	9	5.6	4	2.9
4	3	2	1.3	0	0
5	4	0	0	1	.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table about 88% of respondents from tribal community and 89% respondents in non-tribal community want to have minimum one daughter whereas about 9% respondents of tribal community and 4% respondents of non-tribal community do not expect even a single daughter. To say in brief that the expectations about male or female child remains more or less same in both communities, but a significant difference is observed in both communities about 9% of the respondents do not expect any children neither male or female. This may be due to their economic conditions in this area they do not have regular source of income and hence they might have the feeling of more responsibilities for the maintenance of their children and other expenses of their children.

4.13. PERCEPTION ABOUT THE REASONS FOR PREFERRING A MALE CHILD

In a patriarchal society a male child is considered to be very important. In fact, it is also believed that apart from carrying the name of the family forward the male will take care of the parents and be s support to them when they have grown old and also look after the family property. He will also continue family business or profession and also will shoulder various family responsibilities and look after younger siblings. Perhaps male child is a status symbol for some communities. It is assumed that a male child is financial asset whereas daughter is a burden for the family. This concept surface mainly due to the dowry system and heavy expenses on marriage especially among the non-tribal communities.

A commonly held myth is that a girl child is less capable of achieving things in life than the male child. However, this myth has been shattered as we see that girls excel and do equally. The difference in perception about the preference for male child among the tribals and the non-tribal communities is studied. The information collected from respondents is given in table no.4.16.

TABLE NO.4.16.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **preference for son**

Sr. No.	Preference of son	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	90	56.3	67	47.9
2	No	67	41.9	72	51.4
3	No commend	3	1.9	1	.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that 56% respondents in non-tribal community and 48% respondents in tribal community have reported that they prefer to have son than daughter. Whereas 42% respondents in non-tribal community and 51% respondents in tribal community have reported they do not prefer son. They are not particular about the sex of the child. It is observed that percentage of preferring son is observed more in non-tribal community than the tribal community.

TABLE NO.4.17.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **the reasons for son preference**

Sr. No.	Reasons for son preference	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Belong to another	57	35.6	41	29.3
2	Girl less capable	9	5.6	10	7.1
3	Many burdens for girl	3	1.9	2	1.4
4	Son is more capable	2	1.3	2	1.4
5	Son will inherit	7	4.4	3	2.1
6	Stay with me	12	7.5	9	6.4
7	NRSP	70	43.8	73	52.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from above table that there are various reasons for preferring male child. 36% respondents in non-tribal community and 29% respondents in tribal community have reported that they prefer to have son because 'girl/daughter' belong to another family. A daughter is not considered as permanent member in the family because she belongs to her husband's family when married. Therefore, taking care of her needs, spending huge amount of money on her marriage is a burden for the parents.

6% respondents in non-tribal community and 7% respondents in tribal community reported that they prefer to have son because physiologically girls are less capable and cannot sustain for a longer time. About 2% of tribal community and non-tribal community respondents feel that the girl child is a burden for their family. Son is more capable, inheritor of the progeny and he will stay with the parents in their old age are some of the reason they use to justify for preferring son.

For the preference of son the justifications given by the respondents of both communities do not vary significantly. A about 50% of respondents of tribal and non-tribals communities do not respond to this question. In brief it is to say that there is very strong belief that son is their own property whereas daughter is the property of others, hence they do not prefer daughter. This approach have very strong base on their cultural even some educated respondents have the same feeling. This clearly indicated that the education does not affect the perception or the cultural practices which are deeply rooted in the minds of the people.

4.14. TREATMENT FROM THE PARENT

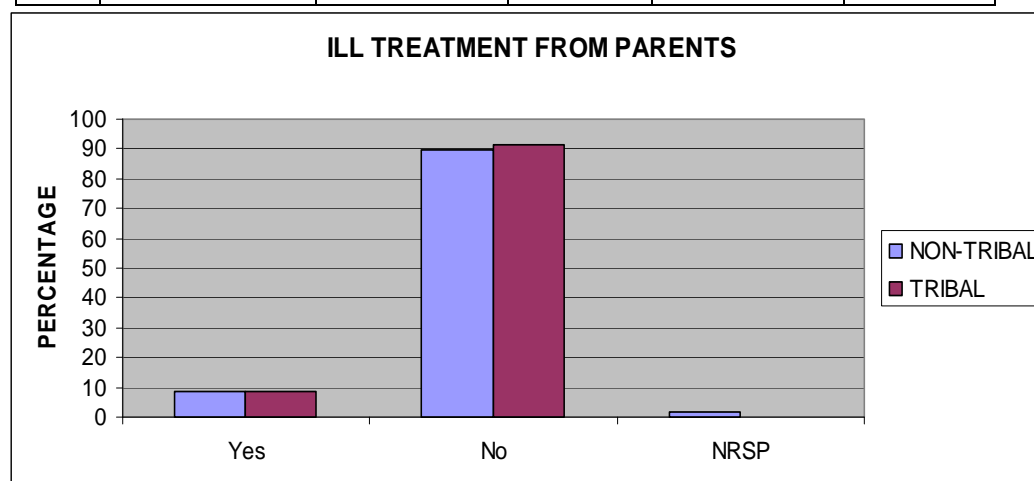
As discussed in earlier tables there are misconceptions about girl child both in tribal and non-tribal communities. Family where strong preference is given to male child and giving ill-treatment to the female directly shows the status of woman and how far is she for her empowerment process.

Irrespective of the educational background one finds that there are even educated parent who ill-treated to their daughter/s. Treatment given to the daughter indicates her status in the family. Often she is given secondary status and neglected by the parents for her well-being or development. If this situation persist in large scale even in community chances of women for their empowerment is very less. In this view the detailed information about ill treatment given by parents is discussed in table no.4.18.

TABLE NO.4.18.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **ill-treatment from parents**

Sr. No.	Ill-treatment	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	14	8.8	12	8.6
2	No	143	89.4	128	91.4
3	NRSP	3	1.9	0	0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from table that equal proportion 9% each of the respondents in both the community reported that they are ill-treated by their parents. 89% respondents in non-tribal community and 91% respondents in tribal community have reported they

are not ill-treated by their parents. It is observed that most of the respondents in both the community are treated well by their parents.

When girls are getting ill-treatment from their parents a give counter question was asked whether they give preferential treatment to the son. The detail in this regard is shown in table no.4.19.

TABLE NO.4.19.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **preferential treatment to son/s**

Sr. No.	Preference of son	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Yes	21	13.1	10	7.1
3	No	106	66.3	78	55.7
4	NRSP	4	2.5	00	00
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that 13% respondents in non-tribal community have reported that they give preferential treatment to son whereas a smaller proportion of 7% respondents in tribal community reported they give preferential treatment to son. About 56% respondents in tribal community and 56% respondents in tribal community have reported that there is a no preferential treatment given to son. About 37% respondents of the tribal community and 18% respondents in non-tribal community are not applicable to answer this question. It is observed that preferential treatment to son is observed more in non-tribal community than the tribal community.

4.15. SETTLEMENT OF DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

Differences are inevitable in a family set up due to different opinion, ideology and mindset of the individuals towards each other or in tackling family matters. At times, due to financial constraints or other problems chances arise to have differences, especial family where woman does not have any voice. In this condition her voice is often unheard and denied her rightful contribution to the family. Therefore, differences persist long in such situation and the atmosphere in the family gets disturbed. This ultimately affects the overall development of the family because this aspect closely linked with the empowerment process. But families where both the spouses are educated and well cultured the differences are resolved through mutual consent and understanding. They succeed in pursuing their opinion to the extent that they get full satisfaction and contented. But in case of illiterate and non earning woman the situation becomes more critical and unfavorable. The detail about the settlement of the difference about opinion is given in table no.4.20.

TABLE NO.4.20

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **settlement of opinion differences**

Sr. No.	Settlement of opinion	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Articulating my view	31	19.4	33	23.6
2	Executing my right	13	8.1	5	3.6
3	Keeping quiet	99	61.9	78	55.7
4	Executing my right and view	00	00	2	1.4
5	Through discussion	11	6.9	13	9.3
6	NRSP	6	3.8	9	6.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that 20% respondents of non-tribal community and 24% of tribal community have expressed their views that they articulate their views when the differences occurred between her and her husband. While 8% respondents of non-tribal community and 4% respondents of tribal community have reported that they exercise their right. These responses given by the respondents from both communities are the indication that they are well aware about their rights and their duties. This is an excellent indication of empowerment. About 46% respondents from non-tribal community and 56% respondents from tribal community have reported that they just keep quiet in order to solve the differences. This large proportion of respondents in both the community indirectly indicates that there is male domination in the family. Hardly 7% respondents from non-tribal community and 9% respondents from tribal community have reported that they solve their differences through discussion. The overall picture shows that considerable numbers of respondents in both the community have no option except just to keep quiet to solve the differences. It is observed that there are large proportion of women do not speak up or exercise their right when it is the most needed.

4.15. HUSBAND FAITHFULNESS

Faithfulness to each other (husband and wife) is the main base of happy and satisfactory existence of family life. Once a man or women get married it is expected that he or she should be faithful to his/her partner. This always helps in overcoming the difficulties that they face in day to day life. To have faith on one another there need to be a mutual understanding and respect for each other. Detail about the husbands' faithfulness is collected in following table no.4.21.

TABLE NO.4.21.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **husbands' faithfulness**

Sr. No.	Husband's faithfulness	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.	52	37.1
2	Always	94	58.8	69	49.3
3	Not all the times	8	5.0	6	4.3
4	Can't say	25	15.6	9	6.4
5	No	4	2.5	4	2.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that 59% respondent of non-tribal community and 49% respondents of tribal community have expressed that the husband is always faithful to them. This faithfulness is in terms of allocation of family resources, development aspects of family and development of their children. In tribal community faithfulness of husband is observed to be low as compared to non-tribal. Equal proportion 5% each of both the communities have reported that the husband is not faithful in all the time. About 16% respondents of in non-tribal community and 6% respondents from tribal community were not able to say anything about the faithfulness of their husband with them. There are hardly 3% of respondents in both communities reported that their husbands are not faithful to them. This clearly indicates that 3% each of the husbands are not trustworthy to the wives. The overall picture shows though a good number of husbands are faithful to the wife, it should be noted that there are numbers of husband who are not faithful to the wife. We can imagine that there are women who suffer silently due to the infidelity of the husband.

SUMMARY

In this chapter various factors related to family life have been discussed in detail. These family factors are closely linked with each other and have direct relevance with the process of empowerment. The main factors the age at marriage shows that almost 65% of non-tribal community get married at the age of 18-25 years, whereas only 42% respondents in tribal community gets married before 25.

In relation to the age of marriage the difference in the age of husband and wife is also discussed in detail. It was observed that about 70% respondents of non-tribal community have 1 to 5 years difference whereas in tribal community the difference in age is comparatively large. The girl's age at marriage is significantly large. This clearly indicates that in the matter of marriage the parents who are educated may not keep large difference but in the tribal communities where illiteracy is more the difference is very large. About 47% respondents in tribal community and about 60% non-tribal respondents are staying with their In-laws. There is a preference for nuclear family in both communities but among the tribal community it is exceptionally high. After marriage the change in residence is bound to be there about 10% respondents have shifted from rural to urban areas but about 60% of respondents have reported that there is not any change in residency.

Significant difference is observed in getting respect in the family. 68% respondents from tribals and 83% from non-tribal community have reported that they get respect from family member. When after marriage a girl is usually allowed to keep contact with her natural parents. However it was observed that only 32% respondents from non-tribal community and 27% respondents from tribal community have regular contact with their parents. A large variation is observed in this aspect. As regard to the control of the family member it was observed that 60 to 65% of both communities have reported that they are being control by the family member. Husband is the main person who controls the woman. For some it is in-laws who control the woman. There are varies of reaction of being control. In non-tribal community respondents are more in favor in control whereas among the tribal community considerable proportions of respondents are not happy with the control.

However, equal proportion of respondents of both group have reported that they are uncomfortable.

Healthy communication and mutual understanding is the base for happy family life. Communication or discussion between husband and wife about family matter is observed in both the communities. The prime areas of discussion are domestic expense and education of children. There is no difference in expectations about the number of children. It is observed that the general expectations in tribal community and non-tribal community is about 2-4 children. There are a very negligible proportion of respondents who have reported that they expect more than 5 children. As regard to the number of son or daughter it is observed that their preference is minimum one and maximum 2-3. However, the reasons expressed by the respondents to have male child is that son is more capable, son will inherit and he will stay with parents during their old age. Girl child is not wanted because she is a burden for family, less capable and they belong to another family.

The treatment given by the parent significantly helps in empowering of women. There are hardly 8% to 10% respondents who have reported that they get ill-treatment by the family. In such family girls are neglected and unattended by the family. As regard to the settlement of differences, majority of them have reported that they just keep quiet in order to solve the problem, but just keeping quiet will not do good for the woman in long term. 25% to 28% respondents have reported that they pursue their own views which are an excellent indicator of empowerment. More than half of the respondents have reported that their husbands are faithful to them.

CHAPTER V

CULTURAL FACTORS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian woman carries dual status. The Hindu religion personifies a woman to be like a goddess; goddess of wealth (laxmi), goddess of melody (saraswati) or the vengeful goddess (durga). Many aspects of a religious ceremony cannot be complete without the presence of a woman. The Indian culture has placed great value on the role of woman as a mother, a valuable life partner and the author of life on this earth. However, it is this very same culture that also suppresses and delimits a woman's freedom.

It is seen that the woman plays a pivotal role in the family affairs. Sometimes she enacts the role of a manager, administrator, care taker and controller. She carries the various duties of the home with ease. The woman is also seen balancing a career or job and the family affairs yet many a times cultural restrictions do create lot of hurdles in her path to progress.

In spite of the woman's significant contributions she is still oppressed in the name of culture and even subject to, domestic violence, secondary status, non-participation in major decision-making at family level, negligence or avoidance of her needs and aspirations. Government has made several efforts to bring women into the main stream of development for which various laws and acts have been adopted for her protection.

In urban areas, the situation and condition of women is comparatively better than in rural areas where their situation is very pathetic, the level of education is still very low hence; they do have lesser opportunities for any paid job or employment, and this makes them financially dependent.

Early marriages, less privileges to achieve education and pursue a career are some of the prominent problems face by the rural women. Government has made several

programs and policies to enhance their existing status, by supporting and improving their educational level. But, the results are not achieved as anticipated. For these recurrent failure for bringing women folk into the main stream of the society is still a challenge for the government.

As stated earlier, culturally the status of woman is considered as significant and important, but practically she is deprived of all the opportunities in the family and the community. The empowerment process is greatly influenced by the cultural factors. Perhaps, marriage practices, rituals in marriages, various festivals and the procedure of its celebration contribute towards their empowerment. Apart from this, utilization of time in daily life, access to outside world, treatment to widows or divorce are also taken into consideration for women empowerment. Equal social status, equal treatment, various means of ill-treatment, their reactions of ill treatment, participation in farm activities are also crucial for empowerment process. Education and employment are the two main aspects that determine women's status and process of empowerment. The detail discussions on these issues have been undertaken in these chapters as follows:

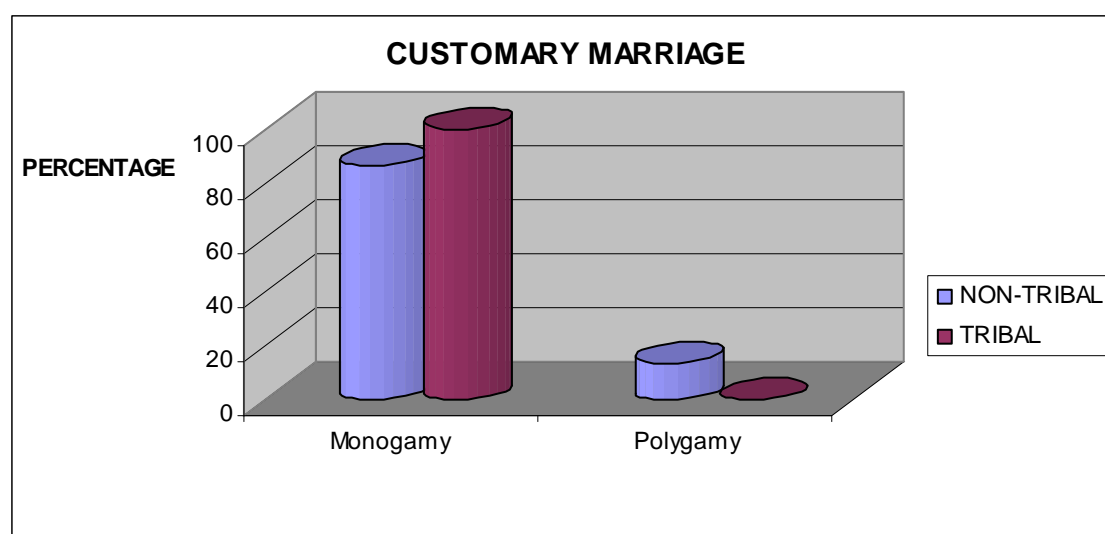
5.2. INFORMATION ABOUT CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE

There are mainly two types of marriages practice in India such as monogamy and polygamy. These marriages are not uniformly spread over in all communities. There is a large variation in marriage practices depending upon the culture and religious practices. There are some non-tribal communities that practice polygamy. In this type of marriage a man can marry more than one woman. In such type of community the status of women is very low. On this background a detailed about customary marriage is collected and given in table no.5.1.

TABLE NO.5.1.

Distribution of the respondents according to information about **customary marriage**

Sr. No.	Customary marriage	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Monogamy	138	86.3	140	100.0
2	Polygamy	22	13.8	00	00
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table above that Monogamy is exclusively practiced by tribal respondents whereas in non-tribal communities both Monogamy and Polygamy is practiced. About 86% of the non-tribal respondents have reported that they practice Monogamy while 14% respondents have responded that they followed Polygamy. Thus, it is observed that Monogamy is dominantly followed in both the communities.

5.3. INFORMATION ABOUT CHILD MARRIAGE PRACTICES

Child marriage was commonly practiced in some traditional Indian societies but such practices have been banned by the government. However, there are women

who marry before 18 years due to ignorance of the law. Detail information in this regard is collected and given in 5.2.

TABLE NO.5.2.

Distribution of the respondents according to information about **child-marriage practice**

Sr. No.	Child marriage	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Don't know	9	5.6	00	00
2	No	151	94.4	140	100.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

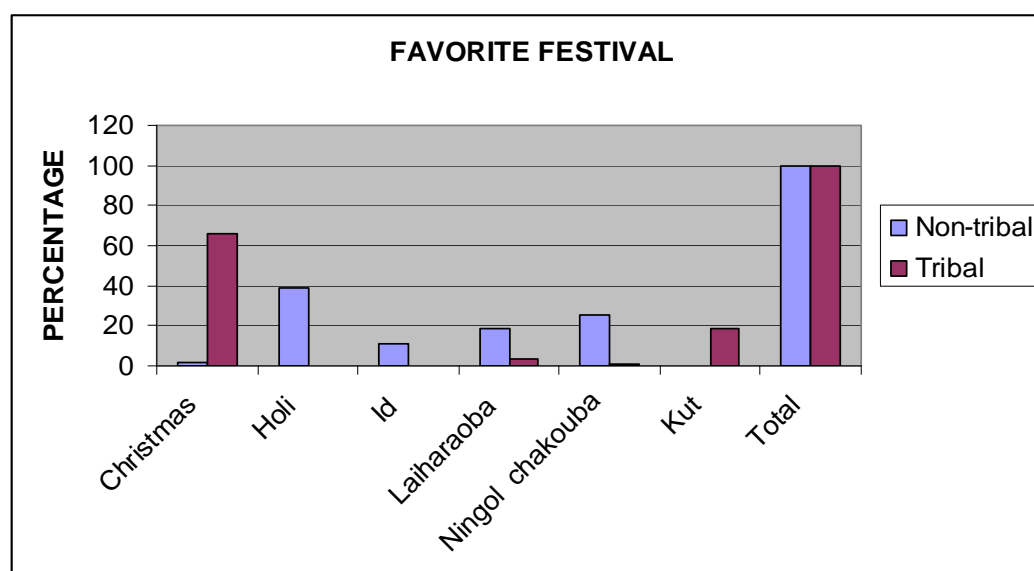
The above table indicates that child marriage is not a common practice among tribal communities. 6% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that they do not know whether child marriage exists in the community or not. 94% respondents of the non-tribal communities reported that they do not follow such practices. Thus it is observed that child marriages are not practiced in both communities.

5.4. FAVOURITE FESTIVALS

Several festivals are celebrated by the people of Manipur. However, festivals vary from community to community. These festivals are important part of their life. These festivals are celebrated depending upon the culture of the particular community. Holy, Christmas, Laiharaoba, Ningol chakouba and Kut are some of the big festivals where series of activities take place. During planting, seedlings and harvesting, festivals are celebrated according to these seasons. Each festival is unique and special. These festivals are rooted in people's mind and blood therefore, everyone celebrate all these festivals with joy and enthusiasm. Various religious and cultural activities are also performed on the eve of these celebrations. Respondents' favorite festivals are collected and given in table no.5.3.

TABLE NO.5.3.Distribution of the respondents according to **favorite festival/s**

Sr. No.	Favorite festival	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	All	9	5.6	16	11.4
2	Christmas	2	1.3	93	66.4
3	Holi	62	38.8	00	00
4	Id	17	10.6	00	00
5	Laiharaoba	30	18.8	4	2.9
6	Ningol chakouba	40	25.0	1	.7
7	Kut	00	00	26	18.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.00



The table above indicates that there are numbers of festivals which are the respondents' favorite festivals. As most of the Tribal communities are Christians, Christmas is the predominant festival celebrated by 66% of the tribal respondents. Christmas is the joyous festival of all the Christians of Manipur as it is the mark of the birth of the Saviour Jesus. Prayers, reading of Gospels, singing of hymns, lectures on Christ, form the major part of the festival. 19% respondents by the tribal

reported that Kut celebration is their favorite festival. Kut is an autumn festival celebrated by the different tribes of Kuki-Chin-Mizo groups of Manipur. It is a happy occasion for the villagers whose food stock is bountiful after a year of hard labour. The festival is a thanks-giving feast with songs and dances in merriment and joviality for all, in honour of the giver of an abundant harvest. This festival is celebrated on the 1st of November every year and it is observed as a state holiday.

Among non-tribal, Holi is most favorite festival reported by 39% respondents followed by Ningaolchakouba 25%. It is a remarkable social festival of the Meiteis. Married women of the family who were married to distant places come to the parental house along with her children and enjoy sumptuous feast. It is a form of family rejoinder to revive familial affection. It is observed on the second day of the new moon in the Manipuri month of Hiyangei (November). 19% of the respondents' of non-tribal respondents reported that their favorite festival is Laiharaoba. It is celebrated in hour of the sylvan deities known as *Umang Lai*, the festival represents the worship of traditional deities and ancestors. A number of dances by both men and women are performed before the ancient divinities. It is held in the month of May. Only 6% respondents of non-tribal have reported that they celebrate almost all festival. 11% of the non-tribal respondents reported that their favorite festival is Id festival. About 6% of the non-tribal and 11% tribal respondents have reported that they celebrate all the festivals.

5.5. HOBBIES OF THE RESPONDENTS

Having a hobby is a positive sign of dynamic personality. Each individual has a tendency to develop a hobby. Hobbies also help in development of personality and creative thinking. Hobbies such as arts and crafts, dance, reading, singing etc. are some of the broad categories reported by the respondents. In tribal communities dance and folk songs have close relation with their culture. Detail information in this regard is collected and given in table no.5.4.

TABLE NO.5.4.Distribution of the respondents according to **hobbies**

Sr. No.	Hobbies	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Art & Craft	52	32.5	16	11.4
2	Dance	26	16.3	5	3.6
3	Gardening	10	6.3	7	5.0
4	Reading	30	18.8	49	35.0
5	Singing	17	10.6	38	27.1
6	Others	25	15.6	25	17.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

The table above indicates hobbies vary from community to community. Reading and singing are the main hobbies among the tribal communities followed by arts and crafts, gardening, dance, whereas among the non-tribal communities arts and crafts is the most popular hobby. In non-tribal communities dance and reading are more common whereas gardening and singing is comparatively less. Thus hobbies are prevalent in both the communities.

5.6. UTILIZATION OF FREE TIME

Every individual whether working in organization, private or public has some break time from the normal duty which we called it 'free time'. Having quantity of free time varies from individual to individual depending on the pattern of job he/she is engaged. Even time spend during free time varies from person to person or it may also depend on economic condition of the family. Families who are economically poor would like to spend their time for something that would be beneficial for the family. Others may like to spend their free time for recreation. The details about utilization of free time of the respondents are collected and given in table no.5.5.

TABLE NO .5.5.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **utilization of free time**

Sr. No.	Spending free time	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Gardening	10	6.3	5	3.6
2	Gossiping	51	31.9	18	12.9
3	Watching TV	60	37.5	35	25.0
4	Sing songs	8	5.0	26	18.6
5	Other	31	19.4	56	40.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

The table above indicates that 6% respondents of non-tribal communities and 4% respondents of the tribal communities have reported that they do gardening during their free time. Kitchen-garden or nurturing flower plants in the compound is very common both in tribal and non-tribal communities. 32% respondents in non-tribal reported that they gossip (chit-chat with friends) during their free time. Whereas only 13% respondents of tribal communities have reported they gossip during their free time. 38% respondents of non-tribal communities and 25% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they watch TV during their free time. 19% respondents of non-tribal and 40% tribal respondents have not specified any specific activities they do during their free. Singing songs during free time is found in 19% of the respondents of the tribal communities and among 5% among the non-tribal communities. Therefore it is observed that there is no consistent pattern followed in matters of the usage of free time.

5.7. ACCESS TO OUTSIDE WORLD

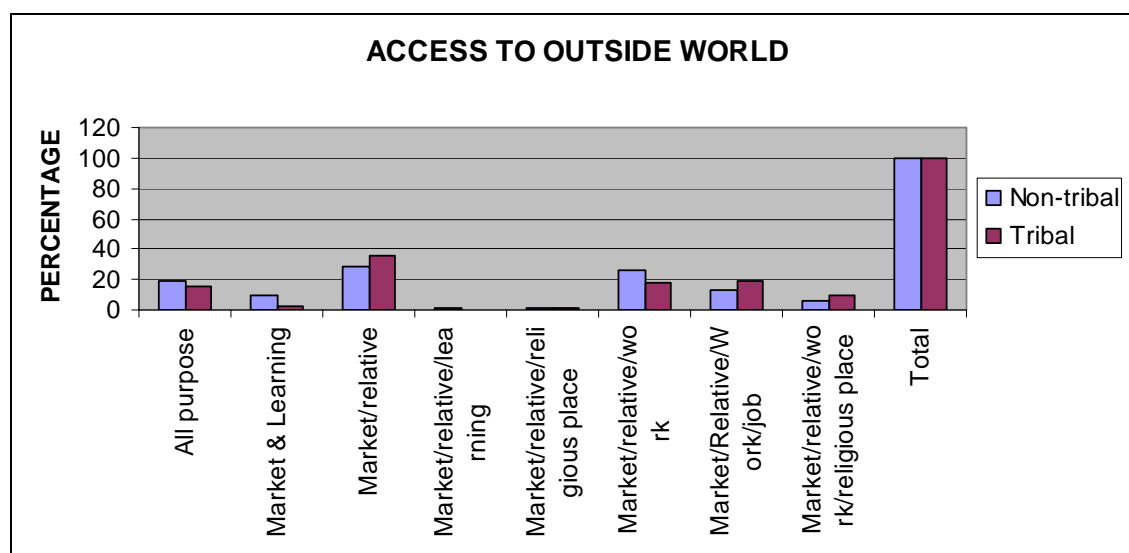
Access to the outside world is an excellent indicator of empowerment of women. As she develops her relationship with outside world and as she interacts with others during the course of marketing, schooling, work, attending religious functions, etc

she develops her personality and it automatically empower her. The detail about this is given in table no.5.6.

TABLE NO.5.6.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **access to outside world of house**

Sr. No.	Access	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	All purpose	30	18.8	21	15.0
2	Market & Learning	16	10.0	3	2.1
3	Market/relative	47	29.4	50	35.7
4	Market/relative/learning	2	1.3	00	00
5	Market/relative/religious place	1	.6	1	.7
6	Market/relative/work	42	26.3	25	17.9
7	Market/Relative/Work/job	21	13.1	26	18.6
8	Market/relative/work/religious place	1	.6	14	10.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table and graph above that 15% tribal respondents and 19% non-tribal respondents have reported that they have access to outside world for all purposes whereas only 2% tribal respondents and 10% non-tribal respondents have reported marketing and learning are the two main areas where they can interact with others. Considerably high proportion of 29% non-tribal and 36% tribal respondents have reported that marketing and visiting to relatives are the main reasons of interaction. About 18% respondents of Tribal communities and 26% non-tribal respondents have reported that market, visiting relatives or work place is the main areas where they can interact with others. About 19% tribal and 13% non-tribal respondents have reported that they have access to the outside in their work place.

5.8. TREATMENT METED TOWARDS THE DIVORCEE

Treatment given to divorced women is differs from community to community. In some Indian societies the woman or the girl is blames if her husband leaves her. Many communities do not look favorably at the divorced woman. Particularly in tribal communities the divorced woman is treated very low. She is looked down upon in the family as well as in the society. Women who are employed may have their social circle but those who are not employed may not have any friends. The life of such woman is miserable. Even if she goes back to her parents' home she gets secondary status and neglected even by her own parents. Detail information on treatment of the divorced is collected & given in table no.5.7.

TABLE NO.5.7.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about the **treatment to divorcee**

Sr. No.	Treatment	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	127	79.4	86	61.4
2	Criticized, but support later	2	1.3	00	00
3	Support	2	1.3	1	.7
4	Reject to some extend	00	00	1	.7
5	NRSP	29	18.1	52	37.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that 1% respondent of non-tribal communities reported that they are held responsible for being divorced. However many families support their daughters to a certain extent after knowing the cause of divorce. There is the equal proportion of the respondents say that they are being supported by their family members, relatives and the community in which they live. Considerable numbers of respondents have not responded to this. There is hardly any difference between tribal community and non-tribal community. Thus by and large the condition of divorced women is not favorable in both the communities.

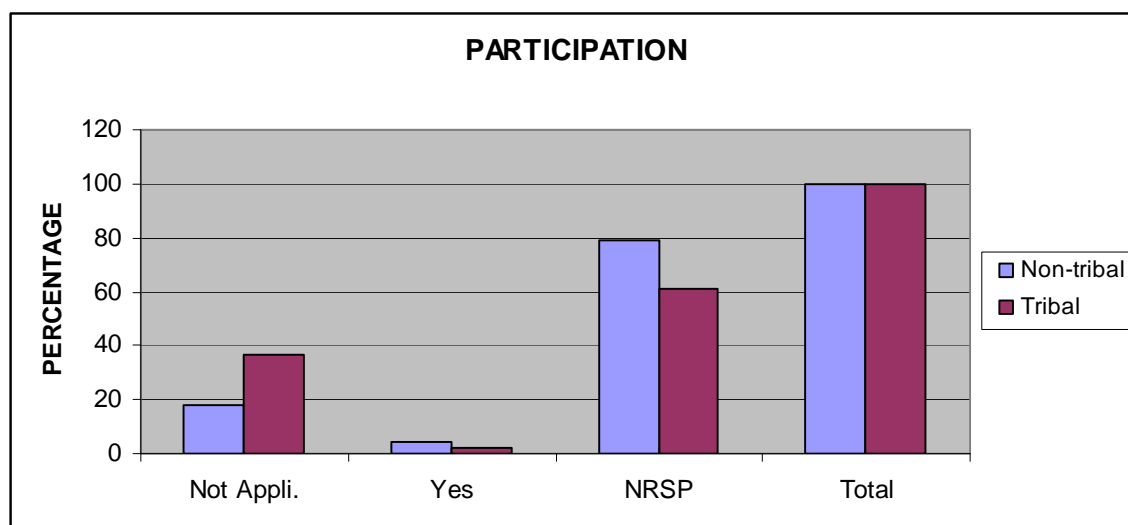
5.9. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Social activities always help woman to develop her personality and lift her social status. Participating in such activities makes her socialize, while exchanging her view with friends and family members. It is a process which helps to develop her potential in various fields. It also help her to remain active, develops her personality with the help of her own efforts. As regards to divorced, divorced itself is a social stigma for the divorced woman and sometimes it is difficult for them to participate in social activities. Information regarding active participation of divorced women in various social activities has been collected and given in table no.5.8.

TABLE NO.5.8.

Distribution of the respondents according to active participation in social activities

Sr. No.	Social activities	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Yes	4	2.5	2	1.4
3	NRSP	127	79.4	86	61.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table and graph above that all the divorced women in both the communities reported that they take part in social activities. There is not much difference in this regards. 79% of the respondents of non-tribal communities and 61% respondents of the tribal communities who did not respond to this question are not divorced. Therefore it is observed that participation of the divorced in social activities is observed in both the communities.

5.10. WIDOWS RESIDENCE – WITH OR WITHOUT CHILDREN

After the death of the husband, a woman (widow) has to stay either with her parents or with her in-laws. A place to stay depends also upon the age of the widow and number of children she has. If she is young and has no child, she prefers or has

to go back to her parents. But if she has a child/children she prefers to stay with her children either in her husband's house or independently with the children. Apart from that if she is self-reliant or financially independent she always prefers to stay alone along with her children. But if she is dependent she has to live in a miserable condition under the control of her in-laws. This shows that a majority of women who become widows do have the privilege of choosing where to live. This aspect is an excellent indicator of women empowerment. Details in this regards is collected & given in table no.5.9.

TABLE NO.5.9.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **staying with children**

Sr. No.	Staying with children	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not applicable	157	98.1	133	95.0
2	Stayed with my children	3	1.9	7	5.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that widows of 2% respondents of non-tribal communities and 5% respondents of tribal communities are widowed and all of them responded by saying that they prefer to live independently with their children. It is observed that there is no difference in the perception among the widows in both the tribal and non-tribal communities. Preference to stay with children is more prevalent.

TABLE NO.5.10.

Distribution of the respondents according to the person **controlling family property of widow women**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	In-laws	3	1.9	5	3.6
3	NRSP	127	79.4	83	59.3
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that after the husband died woman (widowed) has no control over the husband's property. About 2% of the respondents of non-tribal communities and 4% respondents of tribal communities reported that their property is being controlled by the in-laws. The overall picture shows that widows have no power to control their property after the death of her husband.

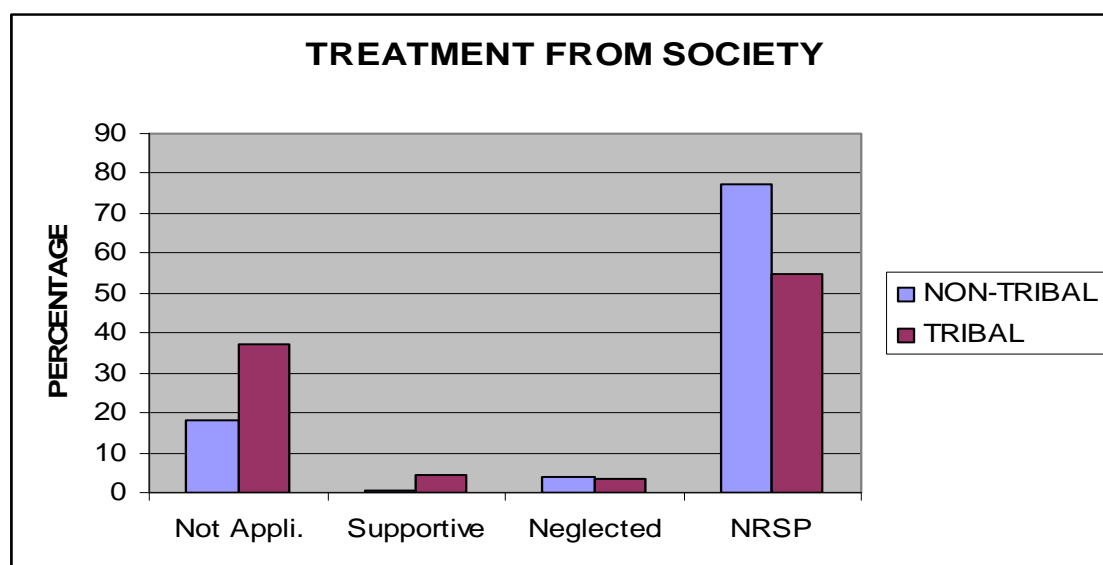
5.11. TREATMENT TO THE WIDOWS

Widows are treated differently in different communities. In some communities she is sympathized and morally supported however many times she gets blamed for any unfortunate event that takes place in the family. Treatment of widows also depends upon the culture of the family. In advanced and educated family chances are there that she gets support whereas in traditional family she always remained neglected and denied freedom. The detailed information in this regards is given in table no.5.11.

TABLE NO.5.11.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **treatment of divorced, widows and separated women from the society**

Sr. No.	Treatment	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Supportive	1	.6	6	4.3
3	Neglected	6	3.8	5	3.6
4	NRSP	124	77.5	77	55.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table and graph above that about 4% respondents of tribal communities and hardly 1% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they get support from their family or community. And the same proportions of 4% respondents of tribal communities and non-tribal communities have reported that they are neglected by their parents or the family members of husband's or community. Thus it is observed that proper treatment of widows is comparatively more in tribal communities than non-tribal communities.

5.12. WHETHER WIDOWHOOD OR DIVORCE HAS EFFECTED CHANGE IN SOCIAL STATUS

There are many factors that contribute to the social status of a woman in the community that she is part of. It is very commonly observed in the Indian set up that the woman who is married and that too at the right age is well respected however her identity is linked with her husband's. On the other hand it is also observed that the woman who remains unmarried for some reason or other or who has been deserted or divorced or who is a widow is not looked at with much favor. There is a social stigma that these women carry with them. Based on this information details of their social status is given in the following table.

TABLE NO.5.12.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about change in **social status**

Sr. No.	Social Status	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Low	6	3.8	5	3.6
3	No change	1	.6	6	4.3
4	NRSP	124	77.5	77	55.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that equal proportion of about 4% respondents of non-tribal and 4% respondents of tribal communities have reported that their social status is lowered. About 1% respondents of non-tribal communities and 4% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they do not observe any change in their social status. Thus it is observed that lower social status of widows, divorcees or deserted women is observed in both tribal and non-tribal communities in Manipur.

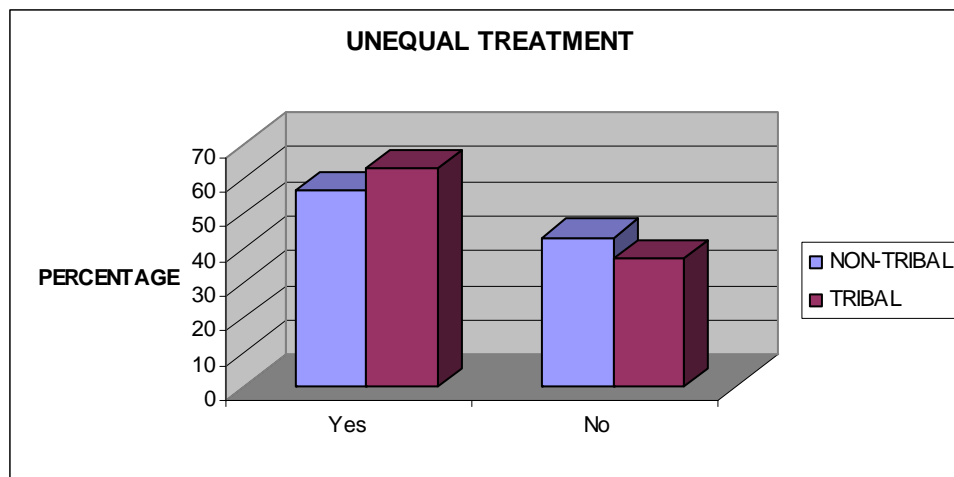
5.13. GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Gender discrimination has been practiced since ancient India, where women were considered to be mere commodities to be bought and sold and auctioned in a fight or game. Even today where modernization and liberalization has changed the condition of women, we see that gender discrimination is practiced in almost all walks of life. Gender discrimination is part of almost all the communities not only in India but throughout the world. One can imagine what it would be like in tribal communities where mostly ignorance over-rides rationality. This gender bias definitely contributes to the degeneration of the process of empowerment among women, not only in Manipur but also in the other parts of India. Gender bias is practiced in the family, in educational institutes, in government and private sectors, in the field of politics, religion etc. Women are generally sidelined as they are considered to be the weaker section of society. Most of the Indian families prefer a male child to that of a female thus gender bias begins in the womb itself. In spite having tremendous potentials the girl child mostly neglected. Detail information about the unequal treatment meted out to the girl child is collected and given in table no.5.13.

TABLE NO.5.13.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **unequal treatment meted to the girl child**

Sr. No.	Reasons	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	91	56.9	88	62.9
2	No	69	43.1	52	37.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table and graph above that unequal treatment is meted out to women both in tribal as well as non-tribal communities. About 57% of the respondents of non-tribal communities reported that they are not treated equally not only in their families but also in their communities. 63% of the respondents of tribal communities have reported that they are not treated equally both in their family environment as well as in their communities. 43% respondents of non-tribal communities reported that they enjoy equal status with men in their homes as well as the communities. Only 37% respondents of tribal communities reported that they get equal treatment. The above figures indicate that unequal treatment is observed to a greater extent among the tribal communities than the non-tribal communities. However, gender discrimination is pre-dominantly observed in both the communities. This discrimination definitely has contributed to the slowing down of the process of empowerment.

5.14. FREQUENCY OF UNEQUAL TREATMENT

In spite of the gender discrimination in both communities the frequency of discrimination varies from place to place, especially in the rural and urban regions. It also varies depending upon the educational level of family members. The detail information about the frequency of unequal treatment is collected and given in table no.5.14.

TABLE NO. 5.14.

Distribution of the respondents according to the perception about **frequency of unequal treatment**

Sr. No.	Frequency of unequal treatment	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Always	6	3.8	11	7.9
2	Sometimes	48	30.0	40	28.6
3	Occasionally	37	23.1	37	26.4
4	NRSP	69	43.1	52	37.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that about 4% of the respondents of non-tribal communities have said that they are always treated unequally in the family as well as in the community too. About 8% of the respondents of tribal communities have reported that always they get unequal treatment from their family/community. About 30% respondents of both communities have reported that sometimes they are not treated equally. 23% respondents of non-tribal communities and 27% of respondents of tribal communities have reported that they get unequal treatment occasionally. About 43% respondents of non-tribal communities and 37% of tribal communities have not remained neutral to this question. Thus, from this analysis it can be concluded that unequal treatment or gender discrimination is higher in tribal communities as compared to the tribal communities.

5.15. MEANS OF ILL-TREATMENT

There are several ways in which a woman is ill-treated. Using abusive language towards them, wife battering, sexual abuse, eve-teasing, psychological harassment, are the ways in which the women is meted out with ill-treatment. Domineering approach of husband and in-laws too is a form of ill-treatment. The detail information about the means of ill-treatment has been collected and given in table no.5.15.

TABLE NO.5.15.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **means of ill-treatment**

Sr. No.	Means of ill-treatment	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Abusive language	33	20.6	14	10.0
2	Abusive & Mental	0	0	11	7.9
3	Beating	0	0	6	4.3
4	Dominating	4	2.5	3	2.1
5	Mental	30	18.8	38	27.1
6	Teasing	24	15.0	16	11.4
7	NRSP	69	43.1	52	37.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is noticed from the table above that that there exists a large variation between tribal communities and non-tribal communities in the form of ill-treatment of women. About 21% respondents of non-tribal communities reported that they are ill-treated by their family as well as the community by abusive language whereas 10% respondents of tribal community have reported that they are ill-treated by abusive language. About 8% respondents of tribal community reported that they are ill-treated by being exposed to abusive language and mentally torture. 4% respondents of tribal community reported that they are battered by the husbands. Use of abusive language is observed more in non-tribal communities whereas wife battering is prominent in tribal communities. When it comes to male domination both the communities have shown equal proportion. Mental torture and physical harassment is also prominent among tribal communities. Eve-teasing is another mode of ill-treatment that the women in both the communities face in their day to day existence. The same proportion of eve-teasing is reported by the respondents of

both the communities. About 43% respondents of non-tribal communities and 37% respondents of tribal communities did not respond to this question.

5.16. PERPRETATORS OF ILL-TREATMENT

There are numerous ways and means of ill-treatment meted out to the women who are generally attacked by men they know. Studies have shown that a great percentage of women are abused and ill-treated by their own family members followed by a small percentage of strangers. After marriage the in-laws may harass for dowry or a male child. The woman is also harassed in her workplace by her superiors and colleagues. The details about sources of ill treatment is collected and given in table no.5.16.

TABLE NO.5.16.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about the **perpetrators of ill-treatment**

Sr. No.	Perpetrators of ill-treatment	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Employer	1	.6	2	1.4
2	Husband	12	7.5	16	11.4
3	In-laws	12	7.5	7	5.0
4	Male colleague/ Friends /classmates	4	2.5	4	2.9
5	Male friends	22	13.8	23	16.4
6	Other males	34	21.3	31	22.1
7	Parents	6	3.8	5	3.6
8	NRSP	69	43.1	52	37.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above, that male friends and other males in the society are the main perpetrators of ill-treatment of the women. About 1% respondents of both

the tribal and non-tribal communities reported that their employers ill-treated them. 7% respondents in non-tribal communities and 11% respondents in tribal communities reported that they face violence at the hands of their husbands. 8% respondents of non-tribal and 5% respondents of the tribal communities said that they are ill-treated by the in-laws. Ill-treatment by the husband is observed more in the tribal communities, whereas harassment by in-laws is observed more among the non-tribal communities. The same proportion about 3% respondents in both the communities reported that they are ill-treated by the male colleagues, friends and classmates. About 14% respondents of non-tribal communities and 16% of tribal community have reported that they are ill-treated by their male friends. About 37% respondents of tribal communities and 43 % respondents' non-tribal communities have not responded to this question. Thus the overall picture proves that women face violence and are ill-treated by men and family members whom they know well that too in places they would consider as safe that is their home.

5.17. REACTION TOWARDS ILL-TREATMENT

It is human nature or natural phenomenon for anyone to react to any kind of treatment, whether it is good or bad. Mostly the women of the Indian society are brought up to tolerate subjugation and unjust treatment. Many women are also taught to bear the violence meted out to them by their husbands or in-laws. At times family members exert pressure on the woman not to react to such kind of indifferent treatment. Naturally this unhealthy trend has slowed down the process of empowerment. However, as the educational level rises they are more aware of their fundamental rights and raise their voices. The expression of their reaction itself is a process of empowerment. Educated women may adopt various means to express her views. The detail information about the reaction of women to ill-treatment is collected and given in table no.5.17.

TABLE NO.5.17.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **reactions to ill-treatment**

Sr. No.	Nature of reaction	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Articulating my view	6	3.8	17	12.1
2	Keeping quiet	76	47.5	66	47.1
3	Protest my right	9	5.6	5	3.6
4	NRSP	69	43.1	52	37.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table that almost half of the respondents do not express their reactions. The same proportion of 47% each in both tribal and non-tribal communities reported that they just keep quiet and do not express their feelings when ill-treated. 12% respondents in tribal communities reported that they articulate their views when ill-treated whereas only 4% respondents in non-tribal community reported that they articulate their views. There are hardly 6% respondents in non-tribal community and 4% respondents in tribal community protests their views when ill-treated. About 37% respondents in tribal community and 43% respondents in non-tribal community have not responded to this question. Thus it is observed that women of both the communities tolerate ill-treatment meted out by family members or the society as a whole. This is one of the main challenges to initiate the process of women empowerment.

5.18. WORK ON OWN FARM

Domestic work is very much significant and inherent part of a woman's life. Though women are educated and are earning members in the family they have to undertake domestic work. Women in rural areas have multiple roles to play. They have to do house work and at the same time assist and work hand in hand with their male counterparts at farms or in the fields. Detail information about their contribution in their own farm has been collected and given in table no.5.18.

TABLE NO.5.18.Distribution of the respondents according to **work on ones own farm**

Sr. No.	Farm	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	141	88.1	14	10.0
2	Yes	1	.6	59	42.1
3	No	18	11.3	67	47.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table that almost half that is 42% respondents of tribal communities reported that they are involved in agricultural activities. Whereas hardly 1% of the respondents of non-tribal communities reported that they work on farms or fields. One can assume that in tribal communities women have to work because they are not able hire agricultural laborers. 13% respondents of non-tribal and 48% respondents of tribal communities reported that they do not work on their own farm. 88% respondents of non-tribal communities and 10% respondents of tribal communities are not concerned with this question which means they do not engage in any productive activity or have any farm or field. Thus it is observed that women working on their own farms are more in tribal communities than in the non-tribal communities.

5.19. SIZE OF LAND

Agriculture is the main occupation of rural India. Perhaps it is the backbone of Indian economy. About 70% of the population of India depends upon the agricultural sector. Since the last three to four decades, gradual fragmentation of agricultural land has been taking place due to rapid growth of population. Population is increasing hence; the land is being fragmented into small pieces. If the family is not able to meet their basic needs from agriculture they migrated to the urban areas or to some other neighboring villages in search of employment opportunities. Therefore there is close relationship between migration, employment

and occupation. The details about the possession of agriculture land and the size of land is collected and given in table no.5.19.

TABLE NO.5.19.

Distribution of the respondents according to **size of land (big/small)**

Sr. No.	Size	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Big*	18	11.3	24	17.1
2	Small**	1	.6	35	25.0
3	NRSP	159	99.4	81	59.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

(* More than 5 acres, ** Less than 5 acres)

It is seen from table above that there are 17% respondents of tribal communities and 11% respondents of non-tribal communities who reported that they have big farms which constitute more than 5 acres. 25% respondent of tribal communities and hardly 1% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they have a small land holding that is less than 5 acres. As compared to non-tribal communities, more respondents in tribal communities depend on farming and agriculture. However large landholdings are observed more in non-tribal than the tribal communities.

5.20. LAND ON LEASE

Though some families do not possess agricultural land of their own, they take others land on lease and carry out agricultural activities. The detail is given in this regard in table no.5.20.

TABLE NO.5.20.Distribution of the respondents according to **land lease**

Sr. No.	Lease	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Leased	5	3.1	27	19.3
2	NRSP	155	96.9	113	80.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that only 3% of the non-tribal families have taken the land on lease. Whereas in tribal communities about 20% of families have taken the land on lease. Thus it is observed that women belonging to tribal communities engaged more in farming activities than the non-tribal women are.

5.21. WOMENS ROLE IN THE FARM**TABLE NO.5.21.**Distribution of the respondents according to **women's role in the farm**

Sr. No.	Nature of role	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	All kinds of work	1	.6	18	12.9
2	Co-partner with men	4	2.5	39	27.9
3	Mowing, Planting, Weeding, harvesting	1	.6	29	20.7
4	NRSP	154	96.3	54	38.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

In continuation of earlier two tables [5.19 and 20] hardly 1% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they do all kinds farming activities, whereas significant proportion of tribal women reported that they are engaged in all kinds of

work on their farming. 28% respondents of tribal community have reported that they are the co-partner with men/husband whereas hardly 3% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they are co-partner with men on farm. And about 21% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they are involve in sowing, ploughing, planting, weeding, mowing and harvesting. 39% respondents in tribal community and 96% respondents in non-tribal community have not responded to this question. This clearly shows that the status of women in the family. Women in tribal community are actively and equally participating with men on farming than the non-tribal community. But the question remains whether they can equally participate in the decision-making process in the family as well as the society.

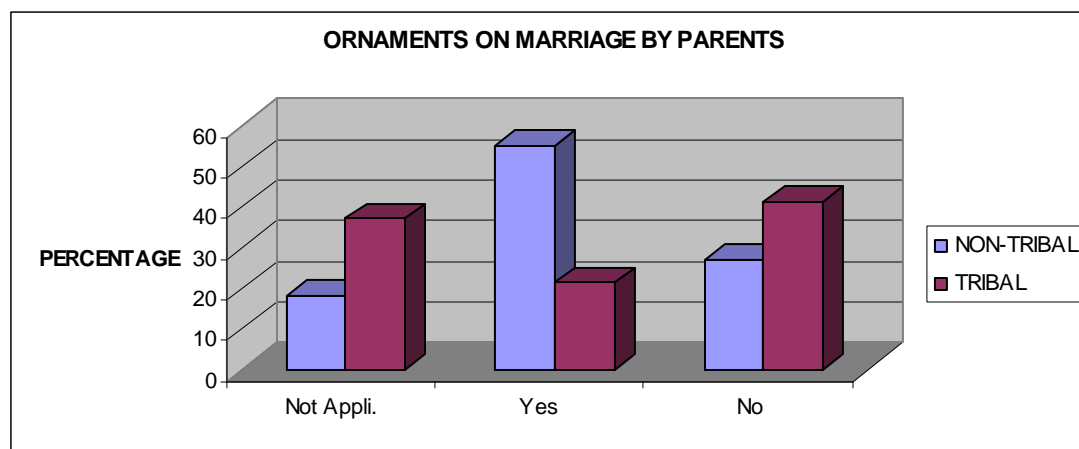
5.22. ADORNING OF ORNAMENTS DURING MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

The Indian womenfolk are characterized by their fondness of adorning themselves with ornaments of gold, silver and precious stones. They even display a yearning for artificial ornaments. Women specially adorn themselves with a lot of ornaments during special occasions such as marriage ceremonies or religious functions. Different kinds of ornaments are meant for different occasions. Even restrictions are imposed on which kind of ornament has to be worn by the girl and the woman. Each ornament has its own significance in a particular culture. Both in tribal and non-tribal communities, ornaments play a significant role in women's social life. Beauty of women always inherited in their social life. There are quite a lot of traditions when women have to wear particular type of ornament. Therefore, it is a custom and regular practiced that women are given ornaments as gifts by the parents on marriage especially in non-tribal community. The detail about the ornaments given in during marriage ceremonies by the parents is discussed in table no.5.22.

TABLE NO.5.22.

Distribution of the respondents according to receiving **ornamentals on marriage by parents**

Sr. No.	Ornaments	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Yes	88	55.0	30	21.4
3	No	43	26.9	58	41.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table above that ornaments are mainly given by parents of the non-tribal communities whereas very less proportion of respondents have reported that they received ornaments from their parents. About 55% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they are given ornaments by their parents on the occasion of their marriage. Whereas only 21% of the respondents of tribal communities have reported that they are given ornaments by the parents on the occasion of marriage. 27% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they are not given any ornaments by their parents, whereas significant proportion that is 41% of the respondents of tribal communities reported that they did not get any ornament on occasion of their marriage. This table clearly shows that among

tribal communities, gifts in the form of ornaments are not given as compared to that of the non-tribal communities. One point to be noted here is that in the tribal communities, the practice giving of ornaments by the parents is uncommon., However in non-tribal communities exchange of ornaments or gift in the form of ornaments passed on from their ancestor is prevalent.

5.23. VALUE OF ORNAMENTS

In continuation of earlier table the following table shows the value of ornaments. The value of ornaments mainly depends upon the economic condition of parents. If the parents are financially well of they can give more valuable ornaments to their daughters. The following table no.5.23. shows the broad classification of the value of ornaments.

TABLE NO.5.23.

Distribution of the respondents according to the **total value of ornaments**

Sr. No.	Value of ornaments	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Not specific	13	8.1	12	8.6
3	Upto 10,000	47	29.4	7	5.0
4	Upto 20,000	14	8.8	7	5.0
5	Upto 30,000	25	15.6	3	2.1
6	50,000 and above	32	20.0	1	.7
7	NSRP	00	00	58	41.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that the value of ornaments ranges between 10 to 50 thousand rupees. About 8-9% respondents both in tribal and non-tribal communities have reported that they cannot state the specific value of the ornaments given to them. About 5% respondents of tribal communities and 30% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they obtained ornaments

from their parents which is up Rs.10, 000. There are 5% respondents of tribal community and 8% respondents of non-tribal community have reported that they got ornaments which costs upto Rs.20, 000. There are 15% respondents from non-tribal community and only 2% from tribal community have reported that they got ornaments which upto Rs.30, 000. Significantly about 20% respondents of non-tribal community have reported that they are given ornament which value more than Rs.50, 000 whereas hardly 1% respondents in tribal community in this category. 41% respondents of tribal community did not respond to this question. Higher value of ornaments is observed in non-tribal community than tribal community.

5.24. CUSTODIAN OF ORNAMENTS

As per Hindu marriage act 1955, the ornaments presented to the woman either by her parents or husband's parents is considered as the property of woman. In legal terms it is considered as a streedhan. It is general practice that all the ornaments are kept in custody of either the husband or in laws but in some cases if a woman is educated or employed she may be a custodian of it. The detail about the same is given in table no.5.24.

TABLE NO.5.24.

Distribution of the respondents according to **custodian of ornaments**

Sr. No.	Custodian	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Husband/ in-laws	48	30.0	7	5.0
3	Myself	83	51.9	25	17.9
4	No ornament	29	18.1	52	37.1
5	NRSP	00	00	58	41.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that 5% respondents of tribal communities have reported that the husband or in-laws are the custodians of the ornaments brought by the woman, whereas only 13% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that husband or in-laws are the custodians of the ornaments. 52% respondents of non-tribal communities and 18% respondents of tribal communities reported that they are the custodians of the ornaments. This indicates higher percentage of women in the non-tribal communities own ornaments than the tribal women. 18% respondents of non-tribal communities and 37% of tribal communities are unmarried are not applicable to this question. 41% respondents of tribal community do not answer to this question. Thus it is observed that the custodians of the ornaments of the women are mainly the in-laws among the non-tribal communities than the tribal communities.

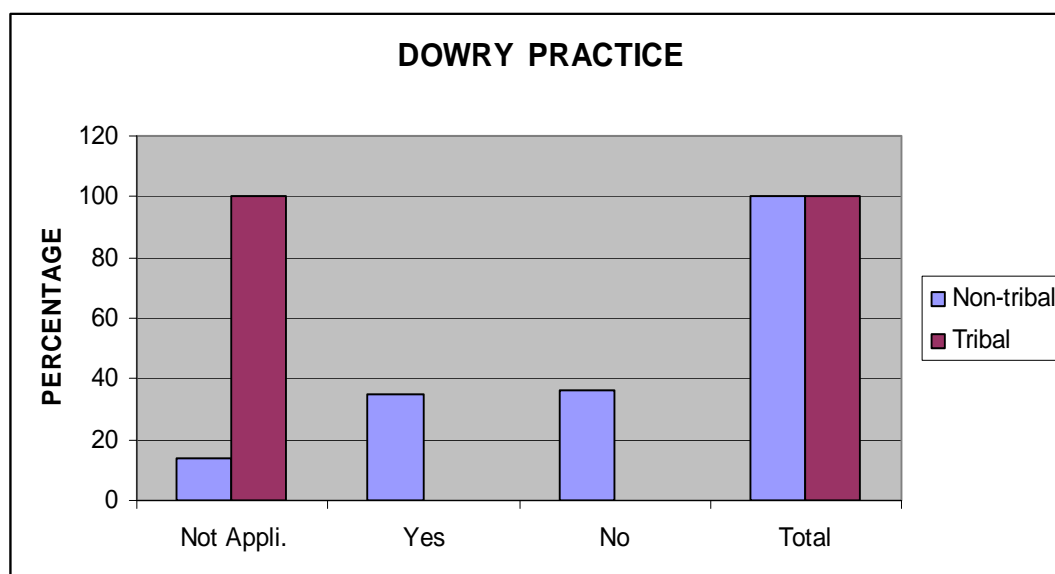
5.25. DOWRY IN MARRIAGE

Dowry is one of the social evils that exist in most parts of the India. The rate of dowry related deaths is increasing in this modern age. However dowry is also not practiced in many sections of the Indian community. Tribals in Manipur do not practice dowry. The details about the practice of dowry is collected and given in table no.5.25.

TABLE NO.5.25.

Distribution of the respondents according to **dowry practice in marriage**

Sr. No.	Dowry practice	Non Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	22	13.8	140	100.0
2	Yes	56	35.0	00	00
3	No	57	35.6	00	00
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table above that in tribal communities dowry is not normally practiced, whereas in non-tribal communities, 35% of the respondents have reported that dowry is given at the time of marriage while 36% of the respondents of non-tribal communities reported that they do not give any dowry on marriage.

The detail value of dowry is given in following table no.5.26.

TABLE NO.5.26.

Distribution of the respondents according to the **value of dowry**

Sr. No.	Value of dowry	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	2	1.3	00	00
2	No dowry	102	63.8	140	100.0
3	Not specific	14	8.8	00	00
4	10,000	1	.6	00	00
5	30,000	10	6.3	00	00
6	40,000	7	4.4	00	00
7	50,000 and above	24	15.0	00	00
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that about 9% respondents of non-tribal communities reported that they do not know the exact value of the dowry given on the occasion of marriage. Hardly 1% of the respondents of non-tribal communities reported that the value of dowry given is Rs.10, 000. 6% respondents reported that it was Rs.30, 000 while 4% respondents reported that it was Rs.40, 000 and significantly 15% respondents of non-tribal communities reported that the value of dowry given on their marriage was above Rs.50, 000.

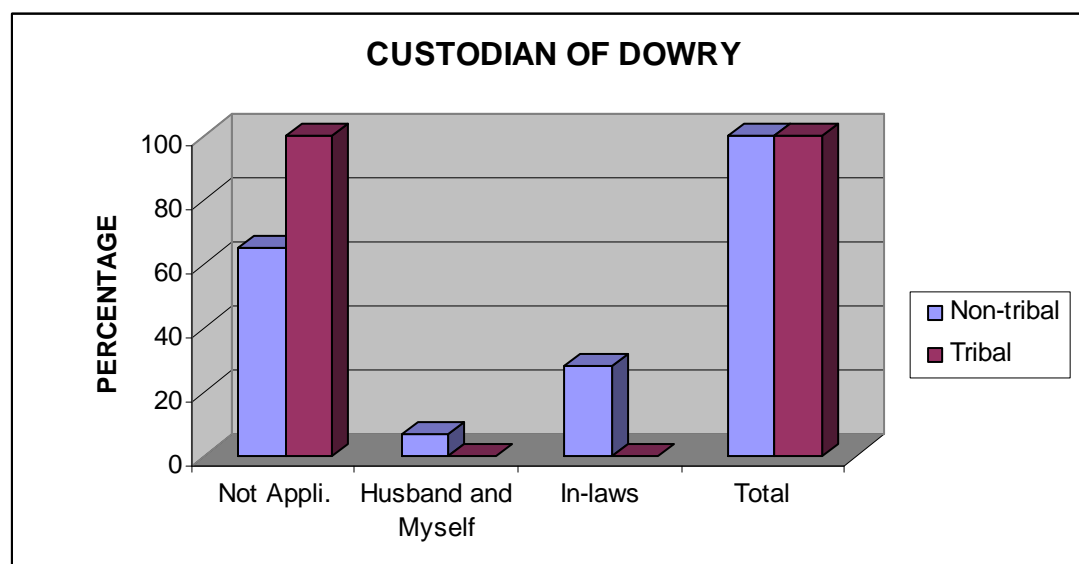
5.26. CUSTODIAN OF DOWRY

Information provided about the custodian of dowry is shown on Table no.5.27.

TABLE NO.5.27.

Distribution of the respondents according to the **custodian of dowry**

Sr. No.	Custodian	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	104	65.0	140	100.0
2	Husband and Myself	11	6.9	00	00
3	In-laws	45	28.1	00	00
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.00



It is seen from the table above that about 28% respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that their in-laws are the custodians of dowry that they bring. Only 7% respondents have reported that they themselves or their husbands are the custodians of dowry they bring. Thus it is observed that the in-laws are the main custodians of dowry. Women hardly have power or say in regards to ownership of dowry.

5.27. BRIDE PRICE

In the tribal communities the custom of dowry is not prevalent; however there is a customary law or practice of bride price. In such a practice, the groom's parents give money or material gifts to the bride's parents at the time of marriage. This is nothing but to honor the bride's parents and value the bride. The detail about the bride price is given in table no.5.28.

TABLE NO.5.28.

Distribution of the respondents according to **bride-price on your marriage**

Sr. No.	Bride-pride	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	160	100.0	00	00
2	Yes	00	00	62	44.3
3	No	00	00	16	11.4
4	NRSP	00	00	62	44.3
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that the non-tribals communities do not practice bride-price, however it is a common practice seen among the tribal communities. 44% respondents of tribal communities reported that their parents received bride-price at the occasion of their marriage while 11% respondents have reported that no bride-price is received by their parents on the occasion of their marriage. 44%

respondents of tribal community did not response to this question.

TABLE NO.5.29.

Distribution of the respondents according to **value of bride-price**

Sr. No.	Reasons	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	160	100.0	00	00
2	Don't know	00	00	22	15.7
3	Upto 10,000	00	00	31	22.1
4	10,000 and above	00	00	9	6.4
5	NRSP	00	00	78	55.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that 16% respondents of tribal community reported that they do not know the exact value of the bride price given to them at the time of marriage. 22% of the respondents reported that the amount is up to Rs.10, 000 rupees. About 6% of the respondents reported that the value of the bride-price is more than Rs.10, 000 rupees. About 56% of the respondents did not respond to this question.

It is seen that bride-price is practiced more commonly in tribal communities whereas dowry is practiced only in non-tribal communities. In tribal communities, women are sometimes criticized of being costly by the in-laws. An informal question was asked whether she is criticized of being costly by the husband or in-laws because of bright price. The details about the same are given in table no.5.30.

TABLE NO.5.30.Distribution of the respondents according to **criticized of being costly**

Sr. No.	Criticized of being costly	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	160	100.0	77	55.0
2	Sometimes	00	00	10	7.1
3	Never	00	00	1	.7
4	No	00	00	52	37.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that 7% respondents have reported that they are criticized of being costly by the husband or in-laws sometimes. Thus it is observed that bride-prize is just to show honor to the bride's parents or valued the bride, however it sometimes become an element of making woman's life difficult and miserable.

5.28. MEHR IN MUSLIM COMMUNITY

In the sample size there are 20 Muslim respondents (3.7%) dowry and bride price are not practiced by the Muslim community, but Mehr is practiced. Mehr is also one form of dowry or bride price. The detail about the same is given in table no.5.31.

TABLE NO.5.31.Distribution of the respondents according to **receiving mehr on marriage**

Sr. No.	Mehr	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	144	90.0	140	100.0
2	Yes	16	10.0	00	00
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

According to the above table 10% respondents (which is 100% of Muslim community) of non-tribal communities have reported that the parents received Mehr at the time of marriage. Mehr is a practice only seen in the Muslim community, the Hindu non-tribals and the Christian tribals do not practice Mehr. Mehr is just like bride-price in tribal communities and dowry among the Hindu non-tribal communities.

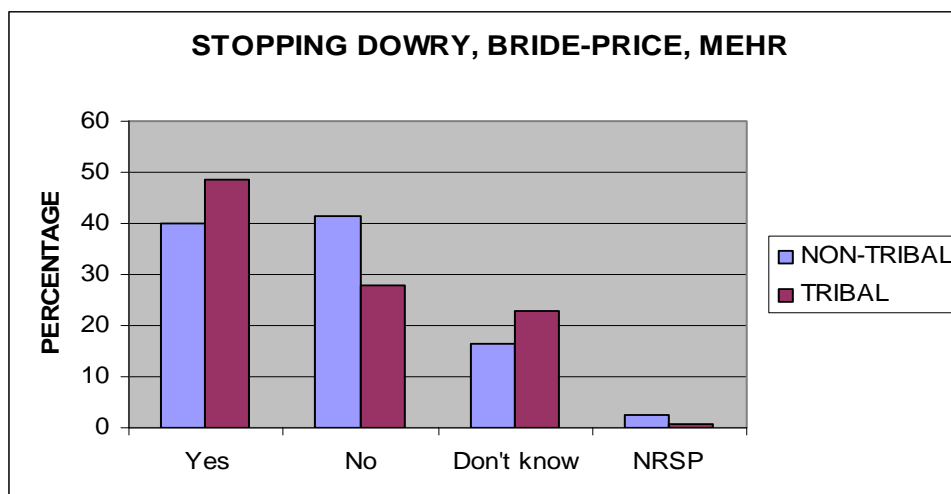
5.29. PERCEPTION ABOUT AVOIDANCE OF THE PRACTICE OF DOWRY, BRIDE PRICE OR MEHR

Educated women in all the communities know the seriousness of the ill-effects of dowry, bride price and Mehr. Detail information collected about the perception to stop the practice of dowry, bride-price and Mehr is given in table no.5.32.

TABLE NO.5.32.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **avoidance of the practice of dowry, bride-price, mehr**

Sr. No.	Reasons	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	64	40.0	68	48.6
2	No	66	41.3	39	27.9
3	Don't know	26	16.3	32	22.9
4	NRSP	4	2.5	1	.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

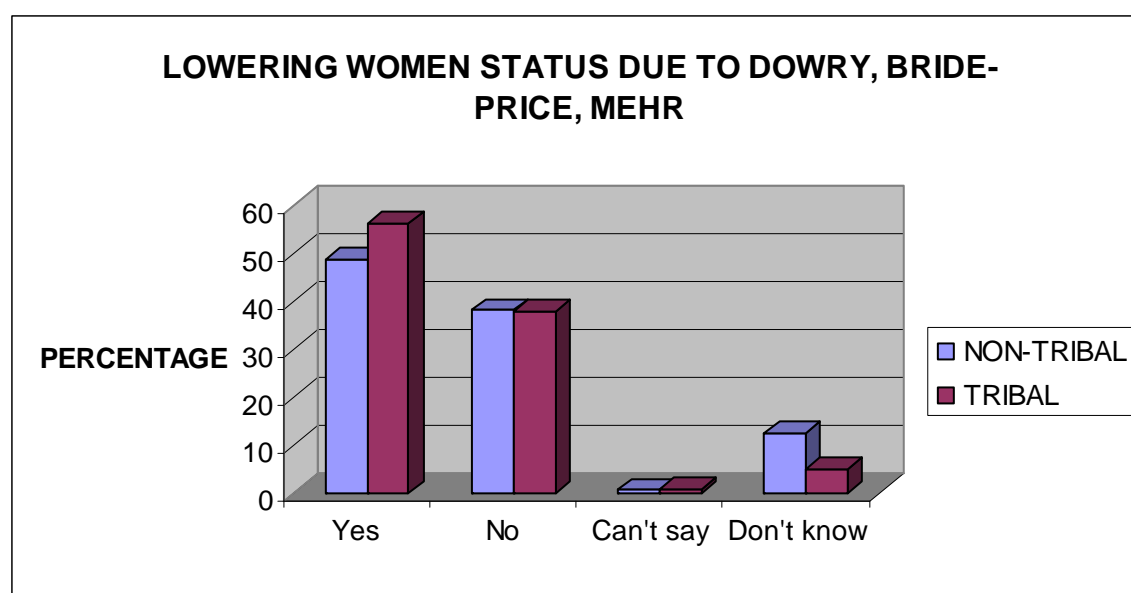


It is seen from the table above that about half of the respondents of tribal communities and 40% respondents of non-tribal communities reported that such practices as dowry, bride price and Mehr should be stopped. About 28% respondents of tribal communities and 42% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that this practice should not be stopped as it is a part of their culture. 23% respondents of tribal communities and 16% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they are not aware or they don't know any thing about the implications of stopping dowry, bride price or Mehr. Keeping this background in mind an informal question was asked about whether these practices lower the status of women in the society or not. The detail about the same is given in table no.5.33.

TABLE NO.5.33.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **lowering the status of women due to dowry, bride-price, mehr**

Sr. No.	Lower the status	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	78	48.8	79	56.4
2	No	61	38.1	53	37.9
3	Can't say	1	.6	1	.7
4	Don't know	20	12.5	7	5.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table and graph above that 56% respondents of tribal communities and 49% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that the status of women is lower due to these practices whereas the same proportion of 38% respondents of both the communities have reported that these practices have nothing to do with the status of woman and does not lower the status of women in the society. Therefore it should not be stopped. About 13% respondents of non-tribal community and 5% respondents of tribal community have reported that they

are not aware about the social implications of this practice. Thus it is observed that considerable respondents from both communities have expressed that these practices should be stopped.

5.30. SHARE IN PARENT'S PROPERTY

As per the Hindu Marriage Act, daughter has been given an equal share in her parents' property. Though there are statutory provisions, one finds that it is not practiced in the society. Tribals are not exception to this, the data collected in this regards is presented in table no.5.34&35.

TABLE NO.5.34.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **a share in parents property**

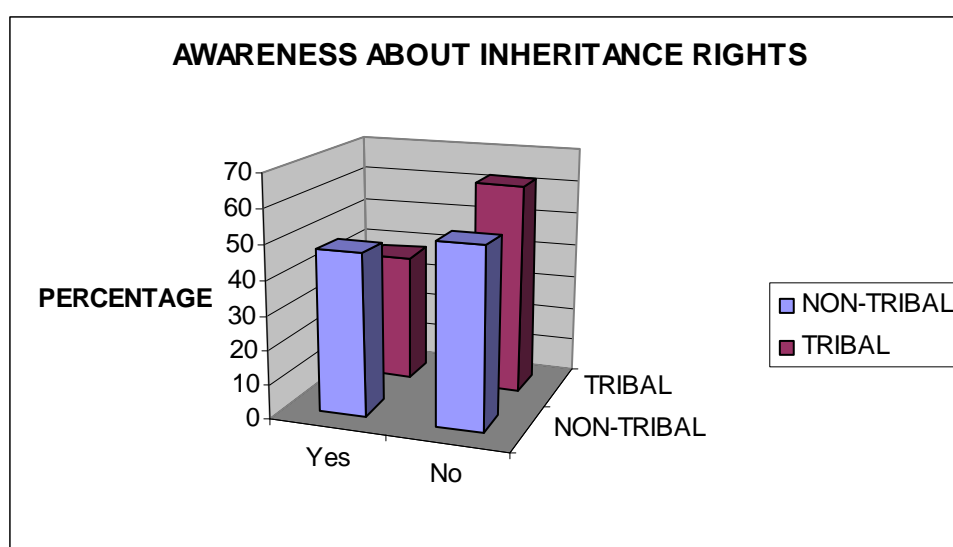
Sr. No.	Share	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	25	15.6	22	15.7
2	No	135	84.4	118	84.3
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table that the same proportion of 16% respondents on both tribal and non-tribal have reported that they get a share in their parents' property. Whereas about 84% respondents each of both the tribal and non-tribal communities reported that they do not have any share in their parents' property. This clearly indicates that majority of women belonging to both the communities do not have right to the parents' property. This is another element that obstructs the process of women empowerment.

TABLE NO.5.35.

Distribution of the respondents according to **awareness about inheritance rights**

Sr. No.	Awareness about inheritance rights	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	76	47.5	53	37.9
3	No	84	52.5	87	62.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



The table no 5.35 shows only half of the respondents of non-tribal communities and only 38% of respondents of the tribal communities are aware about the inheritance rights. This clearly indicates that about 55% respondents of non-tribal communities and 65% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they are not aware about inheritance rights. This also clearly indicates male dominance is still imminent in most of the Indian communities.

SUMMARY

This chapter deals with the relation of cultural factors and women empowerment. Monogamy is dominantly followed by both tribal and non-tribal communities in Manipur. With regards to child marriage practices, it is quite negligent in both the

communities. As most of the tribal communities are Christians, Christmas and Kut are the most favorite festivals celebrated by the tribal respondents. Holi, Ningolchakouba, Laiharaoba and Id are some of the most favorite festivals enjoyed by the non-tribal respondents. Celebrating all the festivals are also observed among 11% of the tribal respondents and 6% non-tribal respondents. Gossiping, watching TV, weaving, gardening, visiting friends, arts & crafts are some of the activities and means of recreation for women during their free time. There is a large variation seen in the pattern of hobbies in both communities. In the non-tribal communities, arts and crafts are the most popular hobby, whereas in tribal communities reading is more popular. In non-tribal communities dance and reading show more and less the same trend, whereas gardening and singing is comparatively lesser. 15% tribal respondents and 19% non-tribal respondents have reported that they have access to the outside world for all purposes, such as going to the market place, visiting friends and relatives and work places some of the sources where women can interact with the outside world.

Mostly divorced women are not morally supported by both the communities. They are often criticized or neglected. However, there is no restriction of divorced women in participating in social activities in both the communities. There is no difference in the perception among the widows in both the tribal and non-tribal communities. However, supportive treatment is comparatively high in tribal communities than non-tribal communities. Lower social status of widows, divorcees and separated women is observed in both tribal and non-tribal communities. Gender discrimination is observed in both the communities; however, unequal treatment is higher in tribal communities than non-tribal communities. The overall picture shows that women are meted out with ill-treatment at the hand so their husbands, by male friends, and strange men in the society. In-laws are the main perpetrators of ill-treatment within the homes. Women in both the communities tolerate the ill-treatment given by family members or the society as a whole. This is one of the main challenges, to initiate the process of empowerment among women.

Women working on their own farms is observed more in tribal communities than non-tribal communities. As compared to non-tribal communities, more respondents of tribal communities depend on farming or agriculture. However large landholdings are observed more in non-tribal than the tribal communities. Dowry and Mehr is practiced only among the non-tribal communities whereas bride-price is practiced only in the tribal communities. As per the custodians of dowry is concerned, the in-laws are the main custodians of dowry. Most of the respondents in both communities have expressed that these practices (dowry, bride-price, mehr) should be stopped. Most of the respondents are not away of property rights. They also do not have a share in their parents' property. This is one of the elements that obstruct the process of women empowerment. Thus it is observed that the various cultural practices of the tribals as well as the non-tribals largely affect the process of empowerment of women in a negative manner.

CHAPTER VI

OCCUPATIONAL AND ECONOMICAL FACTORS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

6. INTRODUCTION

The term empowerment indicates enhancement of various capabilities of an individual. It also indicates strengthening the abilities of a person to cope with situation of crises. Capability to cope with crises situations indirectly indicates that the person has the ability to overcome the situation. As we said earlier, Indian society is generally a male dominated society thus all the powers are vested upon the husband even if a woman is educated and engaged in a well paid job. In such a situation woman does not have any power or say on the family resources and has to depend upon her husband for most of her needs.

However since the last few decades, the status of women has been elevated in various fields: educationally they are more advanced and have more opportunities to get well paid jobs and they are found to be shouldering most of the family responsibilities. Their access to the outside world has increased also they have more opportunities to take up various responsibilities and excel in every arena of competitive positions such as, managers, administrators, engineers, doctors or any other professions. This indicates that women proved themselves that they are not far behind the males.

The higher the educational level of the women, wider is their visions. The white collar jobs of today put woman in a commanding position in various fields and this automatically helps empowers the women. She gets an opportunity to interact with her colleagues. This interaction helps to exchange her thoughts and also stimulate to think of herself as a significant individual who can make a difference in the society. Molding her own future helps her to strengthen her personality. On this background of this information, this chapter deals with the various factors related to

employment and economical independence of the women which has contributed directly to their empowerment and how far this is true for the woman of the tribal as well as the non-tribal communities.

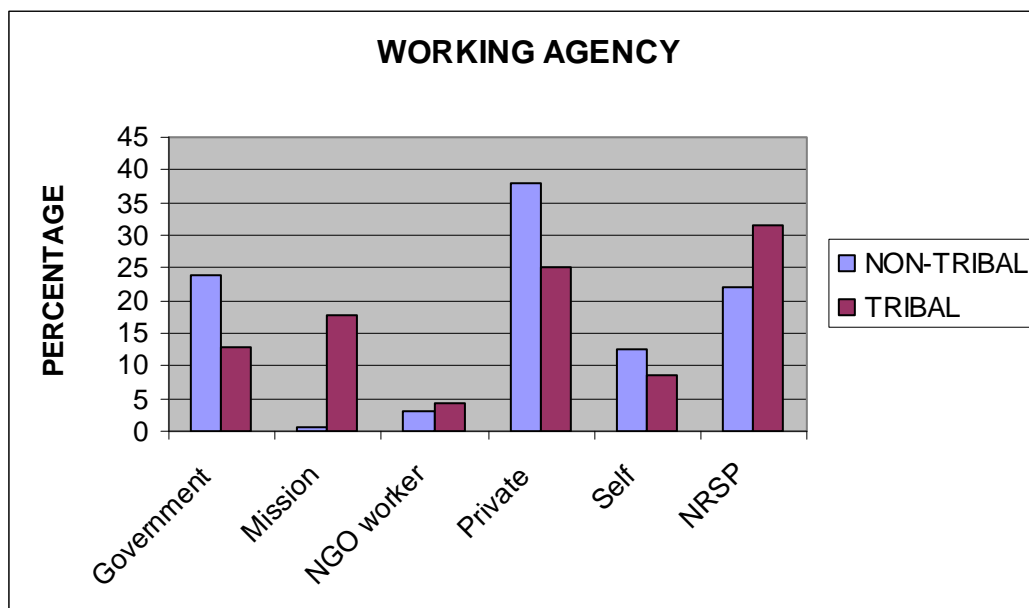
6.1. WORKING AGENCY

Education is one of the main instruments that help women to have opportunities to enter into various fields. As said earlier, since there are no big industries or business enterprises the government sector is the main source of employment. Private schools, hospitals and church organizations are some of the sources of employment for women apart from the government services. Small cottage industries where the individual's artistic talents are used to produce many things are also found but at a small scale level. The details about the place of employment is collected from respondents and given in table no.6.1.

TABLE NO.6.1.

Distribution of the respondents according to **working agency**

Sr. No.	Agency	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Government	38	23.8	18	12.9
2	Mission	1	.6	25	17.9
3	NGO worker	5	3.1	6	4.3
4	Private	61	38.1	35	25.0
5	Self	20	12.5	12	8.6
6	NRSP	35	21.9	44	31.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table above that 24% respondents of non-tribal community have reported that they work for the government whereas only 13% respondents of tribal communities reported that they work for the government. Hardly 1% respondents of non-tribal and significant 18% respondents of tribal community reported that they are working for the Christian Mission Organizations. 3% respondents of non-tribal and 4% respondents of tribal community reported that they are NGO workers. A remarkable number of 38% respondents of non-tribal and 25% respondents of tribal community reported that they are working in private sectors. 13% respondents of non-tribal reported that they are self-employed whereas only 5% respondents of tribal community respondents reported that they are self-employed. The same proportion of 30-31% respondents of both the communities did not respond to this question as they are not engaged in any paid job. Thus it can be said that the respondents of the non-tribal communities are employed to a great extent in government and private sectors. However, in tribal communities, Mission Organization and private sectors are the prominent sectors for their employment of the respondents. One point is to be noted here that the level of education is comparatively higher in the non-tribal community. Therefore, they get more opportunities to work in the government and private sectors at higher position.

6.2. REASONS FOR WORK

It is quite natural for an individual to seek higher education and better opportunities for employment. To become self-reliant is one of the important outcomes of empowerment. There are several perceptions about the reason for getting employed. As employment opportunity is closely associated with empowerment process the detailed information regarding their perception about the reasons of working is collected from the respondents and given in table no.6.2.

TABLE NO.6.2.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **reasons for work**

Sr. No.	Reasons	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Because I am educated	22	13.8	00	00
2	Support my family	49	30.6	47	33.6
3	To be financially independent	54	33.8	35	25.0
4	To serve God	00	00	14	10.0
5	NRSP	35	21.9	44	31.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that 14% respondents of non-tribal community have reported that they are working because they are educated. About 36% respondents of non-tribal community and the equal proportion of respondents of tribal community have reported that they need to help and support the family. Hence, they are working and supporting their family. About 34% respondents of non-tribal communities and 25% respondents of the tribal communities have reported that they want to become financially independent hence, they are working. 10% respondents of tribal community have reported that they are working because they want to serve God. 22% respondents of non-tribal community and 31% respondents of tribal community have not responded to this question. Thus we see a clear

distinction between tribal community and non-tribal community about their perception about reasons for employment.

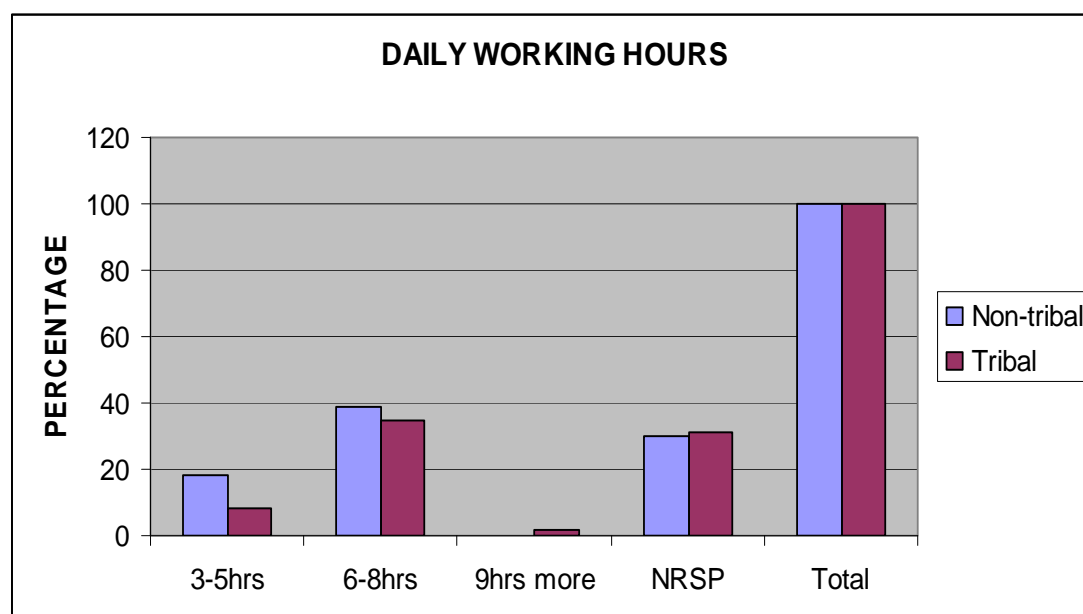
6.3. WORKING HOURS

In most parts of the world including India every individual generally has to work minimum eight hours in a day whether she is employed either in private or government sector. If she is engaged in self employment such as cottage industries which may be her own enterprise she may put in more than eight hours of work. The detail information in this regards has been collected and given in table no.6.3.

TABLE NO.6.3.

Distribution of the respondents according to **daily working hours**

Sr. No.	Working hours	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	No fix hrs	35	21.9	33	23.6
2	3-5hrs	28	17.5	11	7.9
3	6-8hrs	62	38.8	49	35.0
4	9hrs more	00	00	3	2.1
5	NRSP	35	21.9	44	31.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table above that 23-24% of respondents of non-tribal communities and tribal communities have reported that there are no fixed hours of work. About 18% respondents of non-tribal community and 7% respondents of tribal community have reported that they have to work minimum 6 hours, very negligible number about 2% of respondents of the tribal community have reported that they have to work more than 9 hours. About 22% respondents of non-tribal community and 31% respondents of tribal community have not responded to this question. Therefore it is quite evident that the minimum hours put into work per day is between six to eight hours among both respondents and considerable numbers of respondents do not have any fixed work hours.

6.4. WORKING DAYS

Number of working days in a week varies from region to region however, in government sector state government have five days a week is usually followed. In private sector number of working days in a week varies from organization to organization. For some private organizations the workers have to work for six to seven days in a week. Perhaps they do not have any fix days of working. The details about the working days of the respondents have been collected and given in table no.6.4.

TABLE NO.6.4.

Distribution of the respondents according to **working days**

Sr. No.	Working days	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Five days	28	17.5	35	25.0
2	Six days	77	48.1	55	39.3
3	Seven days	20	12.5	6	4.3
4	NRSP	35	21.9	44	31.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that there are 25% respondents of tribal community and 18% non-tribal community respondents have reported that they work five days in a week. About 40% respondents of tribal community and 48% respondents of non-tribal community have reported that they work 7 days in a week. Considerable number of respondents 22% of non-tribal and 31% of tribal community respectively has not responded to this question. Therefore it is seen more commonly that five to six working days is practiced among the people of Manipur. Moreover there is no significant difference seen between the tribal and non-tribal communities in this regard.

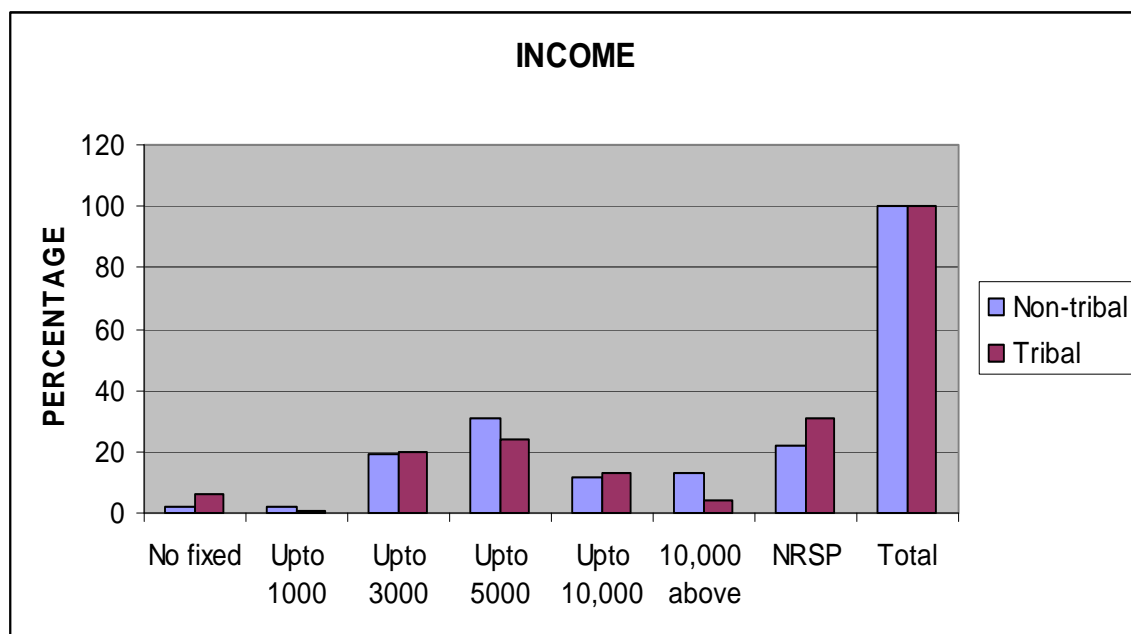
6.5. INCOME OF RESPONDENTS

In continuation of the earlier table the detail information about the income of the respondents have been collected and given in table no.6.5.

TABLE NO.6.5.

Distribution of the respondents according to **income**

Sr. No.	Income	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	No fixed	2	1.3	8	5.7
2	Upto 1000	3	1.9	2	1.4
3	Upto 3000	30	18.7	28	20.0
4	Upto 5000	50	31.3	34	24.3
5	Upto 10,000	19	11.9	18	12.9
6	10,000 and above	21	13.1	6	4.3
7	NRSP	35	21.9	44	31.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the above table that 1% respondents of non-tribal communities and 6% respondents of the tribal communities reported that they do not have a fixed income. One can assume that they are the respondents who are not engaged in any organized sector. The same proportions of 1-2% from both the communities have reported that their income per month is up to Rs.1, 000. About 19% respondents of the non-tribal communities and 20% respondents of tribal communities have monthly income up to Rs.3, 000. 31% respondents of non-tribal communities and only 24% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they get monthly income upto Rs.5, 000. The same proportions of 12% respondents of both communities have reported that their monthly income is upto Rs.10, 000. 13% respondents of non-tribal community and only 4% respondents of tribal community have reported that their monthly income is Rs.10, 000 above. A large variation between the monthly income of tribals and non-tribals has been observed. The proportion of respondents having income Rs.10, 000 above is found more in non-tribal communities whereas respondents whose income is upto Rs.3, 000 is more in tribal communities. In brief it can be said respondents in non-tribal communities have more income while respondents of the tribal communities have lesser income.

6.6. NATURE OF PAYMENT

Government has given specific instructions to private and public sectors about the nature of payment. People who are working as un-official workers or daily wages get their wages daily or monthly. Whereas people employed either in public or private sectors gets monthly salary. The details in this regard have been collected and given in table no.6.6.

TABLE NO.6.6.

Distribution of the respondents according to **nature of payment**

Sr. No.	Nature of Payment	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	44	31.4
2	No fixed	2	1.3	8	5.7
3	Daily	3	1.9	1	.7
4	Monthly	120	75.0	87	62.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that 1% respondents of non-tribal community and 6% respondents of tribal community have reported that there is not fixed date to receive their wages. 2% respondents of non-tribal and 1% respondents of tribal community reported that they get their wages daily. Most of the respondents in both community 75% in non-tribal and 62% of tribal community reported that they get their wages monthly. Thus it is observed that monthly payment is a usual practice in both tribal as well as non-tribal communities. In connection with the above table the details about the mode of payment have been collected and given in table no.6.7.

TABLE NO.6.7.Distribution of the respondents according to **mode of payment**

Sr. No.	Mode	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	44	31.4
2	Cash and Kind	2	1.3	7	5.0
2	Cash	123	76.9	89	63.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that 77% respondents of non-tribal community and 64 % of tribal community respondents have reported that they receive their wages in cash. While 1% respondents of non-tribal and 5% respondents of tribal community get their wages both in cash and kind. 22% respondents of non-tribal and 31% respondent of tribal community are not applicable to respond to this question as they are not engaged in any paid jobs. Thus the usual practice of payment is in terms of cash both among the tribal as well as the non-tribal communities.

6.7. PERCEPTION ABOUT LESS WAGES THAN MALE

Gender discrimination is a natural phenomenon which is observed even today in every society. Though there are tough rules about equal wages for equal work to men and women. In spite of such statutory provision there are certain areas where women are less paid than men. The perceptions about inequality in wages have been discussed in table no.6.8.

TABLE NO.6.8.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **less wages than men**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	12	7.5	6	4.3
2	No	113	70.6	90	64.3
3	NRSP	35	21.9	44	31.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

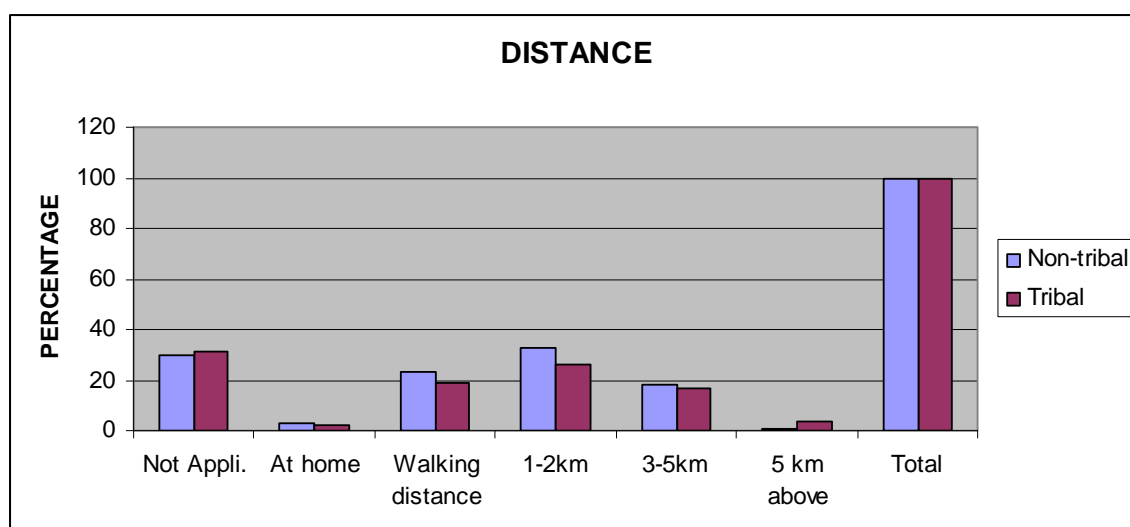
The table above shows that majority of the respondents reported that they do not get less wages than male. However, about 8% respondents of non-tribal communities and 4% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they get lesser wages than men. The overall situation shows that there is no considerable variation among tribal community and non-tribal community about the perception of equal wages.

6.8. DISTANCE OF WORKPLACE AND MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

The distance of work place depends upon the size of city and mode of transportation depends upon the nature of the city. Larger the city, the better communication and transportation facilities which is common equation. Manipur being situated in hilly regions does not have proper communication and public transportation facilities and this definitely affects the lives of the people. The details about the same have been presented in table no.6.9&10.

TABLE NO.6.9.Distribution of the respondents according to **the distance of work place**

Sr. No.	Distance	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	44	31.4
2	At home	5	3.1	3	2.1
3	Walking distance	36	22.5	27	19.3
4	1-2km	53	33.1	36	25.7
5	3-5km	28	17.5	24	17.1
6	5 km above	3	1.9	6	4.3
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the above table that 3% respondents of non-tribal and 2% respondents of tribal community have reported that their work place is their home, so they do not have to go out of the home. About 23% respondents of non-tribal community and 19% respondents of tribal community reported that their work place is a walking distance from their home. 33% of non-tribal and 26% respondents of tribal community reported that their work place is about 1-2km away from their home. The same proportions of 17% respondents of both tribal community and non-tribal community have reported that their work place is located

3 to 5km away from the home. Only 2% non-tribal community and 4% tribal community respondents have reported that their work place is located more than 5 km away from their home. In brief it is to say that nearer distance of respondents' work place from home is observed more in non-tribal communities than tribal communities.

TABLE NO.6.10.

Distribution of the respondents according to **mode of transportation**

Sr. No.	Mode of transportation	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	44	31.4
2	My home	5	3.1	3	2.1
3	On foot	35	21.9	36	25.7
4	Bicycle	3	1.9	3	2.1
5	Own vehicle	39	24.4	30	21.4
6	Rickshaw	1	.6	4	2.9
7	Bus	42	26.3	20	14.3
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that about 22% respondents of non-tribal community and 26% respondents of tribal community have reported that their work place is a walking distance so they do not use any vehicle. The same proportion of 2% respondents of both the communities reported that they use bicycle to go to the work place. About 24% respondents of non-tribal community and 21% respondents of tribal community have reported that they use their own vehicle to attend office. 26% respondents of non-tribal and 12% respondents of tribal community have reported that they use bus to attend the office. It is observed that respondents of non-tribal community use bus (public) more than the tribal respondents. Respondents using own vehicle is observed more in non-tribal whereas go to work place on foot is observed more in tribal respondents.

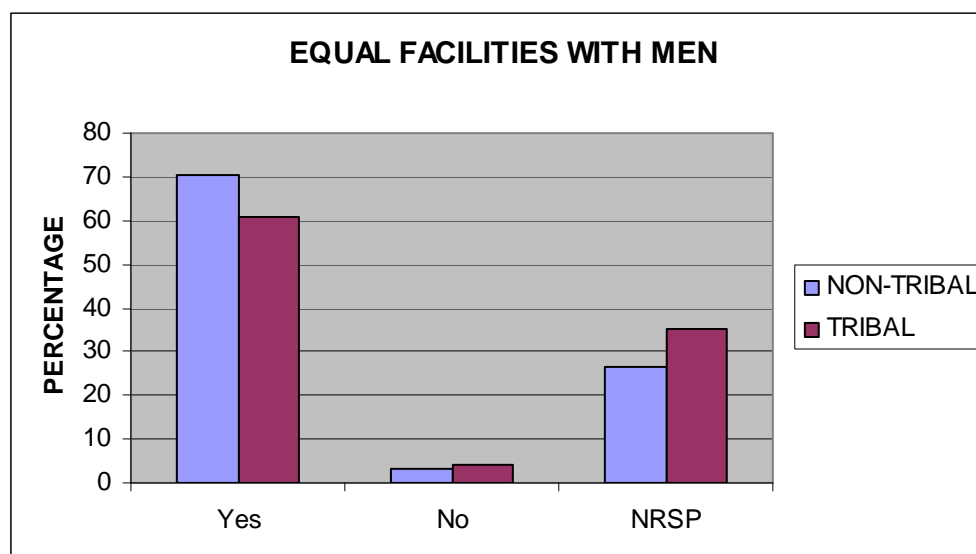
6.9. EQUALITY IN ACCESS TO PRIVILEGES AT WORKPLACE

Government has enacted several acts which provide social security measures to women such as equal wage for equal work, special benefits such as maternity leave, crèche at work place, restrictions for long hours of work are some of the important measures of social security. Along with these security measures there is statutory provision for equal facilities with men which has been collected and given in table no.6.11.

TABLE NO.6.11.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **equal facilities with men**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	113	70.6	85	60.7
2	No	5	3.1	6	4.3
3	NRSP	42	26.3	49	35.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table above that 71% non-tribal community and 61% tribal community respondents reported that they get equal facilities as men. However, 3%

respondents of non-tribal community and 4% respondents of non-tribal community have reported that they do not get equal facilities as men. 26% respondents of non-tribal and 35% respondents of tribal community did not respond to this question as they were not employed. Thus it is observed that there is no difference in the availability of equal facilities to men and women between tribal and non-tribal communities.

6.10. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AT WORK PLACE

Human beings, especially most women have many difficulties and often face gender discrimination in work place. Considering these difficulties in work place, details about the difficulties faced by the women are collected and presented in table no.6.12.

TABLE NO.6.12.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **difficulties**

Sr. No.	Difficulties	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Competition	14	8.8	8	5.7
2	Discrimination base on Gender	8	5.0	5	3.6
3	Heavy pressure	31	19.4	36	25.7
4	Irregular payment	14	8.8	10	7.1
5	Short maternity leave	3	1.9	4	2.9
6	Strike	17	10.6	9	6.4
7	Transportation	15	9.4	8	5.7
8	No difficulty	23	14.4	17	12.1
9	NRSP	35	21.9	44	31.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

The above table indicates that heavy pressure, irregular payment, strike competition are the main problems face by the respondents of both the tribal and non-tribal

communities. About 6% tribal community and 9% non-tribal community have reported that competition is the main difficulty they face at work place. A problem of heavy pressure is reported by 19% non-tribal and 26% respondents of tribal community. The same proportions of 8% respondents of both the community have reported that irregular payment is the main problem and difficulty they face at work. 2% respondents of non-tribal and 3% respondents of tribal community have reported they get very short maternity leave. Strike is one of the main problems faced by the respondents is reported by 11% in non-tribal community and 6% in tribal community. While 9% non-tribal community and 6% tribal community have reported that they face difficulty in transportation. About 14% respondents of non-tribal and 12% respondents of tribal community have reported that they do not face any difficulty. Therefore, it is observed that heavy work pressure is prominent in tribal community. There are also other numerous problems and difficulties face by the respondents of both the communities but there is no uniformity.

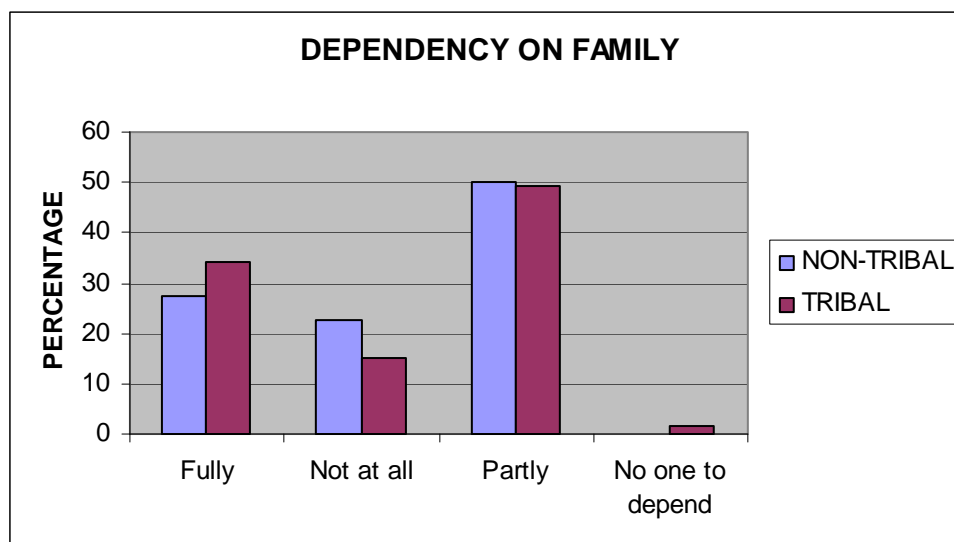
6.11. DEPENDENCY ON FAMILY

Dependency on the family for all her needs indicates how far a woman is empowered. The detail information in this regards has been collected and given in table no.6.13.

TABLE NO.6.13.

Distribution of the respondents according to **dependency on family**

Sr. No.	Dependency	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Fully	44	27.5	48	34.3
2	Partly	80	50.0	69	49.3
3	Not at all	36	22.5	21	15.0
4	No one to depend	00	00	2	1.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is clearly seen from the table above that among the tribal communities there is more dependency of the woman on her family, whereas in the non-tribal communities women are less dependent and thus more self reliant. About 34% respondents of the tribal communities and 28% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they are totally dependent on their parents. The same proportions of about 50% respondents of both the communities have reported that they are partly dependent on parents and partly on husband's family. Whereas only 23% respondents of the non-tribal communities and only 15% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they are not dependent on their families at all. Thus it can be said that respondents of the tribal communities are more dependent on parents while respondents of non-tribal communities are self reliant. The process of empowerment hampered when a woman is dependent.

6.12. FREEDOM TO SPEND ONE'S EARNINGS

Women who are empowered always have freedom and the ability to take their own decisions. To a great extent women who are employed and earning, have more freedom to spend their own earnings as they wish. This clearly indicates that she has complete freedom to allocate her own resources as she desires. However, in some families, it is observed that though the woman is earning she can not spend

her earning as she likes. Detailed information has been collected and presented in following table no.6.14.

TABLE NO.6.14.

Distribution of the respondents according to the **freedom given to spend what one earns.**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Always	75	46.9	51	36.4
2	Sometimes	85	53.1	89	63.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that in both the communities, considerable freedom is given but the extent of freedom varies. About 47% respondents of non-tribal communities and 36% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they always have the freedom to spend their earnings as they wish. However, significantly 53% respondents of non-tribal communities and 64% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they are allowed to spend their earning sometimes only. This clearly indicates that in the tribal community, woman has less freedom to spend her earnings. Thus it is observed that when it comes to expenditure of earnings women of the non-tribal communities have more liberty as compared to women of the tribal communities. In continuation of these aspects further questions were asked about whether they are allowed to spend their earnings for their children. The detail about the same is given in table no.6.15.

TABLE NO.6.15.

Distribution of the respondents according to **freedom to spend for children.**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	58	41.4
2	Always	65	40.6	47	33.6
3	Sometimes	60	37.5	35	25.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that about 41% of respondents of the non-tribal communities and 34% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they are always allowed or given freedom to spend their earning for their children. While 38% respondents of non-tribal and 25% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they are allowed to spend their earnings for their children but at times only. About 41% of respondents of the tribal communities and 22% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities did not respond to this question as there are not earning

Thus a significant difference is seen between respondents of tribal communities and non-tribal communities. Restrictions on family matters indicate that in spite of the woman being financially independent, yet she does not have the power to control her earnings which shows that she is not adequately empowered.

In connection with earlier tables, it is generally observed that husband, in-laws or some other members of the family use all the resources brought by all the members for the maintenance of the family. Usually, it is the head of the family who exercises more authority in spending the family income. The detail about the person who spends most of the money in family for family matters has been given in table no.6.16.

TABLE NO.6.16.

Distribution of the respondents according to Individual who **spends money most in the family**

Sr. No.	Major expenditure by	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Children	10	6.3	11	7.9
2	Family members	50	31.3	59	42.1
3	Head of the family	88	55.0	56	40.0
5	Husband and Myself	2	1.3	2	1.4
6	Myself	10	6.3	12	8.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

The table above indicates that about 82% of the respondents of the tribal communities and 86% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that either head of family (in-laws or husband) spend major amount of her earnings. Only 6% respondents of non-tribal communities and 9% of the tribal respondents and 6% respondents from the non-tribal communities have reported that she herself spends more money than the other members of the family. Therefore it is generally observed that money spent by head of the family or other members of the family and hardly about six to seven respondents of both the communities are spending more than other family members. This is an excellent indicator of the present status of woman in family. Such nature of cultural practices is the main obstacles in the process of women empowerment.

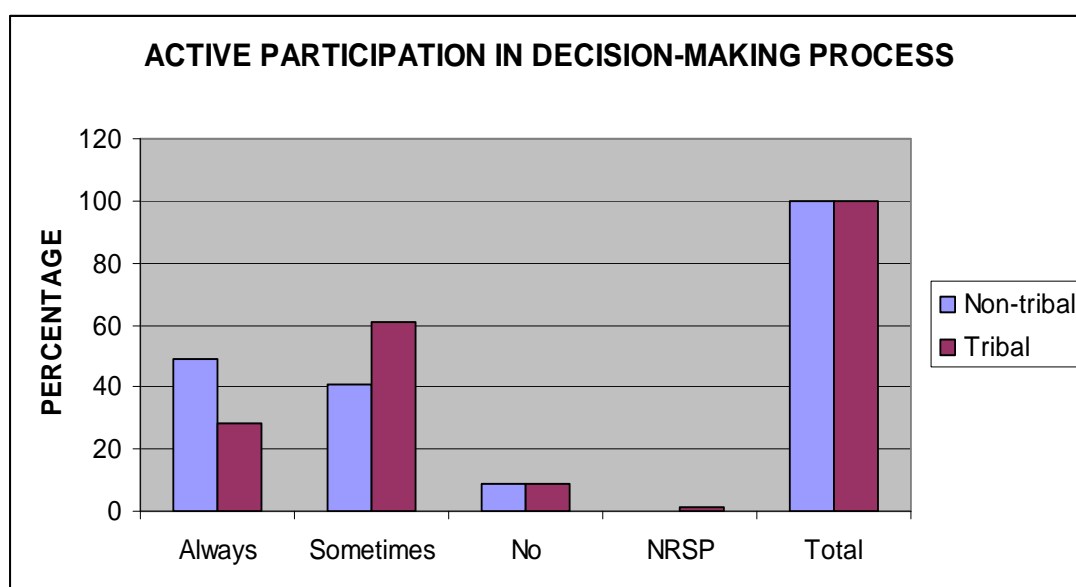
6.13. PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS

In a family where the woman is allowed to actively participate in decision making is an empowered family. The detail in this regard is given in table no.6.17.

TABLE NO.6.17.

Distribution of the respondents according to **active participation in decision-making process.**

Sr. No.	Active participation	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Always	79	49.4	39	27.9
2	Sometimes	66	41.3	86	61.4
3	No	15	9.4	13	9.3
4	NRSP	00	00	2	1.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



The table above indicates that there is a significant difference in respect to decision making between the tribal and non-tribal community. 27% of the respondents of the tribal communities and 48% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that they take active part in decision-making process mainly on family expenditure and for all important occasions. About 60% of the respondents of the tribal communities and only 43% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that they are involved in decision making process but only sometimes. 14% of the respondents of the tribal communities and about 10% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that they do not take part in decision-making process.

respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that they do not take any part in any decision making-process especially in areas of expenditure on important occasions. Thus it is observed that respondents of the non-tribal communities are actively involved in decision making process. A comparative picture portrays the women of the non-tribal community to take active part in the decision making process, while active participation is comparatively lower among the tribal women. This clearly indicates that the women in tribal community are lagging behind and this definitely has a negative impact on the empowerment of women.

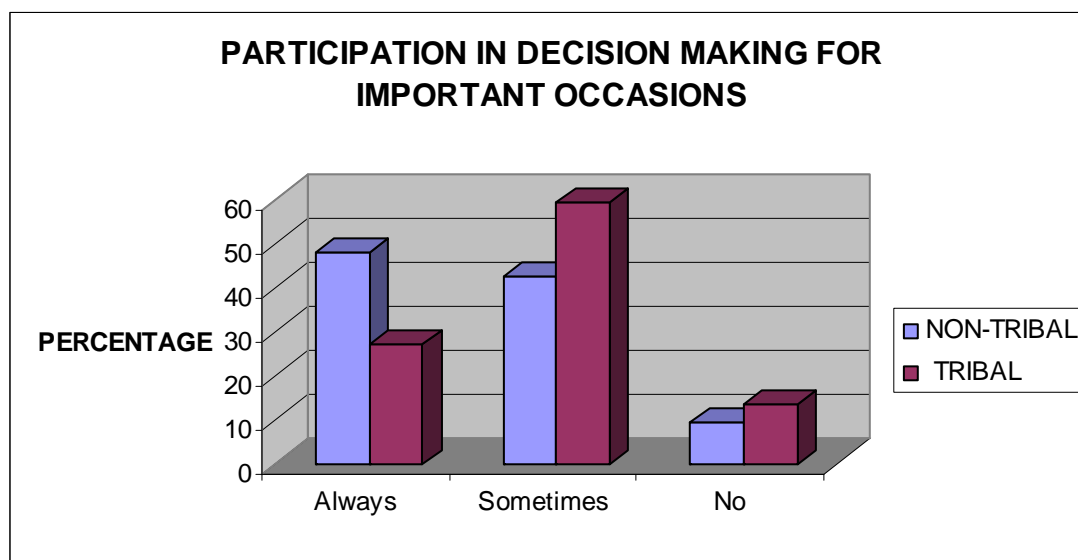
6.14. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING ON EXPENDITURE FOR IMPORTANT OCCASIONS

Active participation of women in decision-making process is one of the indicators of women empowerment in the family or society level. Details are given in table no.6.18.

TABLE NO.6.18.

Distribution of the respondents according to **active participation in decision-making on expenditure for important occasions**

Sr. No.	Active participation	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Always	77	48.1	38	27.1
2	Sometimes	68	42.5	83	59.3
3	No	15	9.4	19	13.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the above table that 48% respondents of non-tribal and 27% respondents of tribal community have reported that they always take active participation in decision-making on expenditure for important occasions. Whereas 43% respondents of non-tribal 53% respondents of tribal community reported that they take part in decision-making process on expenditure for important occasions only sometimes. Briefly it can be said that respondents in non-tribal communities take more active part in this regard than the tribal women.

6.15. DISCUSSION WITH HUSBAND ABOUT EXPENDITURE OF PERSONAL INCOME

Usually a woman who is earning discusses matters of expenditure with husband or elders of the family. Taking advice of husband or in-laws is the usual practice in both the tribal as well as non-tribal communities. Such type of interactions always helps to enhance and strengthen her status at family level which is closely associated with the process of empowerment. The details about the same is collected from the respondents and given in table no.6.19.

TABLE NO.6.19.

Distribution of the respondents according to **discussion with husband/elder for spending personal income**

Sr. No.	Discussion	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Always	87	54.4	75	53.6
2	Sometimes	43	26.9	31	22.1
3	No income	30	18.8	34	24.2
	Total	160	100.0	140	100

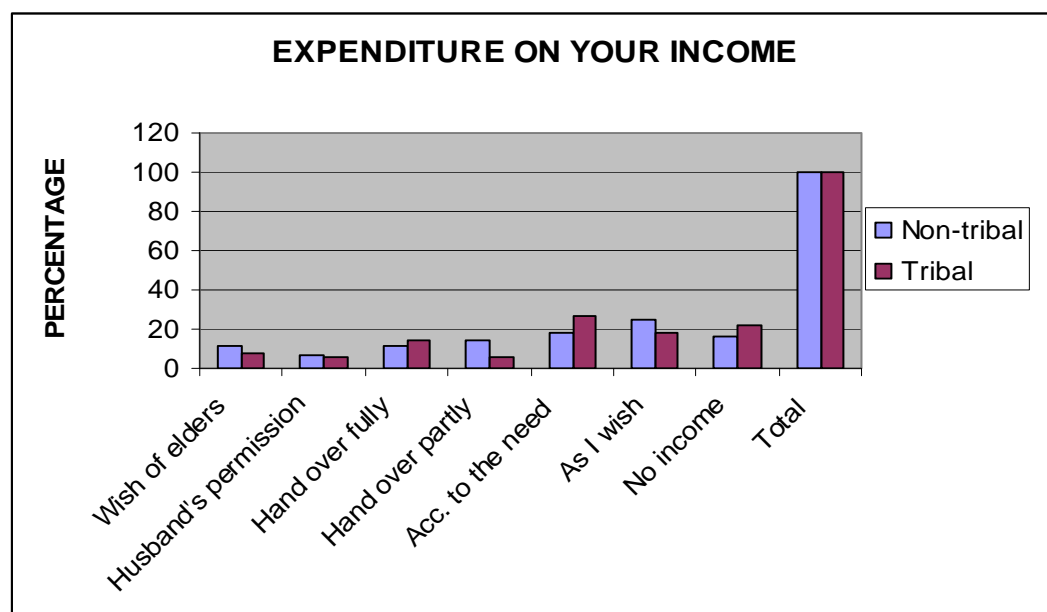
It is seen from the above table that the same proportion of more than half (54%) of the respondents of both the tribal and non-tribal community reported that they always discuss with husband or elders on matters of spending their earnings. While 27% respondents of non-tribal and 22% respondents of non-tribal communities reported that they sometimes discuss with the husband or elder for spending their earnings or income. This shows that though women are earning and financially independent, to a great extent they do not have the power or freedom to spend their income according to how they would want to spend. They have to take consent from the husband or elders. This indicates that financial position doesn't determine the status of women at family level. Here culture seems to have the upper hand.

6.16. EXPENDITURE OF INCOME

There are several areas and sources of expenditure at family level. In earlier tables it is observed that in spite of her 'self-reliance' financially there is hardly any freedom for spending her earning. This indicates that primarily there are direct or indirect restrictions on women through various ways. Approving question was asked about how she spends her earning. The detail about same is given in table no.6.20.

TABLE NO.6.20.Distribution of the respondents according to **expenditure of one's income**

Sr. No.	Expenditure on one's income	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	According the wish of the elders	17	10.6	11	7.9
2	Can't spend without permission of my husband	11	6.9	8	5.7
3	Hand over fully	17	10.6	19	13.6
4	Hand over partly	23	14.4	8	5.7
5	Spend it according to the need	28	17.5	38	27.1
6	Spend it as I wish	38	25.1	25	17.9
7	No income	26	16.3	31	22.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the above table that 11% respondents of non-tribal and 8% respondent in tribal community have reported that they spend their income according to the instruction of the elders. This shows that elders play an authoritative role in the woman's life. About 6% to 7% of respondents of both communities have reported that they can not spend their income without the permission of their husbands. Again there are restrictions from the husbands on women. 14% respondents of tribal communities and 11% respondents of non-tribal communities reported that they hand-over their entire earnings either to husband or in-laws. Whereas 6% respondents of tribal communities and 14% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they hand-over their income partly to the husband or in-laws. There are 25% respondents of non-tribal community and 18% respondents of tribal communities who reported that they can spend their earning as they wish which is an important factor for women's empowerment. In brief it is to say that as compared to tribal community, the non-tribal community have more freedom and liberty and to spend their earning and are less controlled by the elders of the family than the respondents of the tribal community are.

6.17. BANK ACCOUNT

If the woman is earning and has authority on her earnings it is natural that she has her own bank account to transact independently. This is one aspect of economic empowerment. The detailed information in this regards is given in following table no.6.21.

TABLE NO.6.21.

Distribution of the respondents according to **possession of bank account**

Sr. No.	Bank account	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	89	55.6	55	39.3
2	No	71	44.4	85	60.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

The table above indicates that about 56% respondents of non-tribal community and only 14% respondents of the tribal communities have their own bank account. It is assumed that they do the transaction independently in the banks. While 44% respondents of non-tribal communities and a significant 61% of respondents of tribal communities have reported that they do not have their own bank account. Thus it is seen that more respondents of the non-tribal communities have their own bank account whereas majority 61% of the respondents of the tribal communities do not have bank account on their own.

SUMMARY

In this chapter various economic factors and their association with women's empowerment has been discussed. Financial status of women always helps in strengthening her status in the family and in the society. When the woman is economically self-reliant, automatically it increases her power to control and authorize the allocation of her earnings, prioritize her needs and make important decisions related to the development of her own as well as her family's wellbeing. In view of this, working agency, perception about employment, working hours in a day, income and nature of payment, equality of wages with men, distance of workplace and mode of transportation, various difficulties face at work, dependency on family, freedom to spend money, active participation in social activities, having own bank account have been discussed in detail. The brief summary of all these aspects are given in this section. Government and private sectors are the main avenues of employment. Women who are employed feel that they have to work to support their family and for some, they work because they want to become financially independent. 6 to 8 hours in a day is the usual working hours and about 5 to 6 days are the usual number of working days in a week. Salary ranges between 3,000 to 10,000 and above, and income depends upon educational qualifications and nature of work. Monthly payment in cash is naturally followed. Most of the respondents are of the opinion that there is no inequality in wages. Bus, bicycle is some of the means of transportation used by the respondents. Almost everyone feels there are equal facilities but heavy pressure at work; strike and

competition are some of the main difficulties faced by the respondents. Though most of them are employed they are dependent on their families in various levels. Women are not allowed to spend their salary, is one of the prominent observations. Usually the head of the family is vested with the authority to spend the family income. Very less proportion of women take active part in decision-making process and have continuous dialogue with husband on various issues related to expenses. Considerably low proportions of women have their own bank account. The overall situation shows irrespective of education or employment of women there is considerable influence of family members on various aspects which to a great extent hinders women empowerment.

CHAPTER VII

HEALTH STATUS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

7. INTRODUCTION

Good health is very important for all. People who are healthy are more active, physically and mentally strong. However in almost all parts of India we observe that the health of the women is often neglected. Social, cultural and physical factors are responsible for such a condition. Many a times it is the women who themselves are responsible of their poor health condition, as many women always tend to keep the health and needs of their family members first. A woman generally has to balance all the activities of her life such as pregnancy, child-bearing and rearing, caring for the aged and taking care of domestic activities of her home, her health and needs are neglected. Women in rural areas are in even at worst situation. They are engaged in strenuous activities such as fetching water sometimes from far off places, collecting firewood, working on farms and fields as well as doing all the household chores. She has to spend a considerable amount of her energy and time in meeting the needs of the family members. Moreover health awareness and facilities are negligible in the rural areas this too is bad for the rural women. Significant studies done in this area have shown high incidences of maternal mortality rate among the rural women.

Most of our Indian societies often give more emphasis and importance to the male than the female. Women are often deprived of better educational opportunities, even their health and other areas of welfare are ignored. On this background the detailed discussion on various factors associated with health status of women has been discussed in detailed in following points.

7.1. EXISTENCE OF HEREDITARY DISEASES

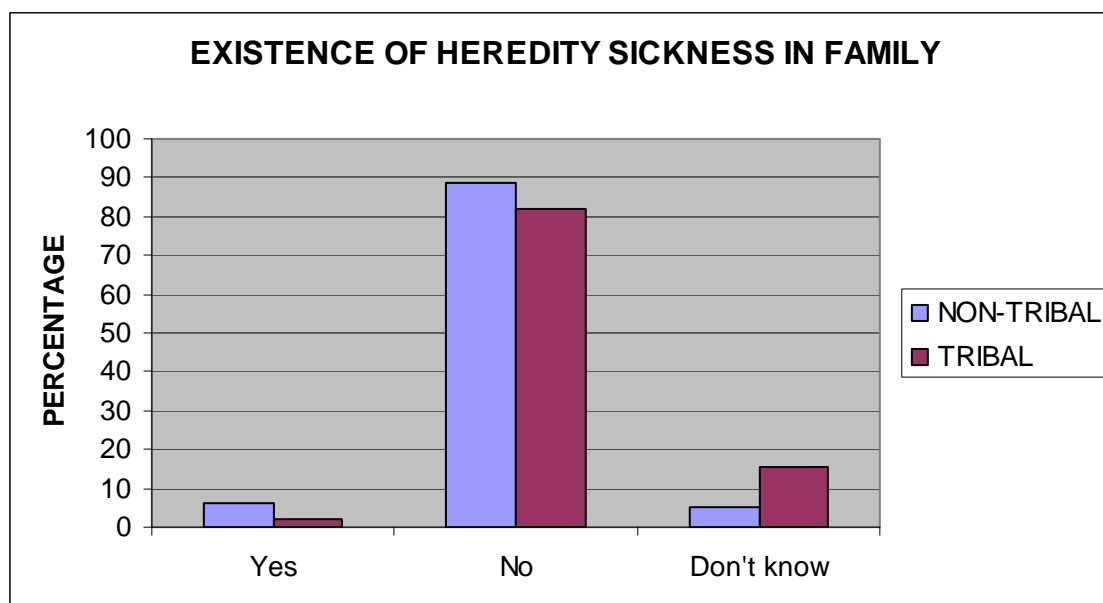
There are quite a few diseases that are transmitted through genes. Disability, mental retardation, coronary heart disease, cancer, diabetes, blood pressure are some of the

diseases which can transmit through genes and pass on the next generation. The detailed information in this regard is given in table no.7.1.

TABLE NO.7.1.

Distribution of the respondents according to **existence of heredity diseases in the family**

Sr. No.	Existence of Heredity diseases	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	10	6.3	3	2.1
2	No	142	88.8	115	82.1
3	Don't know	8	5.0	22	15.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the above table that about 82% of the respondents of the tribal community reported that they do not have any hereditary illness whereas about 89% of the respondents of the non tribal communities have reported that they do not have hereditary illness. 2% respondents of tribal community and 6% of non

tribal community have reported that they have hereditary diseases in the family. As compared to the tribal communities the non tribal communities are more affected by the heredity diseases than the tribal communities. 5% respondents of non-tribal and considerably high percentage that is about 16% of the respondents of tribal communities are not aware about hereditary diseases. This is very evident as the educational level of the tribal and some non-tribal communities is low hence they have limited knowledge about the hereditary disease and their deleterious effects. Thus from what I have observed, considerable proportions of respondents of both communities do not know that whether they have incidences of hereditary diseases in their homes.

7.2. AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH FACILITIES

Manipur, being one of the hilly states of Northeast India, faces some serious problems of good transportation, system of communication as well as good and adequate health facilities. There are times when villagers have to walk for miles at large to reach to a good hospital and many pregnant women and seriously ill people lose their lives before they can reach the hospitals. Moreover, due to cultural practices and superstitions many tribals do not want to take the services of primary health care institutions provided by the government and as such die for need of proper medical care. Tribal women prefer to deliver their children at the hands of mid-wives of the villages as they do not want to be taken care of by male doctors. Crude and unhygienic methods of deliveries often lead to death of the mother and the child. The details about the distance of the hospital from the community and home has been collected and tabulated in table no.7.2.

TABLE NO.7.2.Distribution of the respondents according to **distance of hospital**

Sr. No.	Distance	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Walking distance	35	21.9	33	23.6
2	1-2km	47	29.4	38	27.1
3	3-5km	57	35.6	40	28.6
4	6km and more	21	13.1	29	20.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that there are 22% respondents of non-tribal and 24% respondents of tribal communities who have reported that hospitals or health centres are available in a walking distance from their house whereas about 29% of the non-tribal and 28% of the tribal respondents have reported that the distance of the hospital from their home is about one to two kilometers. About 36% respondents of non tribal communities and 29% respondents of tribal communities have reported the distance of the hospital ranges between three to five kilometers away from their residence. About 21% of the respondents of tribal community and 13% of the respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that the distance of the hospital is more than six kilometers from their residences. Thus this observation proves that respondents of non-tribal communities have easy access to health care facilities as they are living in areas that have a proper transportation system hence hospitals and primary health centres are easily accessible. However, the picture for the tribal communities is often dismal. Due to hilly terrains and poor transportation system makes it difficult for the tribal people to have easy access to proper and timely health care services. Far distance of hospitals is observed more in tribal communities as most of them are in rural hilly areas where good hospitals and health care facilities are mostly concentrated in areas that connected with good roads.

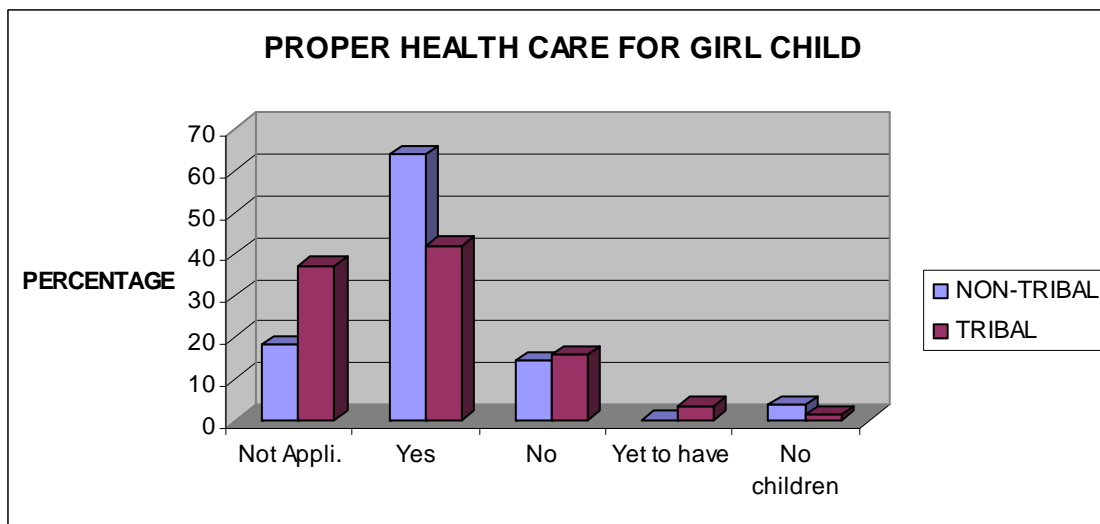
7.3. PROPER REGULATION OF HEALTH FOR THE GIRL CHILD

Giving proper health care to a child is one of prime responsibilities of the individual. Healthy children will definitely bring goodwill and prosperity to the family. However, in most parts of the Indian society there exists a disparity between health care given to the male child and the female child. Often the male child is provided more care and nutritious food because it is believed that he is the one who will carry the name of the family forward. This disparity is not only seen among the tribal communities of the rural areas but also seen among some of the well educated families too. The people of the rural areas attribute this to their poor economic condition and illiteracy. The following table depicts the percentage of care given to the girl child between the tribal and the non-tribal communities.

TABLE NO.7.3.

Distribution of the respondents according to **the practice of proper health care for girl child**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Yes	102	63.8	59	42.1
3	No	23	14.4	22	15.7
4	Yet to have	00	00	5	3.6
5	No children	6	3.8	2	1.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



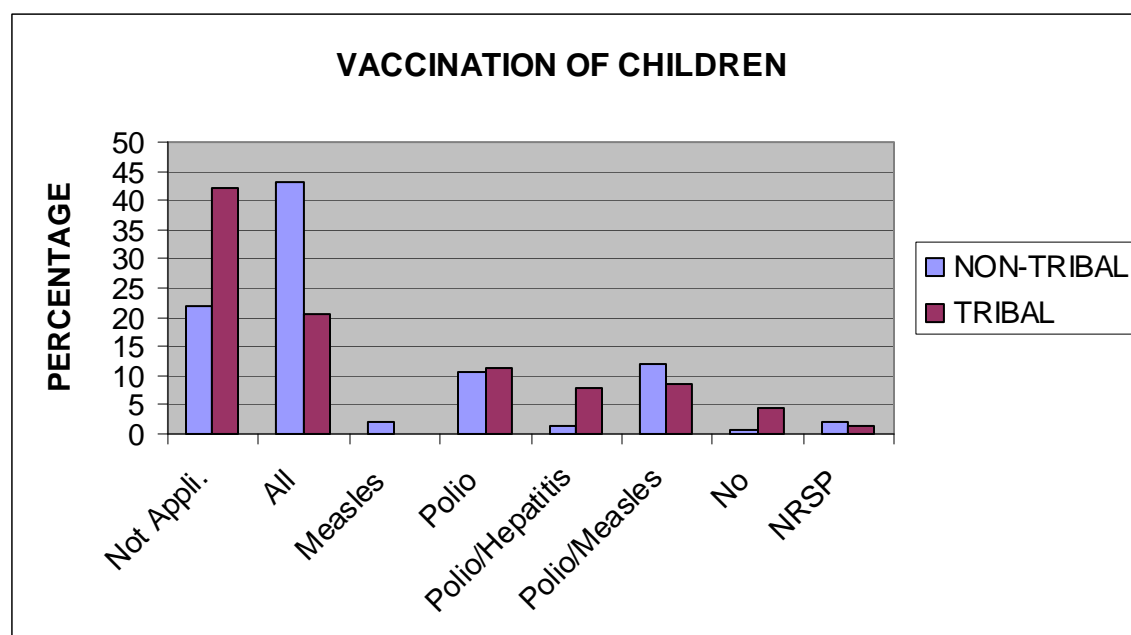
As discussed in introductory part of the chapter health care of the girl child is often neglected as a preference is always given to son. About 64% of the respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they do give proper health care to the girl child whereas only 42% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they have given proper health care to the girl child. About 14% non-tribal and 16% tribal respondents have reported that they do not give proper health care to the girl child. The reasons given by some of the respondents were due to their poor economic condition while some quoted hesitantly that the son is more important than the girl as the son carries the name of the family and the lineage forward. This clearly points to the fact that the health of girl child remains neglected in most parts of the tribal communities.

7.4. VACCINATION OF CHILDREN

Vaccination prevents several illnesses and improves the immunity system of the child thus increasing the resistance of the child to various diseases. Thus a child is protected from various infectious diseases through vaccination. However, in tribal communities there is lack of awareness about vaccinations and the benefits of it. The details in this regard is collected and given in table no.7.4.

TABLE NO.7.4.Distribution of the respondents according to **vaccination of children**

Sr. No.	Vaccination	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	59	42.1
2	All	69	43.1	29	20.7
3	Measles	3	1.9	00	00
4	Polio	17	10.6	16	11.4
5	Polio/Hepatitis	2	1.3	11	7.9
6	Polio/Measles	19	11.9	12	8.6
7	No	1	.6	6	4.3
8	NRSP	3	1.9	2	1.4



It is seen from the table that vaccines to prevent Measles, Polio and Hepatitis are mainly given to the children. 43% of the respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they have given all the necessary vaccines to their children. Whereas only 20% respondents of the tribal communities have reported that they

have given all vaccines to their children. The same proportions of 11% each of the tribal and non-tribal community have reported that they gave vaccines of Polio and Hepatitis. 12% respondents from the non tribal and 9% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they gave vaccines of Polio and Measles to their children. The vaccination of Measles is totally absent in the tribal communities even among the non tribal population the proportion is as low as only 2%. As regards to polio, almost equal proportion, about 11% of respondents in both the communities has vaccinated their children from. Thus from what I have observed and studies, there is a significant difference in the giving of vaccination to children between the tribal and the non tribal communities. However there is no consistency in data about vaccination.

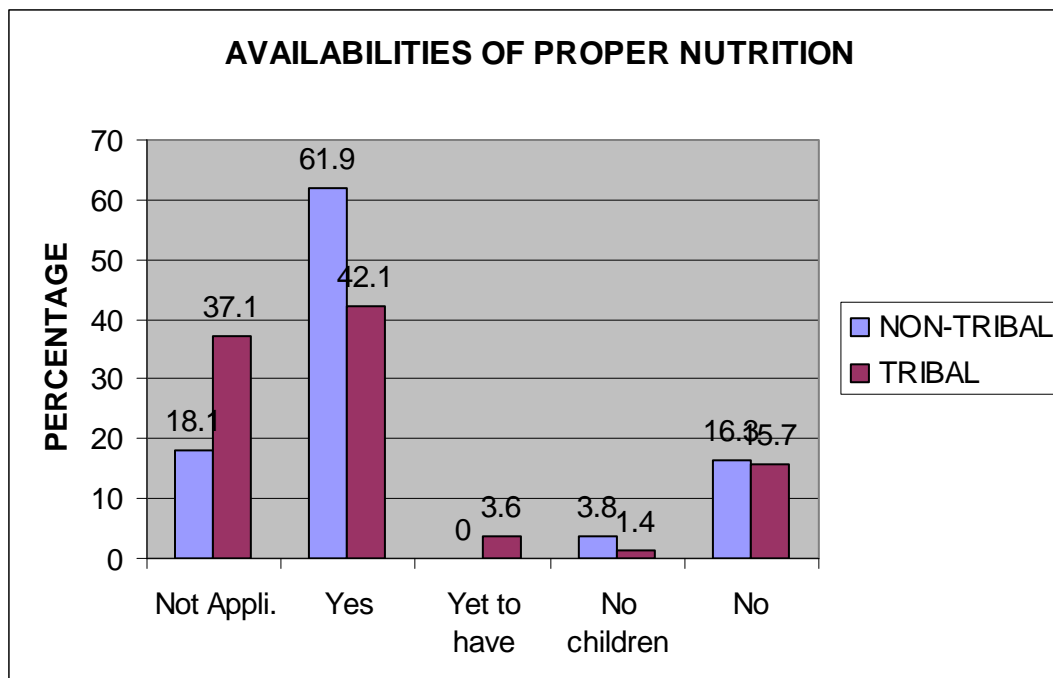
7.5. PROPER NUTRITION

Proper nutrition is must for the overall development of the family in any society. If a family is able to have good and nutritious food then that is a good indicator good economic condition of the family. However, most of the people living in rural areas usually lack proper nutritious food due to their poor economic condition. The details in this regard is collected and given in table no.7.5.

TABLE NO.7.5.

Distribution of the respondents according to **availabilities of proper nutrition**

Sr. No.	Proper nutrition	Non Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
	Yes	99	61.9	59	42.1
	Yet to have	00	00	5	3.6
	No children	6	3.8	2	1.4
	No	26	16.3	22	15.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



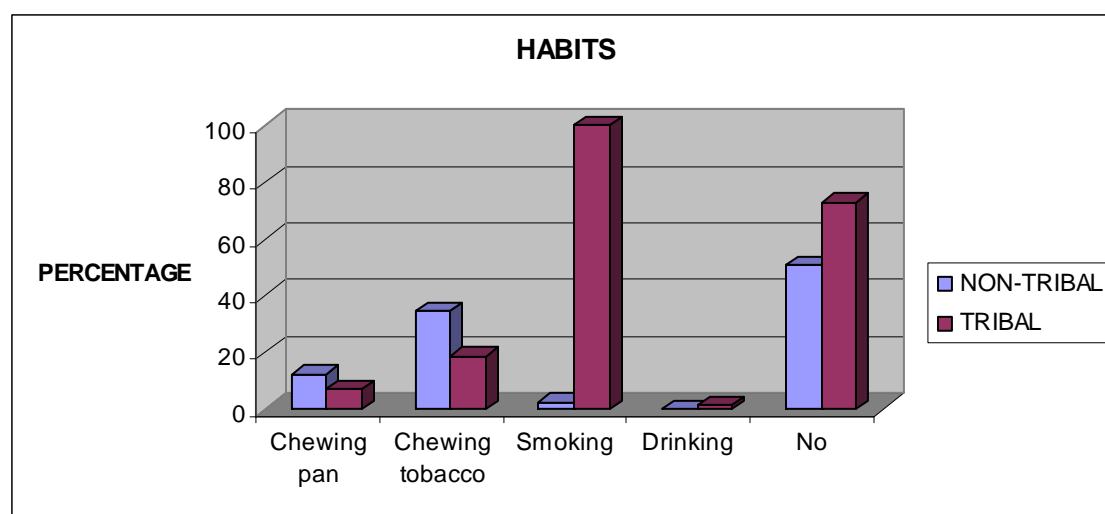
The table above shows that only 42% respondents of tribal community and 62% of non-tribal community reported that they are able to provide proper nutrition to children. About the same proportion of 16% in both the communities have reported that they are not able to afford proper nutrition to their children. The difference between tribal communities and non-tribal community is prominently observed in this regard as most of the tribal community families are not able to afford for better nutrition.

7.6. HABITS

In spite of the low economic condition, alcoholism is one of the main evils seen among the tribal as well as the non-tribal communities. Apart from alcoholism, chewing betel nut and intake of tobacco in all forms are some of the common habits observed among the men and women. Indulging in these bad habits definitely has deleterious effects on the women's development and empowerment. The details about such habits of the respondents have been collected and given in table no.7.6.

TABLE NO.7.6.Distribution of the respondents according to **unhealthy habits**

Sr. No.	Habits	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Chewing pan	20	12.5	10	7.1
2	Chewing tobacco	55	34.4	26	18.6
3	Smoking	4	2.5	00	00
4	Drinking	00	00	2	1.4
5	No	81	50.6	102	72.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is clearly seen from the above table that 13% of the respondents of non-tribal communities and 7% respondents of the tribal communities reported that they indulge in chewing betel nut. 34% non-tribal and 19% of the tribal respondents have reported their practices of chewing tobacco. Smoking is prominent in non-tribal whereas drinking is predominant among the tribal communities. 51% non-tribal and 73% tribal respondents have reported that they do not practice such habits which are a very good sign. This observation can lead to the conclusion that respondents of the non-tribal tribal community exhibit greater tendencies of chewing betel nut, tobacco and smoking than the tribal. In relation to this further

probing question was asked about the awareness of the ill effects of these habits. The details are given in table no.7.7.

TABLE NO.7.7.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **harmful effects of the habits on health**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	132	82.5	130	92.9
2	No	11	6.9	3	2.1
3	Don't know	17	10.6	7	5.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is clear from the above table that about 93% of the respondents of tribal communities have reported that they are aware of the harmful or side effects that these habits have on their health, while 82% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported they are aware that such habits are harmful. However, in spite of the knowledge of the ill effects of these practices it sad to see that most women still practice and indulge in such habits. Thus my observation shows that awareness about the harmful effects of these unhealthy habits is there among the tribals as well as the non-tribals.

7.7. ANTENATAL CARE

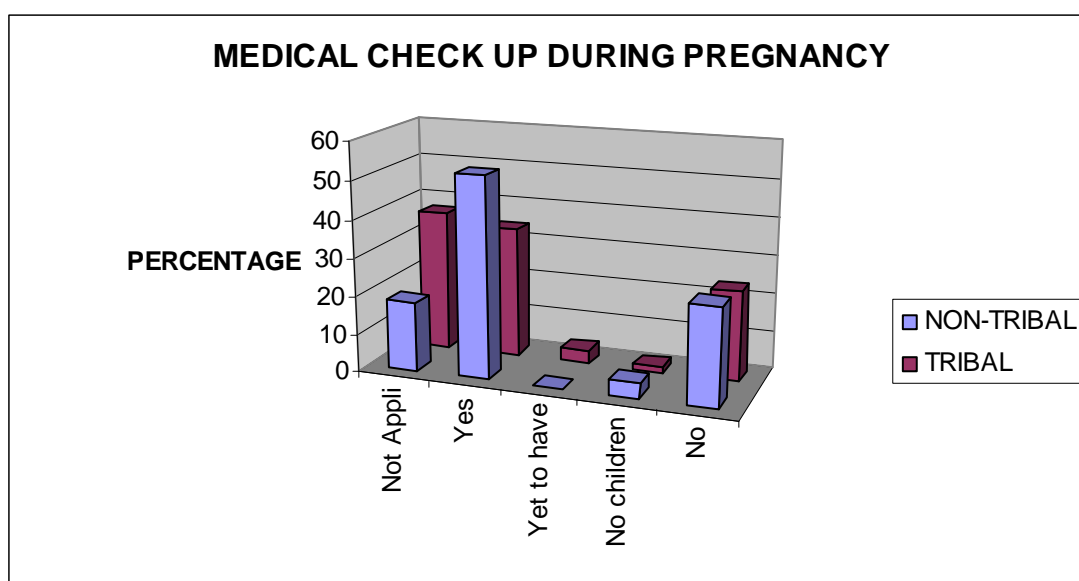
Antenatal care is the unique implication of women's health. Regular medical check-up from the beginning of pregnancy always helps in healthy delivery of a child. During this period, regular medical checkup and nutritious diet is very essential for the mother and the fetus. Many communities often neglect the health of the expectant mother due to their low economic profile. In many tribal as well as non-tribal communities there are myths held about subjecting the expectant mother

to medical checkups that involve exposing the mother and the fetus to ultrasound and chemical tests. Due to ignorance people believe that these tests will have deleterious effects on the mother and child which are actually not true. Thus neglect of the mother's health can lead to high child mortality rate and even high rate death of mother during child-birth. The detail about how much of regular antenatal care is given to the woman during pregnancy is given in table no.7.8.

TABLE NO.7.8.

Distribution of the respondents according to **regular medical check up during pregnancy**

Sr. No.	Medical check up during pregnancy	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
	Yes	84	52.5	48	34.3
	Yet to have	00	00	5	3.6
	No children	6	3.8	2	1.4
	No	41	25.6	33	23.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table that more than 53% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported they have regular medical checkup. While only 34% of the respondents of the tribal communities have reported that they go for regular medical checkups during pregnancy. The same trend of about 26% non-tribal and 24% tribal respondents have reported that they do not get regular medical check-up during pregnancy. This may be again either due to the ignorance about health care or poor economic condition of the family. Thus it is quite evident that respondents of the non-tribal communities get better health care during pregnancy than the women belonging to the tribal communities.

7.8. SEX DETERMINATION

Technological advancement is a boon as well as a curse to humanity. Due to advance in technology the life span of an individual has increased that result in increasing in longevity of life and the prolonging of diseases too. Moreover, technology has helped encourage female feticide. Earlier expectant women could find out the sex of their child. However this was used to find out the sex of the child and if it is a girl child then the girl child was aborted. Once this practice increased at an alarming rate the government banned such practices. However, these practices are still going illegally in many parts of India especially in the urban areas. However this is not a problem among most of the tribal communities as they do not have access to the expensive treatments hence they generally can't indulge in sex determination. The detail about the same is given in table no.7.9.

TABLE NO.7.9.Distribution of the respondents according to **curiosity about sex of fetus**

Sr. No.	Curiosity	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Yes	73	45.6	46	32.9
3	Yet to have	00	00	5	3.6
4	No children	6	3.8	2	1.4
5	No	52	32.5	35	25.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

The above table indicates that 46% respondents of non-tribal community have reported that they are curious to know the sex of the child in the womb whereas 33% respondents of tribal community have reported that they are curious to know about the sex of the child in their womb. 33% respondents of non-tribal community and 25% respondents of tribal have reported that they are not curious about the sex of the child they are carrying. This indicates that they do not mind if the child is a male or female. This shows that in tribal community they accept the baby in a natural condition without predetermination. Whether the Respondents have used sex determination test or not the details are given in table no.7.10.

TABLE NO.7.10.

Distribution of the respondents according to use of **sex determination test during pregnancy**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Yes	2	1.3	4	2.9
3	No children	6	3.8	2	1.4
4	No	123	76.9	77	55.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that most of the respondents of both the communities do not go for the sex determination test during pregnancy though some of them are curious about the sex of the baby. There is negligible number of respondents those who have used this test for determining or knowing the sex of the fetus. No consistent trend has been observed in this aspect. In brief it is said that this advanced medical technology has reached the state.

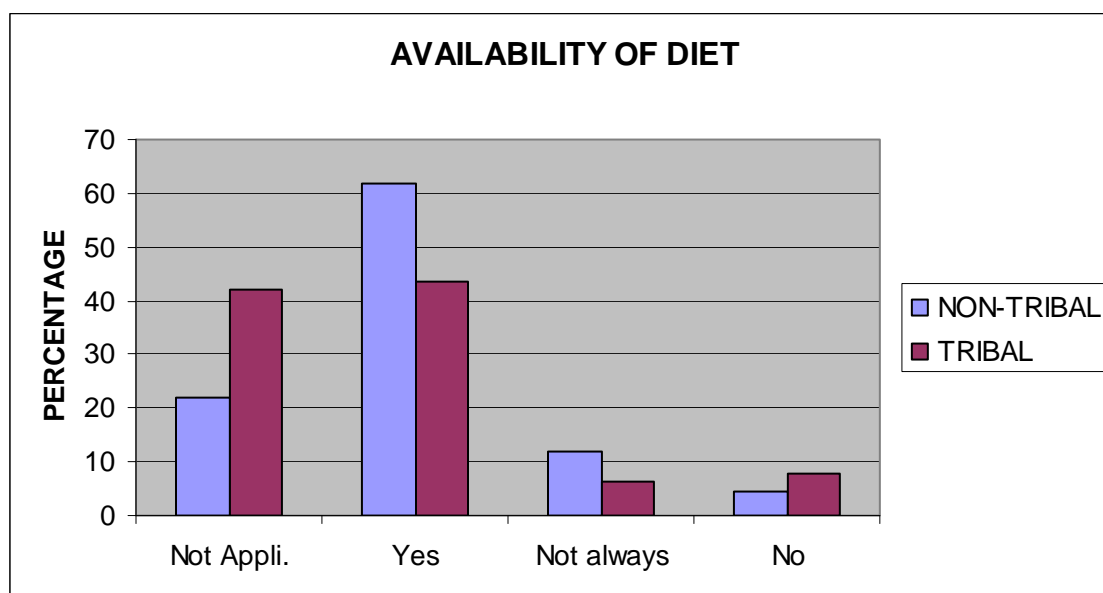
7.9. DIET DURING PREGNANCY

During pregnancy double dietary requirement is needed for the woman. As she substantially needs micro nutrient such as iron, calcium, and vitamins. Woman needs proper diet in order to have a healthy baby. The details in this regard are given in table no.7.11.

TABLE NO.7.11.

Distribution of the respondents according to **availability of diet during pregnancy**

Sr. No.	Availability of diet	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	59	42.1
2	Yes	99	61.9	61	43.6
3	Not always	19	11.9	9	6.4
4	No	7	4.4	11	7.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



Before explaining the details about the table one point is to be noted here that due to the poor economic conditions it is not possible for the woman in a poor family to get adequate balanced diet. The table above shows adequate diet received by the respondents. As compared to non-tribal communities the proportion of the availability of balanced diet is considerably low among the respondents of tribal communities. 62% respondents of the non-tribal communities and only 44%

respondents in tribal communities have reported that they maintained good diet during pregnancy. As most of the respondents in tribal community are poorer in economic condition availabilities of health care and proper nutrition is low. The overall situation indicates there is great difference between tribal and non-tribal respondents for the availability of proper nutrition during pregnancy. Condition of respondents during pregnancy in non-tribal community is comparatively better.

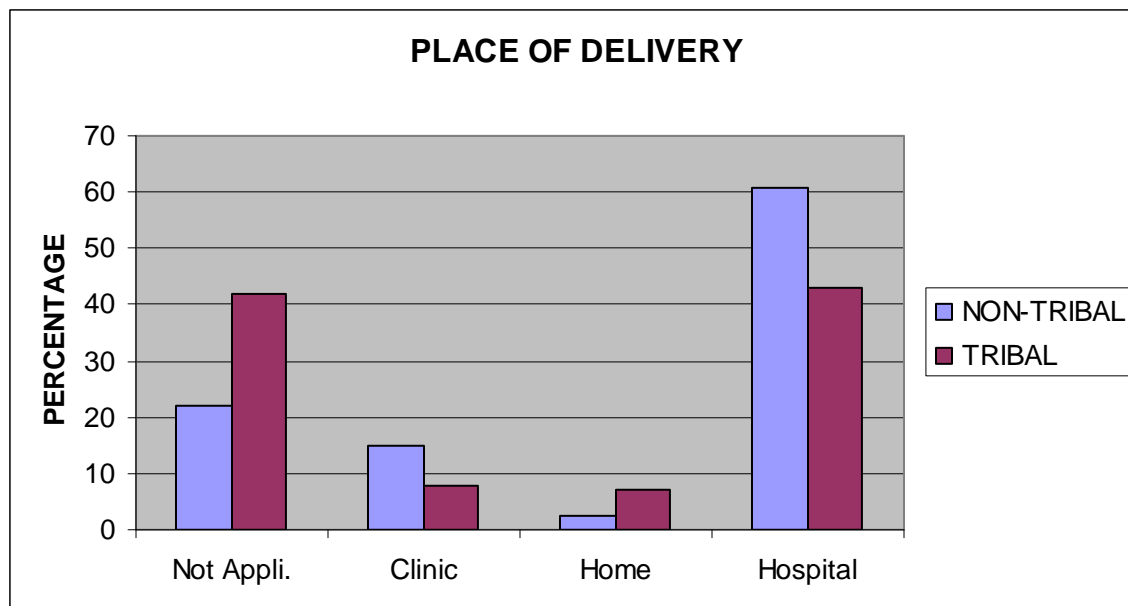
7.10. PLACE OF DELIVERY

In earlier days and even today in most parts of Tribal India women usually deliver their babies at home with the help of senior women or mid-wives of the village. However, today women are well aware about the complications of delivery as the educational level of the person and economic conditional of the family developed. Government has also provided health care centres for the rural women. Therefore, it is observed that deliveries are taking place either at hospitals or clinics though there are women who still deliver at home. The details about the place of delivery is collected from the respondents and given in table no.7.12.

TABLE NO.7.12.

Distribution of the respondents according to **place of delivery**

Sr. No.	Place	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	59	42.1
2	Home	4	2.5	10	7.1
3	Clinic	24	15.0	11	7.9
4	Hospital	97	60.6	60	42.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the above table that 3% respondents of non-tribal communities and 7% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they delivered at home. 15% non-tribal respondents and 8% of the tribal respondents have reported that they delivered at clinics while 61% of the non-tribals and 41% of the tribal respondents have reported that they delivered at hospital. Thus it is observed that the deliveries taking place either in hospitals or clinics are more among in non-tribal communities, whereas the deliveries taking place at home is more evident in tribal communities. It also indicates that due to the far distance of hospitals and clinics as well as low economic condition of the family, most of the deliveries takes place at home.

7.11. DELIVERY AT PARENTS' HOME

It is a practice for some women to go to parents home for delivery. Woman especially, belonging to the nuclear type of family go to parents' house for delivery so that she and her child will be properly taken care of. Detail information regarding the delivery at parents home is collected and given in table no.7.13.

TABLE NO.7.13.

Distribution of the respondents according to **having the delivery at the parents home**

Sr. No.	Parents' home for Delivery	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	59	42.1
2	Yes	19	11.9	31	22.1
3	No	106	66.3	50	35.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

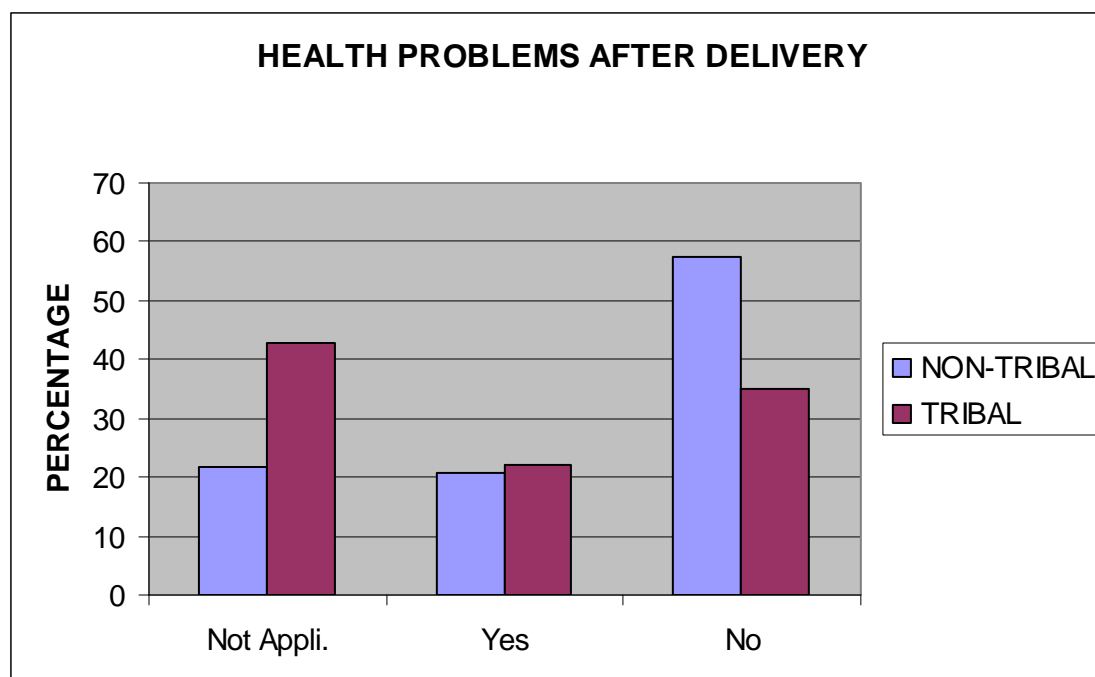
It is seen from the above table that 10% respondents of non-tribal communities and 22% respondents of tribal community go to their parents' home for delivery. However, 66% respondents in non-tribal communities and 36% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they do not go to parents home for delivery. Thus it is observed that going to the parents' home for delivery is prominently observed among the tribal communities than that of the non-tribals.

7.12. POST NATAL HEALTH

Anti-natal, pre natal and post natal care are crucial for the well being of the mother and child. High rate of infant and neo-natal mortality is the basic indicators of lack of proper care given to the child. Proper health care and regular health check-up is essential to maintain good health. Usually this problem is more prominent in rural undeveloped areas. The details about the health problem after delivery that is post natal care presented in following table no.7.14.

TABLE NO.7.14.Distribution of the respondents according to **health problems after delivery**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	60	42.9
2	Yes	33	20.6	31	22.1
3	No	92	57.5	49	35.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the above table that 21% respondents of non-tribal and 22% respondents of tribal community have reported that they have health problem after delivery or child birth. 35% tribal community respondents have reported that they do not have any health problem whereas this proportion in non-tribal community is considerably high 58%. This figure indicates that the tribal women have more problems than non tribal community. Thus, it is observed that tribal community women are facing health problems more than the non tribal community women.

7.13. STERILIZATION PRACTICE

Sterilization is one of the most effective methods of family planning. However, generally it is observed that it is less practiced in rural and tribal areas than the urban areas. The details regarding, Sterilization. Practices are given in table no.7.15.

TABLE NO.7.15.

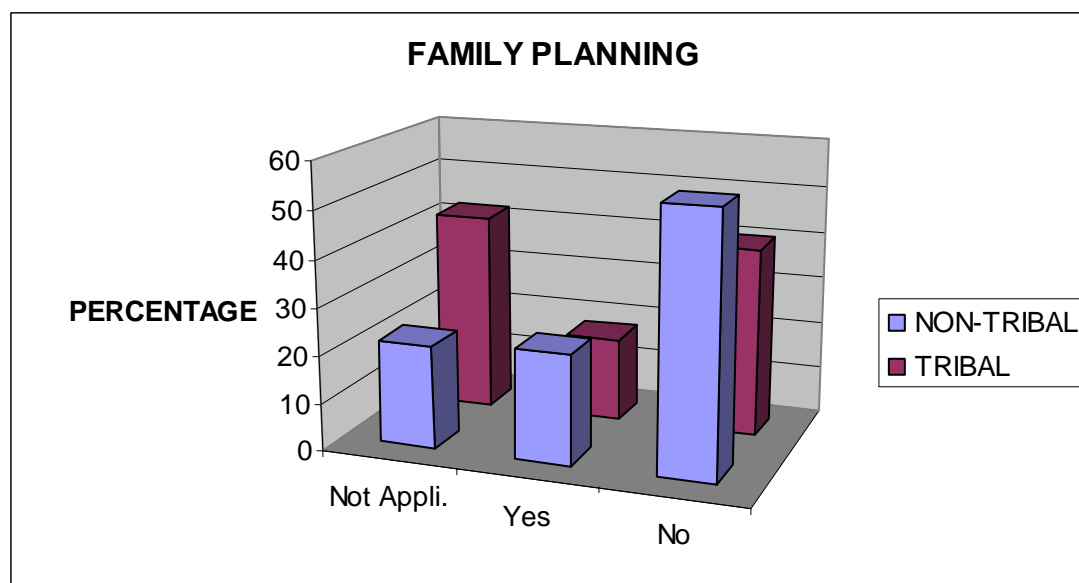
Distribution of the respondents according to **sterilization practice**

Sr. No.	Sterilization	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	59	42.1
2	Yes	25	15.6	28	20.0
3	No	100	62.5	53	37.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that 16% respondents of non-tribal and 20% respondents of tribal community have reported that they have undergone sterilization whereas 38% tribal community and 63% non-tribal community have reported that they do not undergo this procedure. In brief one can say that in spite of their condition more respondents of the tribal community have undergone sterilization than the non-tribal community. A probing question was asked about adoption of any family planning method. The detail about this is given in table no.7.16.

TABLE NO.7.16.Distribution of the respondents according to **family planning**

Sr. No.	Family planning	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	35	21.9	59	42.1
2	Yes	37	23.1	25	17.9
3	No	88	55.0	56	40.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table above that, 23% respondents of non-tribal and 18% respondents of tribal community have reported that they have adopted family planning whereas 40% tribal community and 55% non-tribal community are not adopted family planning method. In brief it is to say that family planning is adopted more in non-tribal communities than the tribal community. However the proportion of adopting family planning is low even in the non-tribal community.

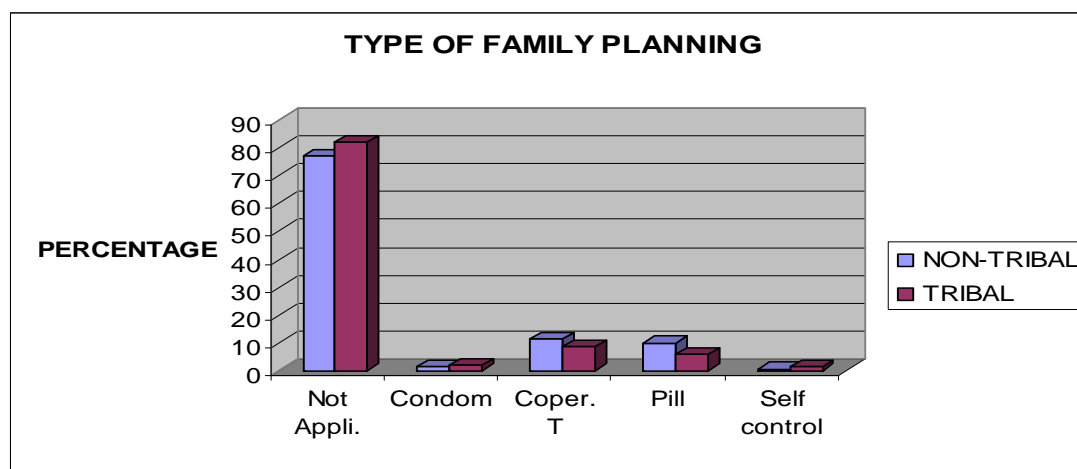
7.14. TYPE OF FAMILY PLANNING

In continuation of earlier table a probing question was asked about the type of family planning method they are using or they have adopted. Detail about this is given in table no.7.17.

TABLE NO.7.17.

Distribution of the respondents according to **type of family planning**

Sr. No.	Type	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	123	76.9	115	82.1
2	Condom	2	1.3	3	2.1
3	Copper T	18	11.3	12	8.6
4	Pill	16	10.0	8	5.7
5	Self control	1	.6	2	1.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



About 25% of the respondents of non tribal community have responded that condoms, copper T, oral pills and self control. These are the main family planning practices they have adopted. Among these, copper T is adapted by 12% persons and oral pills are adopted by 10% of the non-tribal respondents. As compared to non-tribal community, lesser number respondents of tribal community have adopted

family planning. Only 8% respondents of tribal community have adopted copper.T followed by 6% oral pills. Thus it is observed that between the tribal and the non-tribal communities, family planning methods are adapted more by non tribal community. This indicates that in tribal community family planning methods are not very popular. The details about the perception for not practicing any family planning practice was collected through the approving question and the responses re given in table no.7.18.

TABLE NO.7.18.

Distribution of the respondents according to **perception about not practicing any family planning practice**

Sr. No.	Reasons	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	31	19.4	3	2.1
2	Against religion	9	5.6	2	1.4
3	Financial problem	14	8.8	3	2.1
4	Husband not permit	25	15.6	9	6.4
5	No children	6	3.8	7	5.0
6	No specific	21	13.1	52	37.1
7	Not aware	2	1.3	1.3	67.5
8	Not encourage by society	11	6.9	13	9.3
9	Want to have more	5	3.1	3	2.1
10	Divorced	00	00	2	1.4
11	Leave it to God's hand	00	00	11	7.9
12	Separated	00	00	2	1.4
14	NRSP	36	22.5	25	17.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that 6% non tribal community and 2% tribal community respondents have reported that they do not adopt family planning because, it is against by their religion. Particularly, Islam religion is against the family planning. Financial problems are put forward by about 9% non tribal community and 2% tribal community. This explanation is not justifiable because there is hardly connection between financial problems and family planning practices. About 16% of the non tribal community and 6% tribal community have reported that their husband is not permitting for family planning practice. This aspect clearly indicates the dominant nature of the husband on the wife. Woman does not have any say or right over her own body and number of children she wish to have. Though women in non-tribal community are comparatively more empowered she does not have any right to decide number whether to adopt family planning. About 4% respondents of both communities have expresses that they do not have any child. Considerably high proportions of respondents in tribal community have reported that they are not aware about the family planning. Not encourage by the society or family members is 9% in tribal community and 7% in non tribal community. 8% respondents of tribal community have reported that they do not adopt any family planning method because they leave it to God about how many children they will have. Therefore, it is observed that there is large number of respondents who are not aware about the family planning is more in tribal community. Hence, there is urgent and utmost need to educate the women about the family planning especially in rural areas. With regard to this a probing question was asked the motivator or person who has encouraged adopting the family planning. The details are given in table no.7.19.

TABLE NO.7.19.Distribution of the respondents according to **the motivator for family planning**

Sr. No.	Motivator	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
	Not Applicable	31	19.4	52	37.1
1	My husband and I	15	9.4	9	6.4
2	My in-laws	6	3.8	3	2.1
3	My own decision	17	10.6	10	7.1
4	No children	6	3.8	7	5.0
5	Doctors	00	00	3	2.1
6	NRSP	85	53.1	56	40.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.00

It is seen from table above that 9% non tribal community and 6% tribal community have reported they are motivated by the husband and herself. About 4% non tribal community and 2% tribal community have reported their in-laws are the motivators. 11% of non-tribal and 7% tribal respondents reported that it is their own decision to adopt the family planning. 2% respondents of tribal community have reported that they are motivated or advised by the Doctors. Frequency of the consult about family planning is given in following table no.7.20.

TABLE NO.7.20.Distribution of the respondents according to **advice of doctor**

Sr. No.	Doctor's advice	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Occasionally	36	22.5	19	13.6
3	At regular intervals	2	1.3	2	1.4
4	Occasionally	36	22.5	19	13.6
5	Once	2	1.3	2	1.4
6	No children	6	3.8	7	5.0
7	No	50	31.3	41	29.3
8	NRSP	35	21.9	17	12.1
	Total	100.0	160	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that about 23% respondents of tribal community and 14% respondents sought advice occasionally but the respondents who have sought advice at regular interval are very negligible. Very few respondents of both communities have sought advice only once considerably high proportions of respondents have never sought any device. Thus it is observed that after adapting family planning very few respondents seek advice from doctors.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, factors related to health status of the women have been discussed as there is close connection between the health of women and their empowerment process. This includes the hereditary sickness, availability of health facilities, practice of proper health care, vaccination, availability of proper nutrition, perception of its harmful effect, sex determination, place of delivery, sterilization practices and various aspect of family planning. Following is the brief summary of all these points. As regards to the hereditary sickness, it is prominently observed

among non-tribal communities whereas the proportion is negligible among the tribal community. The distance of health facilities available are about 1 to 2 km is by half of the respondents of both communities while 3 to 6km away are also observed in both the communities. Proper health care is more available to women of non-tribal community whereas in tribal community it is comparatively neglected. As regard to vaccination of children the overall situation is very poor. However, non tribal community families are more aware and balanced diet or nutrition is available in non-tribal community whereas in tribal community availability of nutrition is very poor. As regard to habits various habits (chewing tobacco, pan, and drinking alcohol) are observed women in non-tribal community, whereas in tribal community families more awareness about harmful effect of bad habits is observed. Regularity in medical check up during pregnancy is observed in non tribal community while tribal communities are lacking in this regard. In both communities the curiosity is observed about the sex, whereas the sex determination test has been conducted more by non-tribal community. Better food is available for pregnant women in non-tribal community and delivery at home observed more in tribal community. Various methods of family planning is practiced more among the non tribal communities and among the various reasons for not practicing any family planning is the lack of awareness among most of the respondents of tribal community. To conclude this chapter, it is evidently seen that between the tribal community and non-tribal community, women in non-tribal communities have better condition than the tribal community in various aspects of health which is an excellent indicator of women empowerment.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

8. INTRODUCTION

The Indian society is deeply rooted in various religious beliefs. Hinduism is the most predominant religion, followed by Islam, Sikhism and Christianity. In Manipur, majority of the non-tribals follow Hinduism and some do follow the other religions such as Islam and so on. Among the tribals, Christianity is the predominant religion. Earlier, the tribals in Manipur had their own traditional religion which was generally known as Animism. However, after the influence of Christianity brought by the missionaries from the west, most of the tribals have converted to Christianity.

The political environment in India is mainly dominated by the males. A very small percentage of women participate in political activities of the country. However women have proved their prowess equally with their male counterparts. They have also taken part in leading the country for many years as strong political leaders. In spite of the legislations that allow equal participation of women in the political field, the tribal women as well as the non-tribal women of Manipur have not been able to exhibit their full representation. The reason being –male domination and also less encouragement from the family members. The details of the working of religious and political factors on women empowerment have been explained in the preceding paragraphs and a statistical and pictorial presentation of the same is also given below.

8.1. RELIGION OF FOREFATHERS'

As discussed earlier, there is a phase of change in religion, since the last two generations. Therefore to know the change in religion a question was asked about the religion of grandparents'. Information is collected and given in table no.8.1

TABLE NO.8.1.Distribution of the respondents according to **forefathers' religion**

Sr. No.	Forefathers' religion	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Hinduism	127	79.4	00	00
3	Islam	19	11.9	00	00
4	Christianity	00	00	63	45.0
5	Tribal religion	00	00	77	55.0
6	Meitei traditional religion	8	5.0	00	00
6	Don't know	6	3.8	00	00
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that about 80% of the respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that the religion of their forefathers' was Hinduism and 11% of the respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that Islam was their forefathers' religion. 5% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that their forefathers' religion was the traditional Meitei religion. About 4% of the non-tribal respondents do not know about their forefathers' religion. However, 45% respondents of the tribal communities have reported that their forefathers' religion was Christianity whereas 55% of tribal respondents have reported that tribal religion known as animism was their forefathers' religion. Thus it is observed that there has been a shift in religion especially among the tribals. The information about the original religion of the converted individuals has also been collected and in the following table no.8.2.

TABLE NO. 8.2.

Distribution of the respondents according to the **original religion (before conversion)**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Christianity	2	1.3	83	59.3
2	Born Christian	00	00	56	40.0
3	No conversion	00	00	1	.7
4	Hindu	138	86.3	00	00
5	NRSP	158	98.8	00	00
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

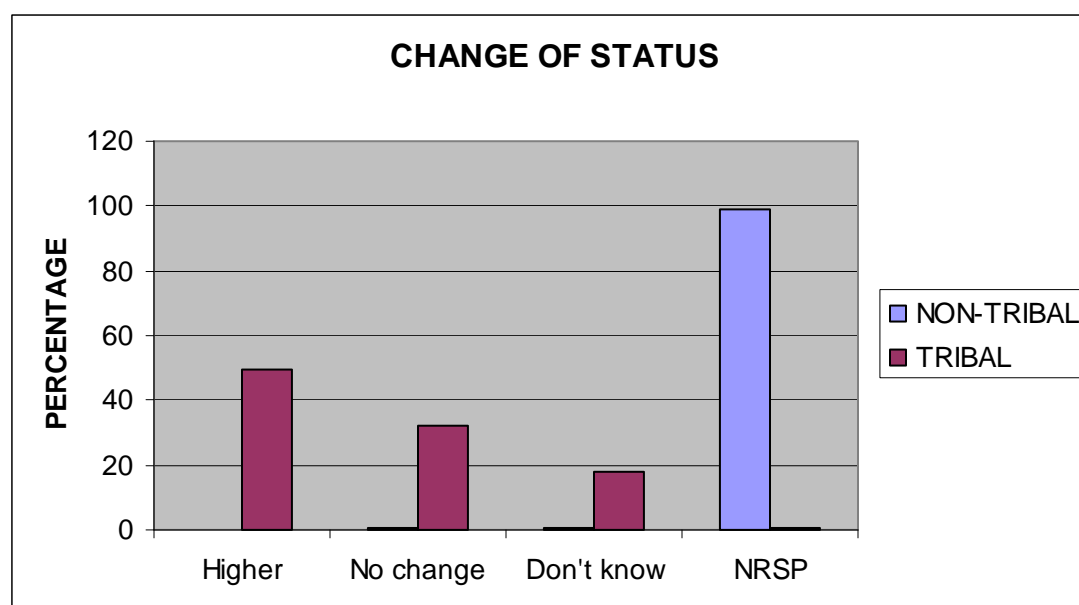
This table also shows that there is hardly any change in the religion among the non-tribal communities. Only 1% respondents of the non-tribal communities have converted into Christianity. 40% respondents of the tribal communities have reported that they are Christians from the time they were born. This indicates that their parents or grand-parents were already Christians. However, 59% of the respondents of the tribal community have reported that they are converted to Christianity. Therefore it is seen that conversion is observed more among the tribal communities rather than the non-tribal communities.

8.2. CHANGE IN STATUS

There is general impression that change in religion will automatically help to improve the status of the individual. The perception about this was collected and given in table no.8.3.

TABLE NO.8.3.Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **change of status**

Sr. No.	Status change	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Higher	00	00	69	49.3
2	No change	1	.6	45	32.1
3	Don't know	1	.6	25	17.9
4	NRSP	158	98.8	1	.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



According to the table above, about 99% of non-tribal community respondents have not reported anything in response to this question; whereas 50% of the tribal community respondents have reported that their status is higher after conversion. 31% respondents have reported that there is no change in their social status after they have changed their religion. About 18% respondents of tribal community reported that they do not know whether their status is affected or not. However there has been changed in the attitude among tribal community respondents and are of the opinion that this change has helped in improving their social status.

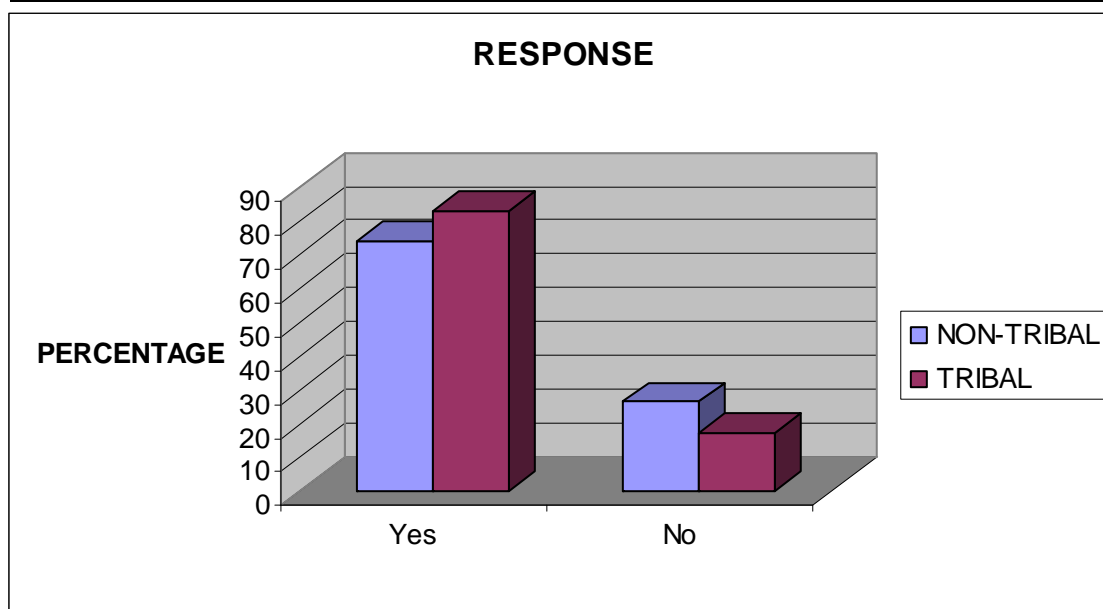
8.3. RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOUR

As discussed in the introductory part of this chapter there is significant impact of religion on general behavior. The details about practicing the values, ethics and culture of their own religion have been collected and given in table no.8.4.

TABLE NO.8.4.

Distribution of the respondents according to **following one's religion.**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	118	73.8	116	82.9
2	No	42	26.3	24	17.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the above table that 74% of the non-tribal community respondents and 83% tribal community respondents are following various religious practices very fervently. 26% of the non-tribal communities and 17% of the tribal communities have reported that they do not follow the religious principles in their social life. Thus it is observed in Manipur that a majority of the respondents

especially from the tribal community are following the norms, values, and the ethics of their religion in their day to day life.

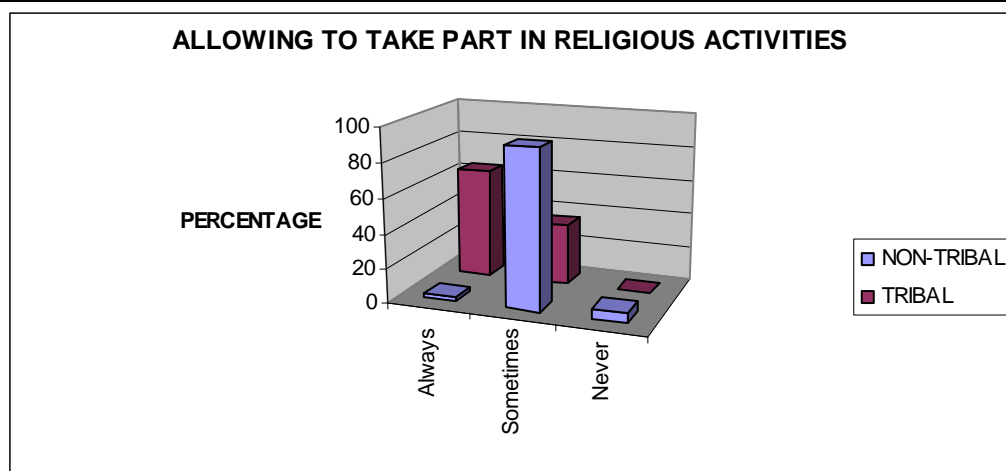
8.4. ACTIVE PART IN RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

Active participation in religious activities indicates the empowerment of women in religion. Religion can also play important roles in women's development. For instance some religions have prescribed strict norms for the women; some religions strictly restrict the participation of women in the religious activities. The details in this regards is given in table no.8.5.

TABLE NO.8.5.

Distribution of the respondents according to the **involvement of religious ceremonies.**

Sr. No.	Involvement in religious ceremonies	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Always	4	2.5	90	64.3
2	Sometimes	147	91.9	50	35.7
3	Never	9	5.6	00	00
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the above table that more respondents of tribal communities take active part in various religious ceremonies. Only 3% of the non-tribal communities have reported that some times they take active part in religious ceremonies whereas 64% respondents of tribal community have reported that they always take active part in various religious activities. 36% of the tribal respondents have reported that they are take active part in various religious and cultural activities sometimes only while significant number 92% of the respondents of the non-tribal community have reported they sometimes participate. Thus from this information, it is seen that the tribal respondents have more freedom take active part in religious activities than those of the non-tribal communities.

8.5. PERMISSION TO TAKE PART IN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN THE MOSQUE, CHURCH AND TEMPLE

In continuation of earlier table a probing question was asked about whether women get the permission to take part in various activities conducted by religious institutions such as the mosques, churches and temples. This information is important as it may be indicator of women empowerment. The details in this regard are given in table no.8.6.

TABLE NO.8.6.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about the **permission to take part in the Mosques/Churches/Temples activities.**

Sr. No.	Permission	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	No	20	12.5	00	00
2	Yes	140	87.5	140	100.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that 100% of the respondents of tribal community have reported that they are allowed or free to take active part in Church activities.

About 88% of the respondents of the non-tribal community have reported that they are allowed to take part in religious activities. Interestingly 13% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that they are not allowed to take part in religious activities. Thus it is observed that the respondents of the tribal communities have more freedom in taking part in religious activities as compared to the respondents of the non-tribal community. Further details about the mode of participation was collected and given in table no.8.7

TABLE NO.8.7.

Distribution of the respondents according to **the modes of practice**

Sr. No.	Mode of practice	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Worship, leading prayer, preaching, religious Teacher	00	00	63	45.0
3	Prayer only	102	63.8	00	00
4	Worship	36	22.5	18	12.9
5	Worship and leading prayer	2	1.3	41	29.3
6	NRSP	20	12.5	00	00
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the table above that 64% of the non-tribal community respondents have reported that they take active part in prayer and 23% respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they take part in worship. Negligent number of them reported they take part in worship and also leading in prayer. 45% from the tribal communities have reported that they can take active part in various activities in worship, leading prayer, preaching or becoming religious teacher. 13% of the respondents have reported that they can take active part through worship and leading prayer. Therefore it is seen that respondents of the tribal communities have various activities to take active part in, whereas for the non-tribal respondents the opportunities are comparatively lesser.

8.6. PERCEPTION ABOUT POSITION OF WOMEN IN RELIGION

One finds that there is specific position of women in religion. The perception about the position varies from place to place depending upon the local culture and atmosphere. The details about happiness or satisfaction about the position of women in religion is given in following table no.8.8.

TABLE NO.8.8.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **happiness with the position of women in religion**

Sr. No.	Happiness	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	150	93.8	119	85.0
2	No	10	6.3	21	15.0
7.9	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

About 94% of respondents of non-tribal community and 85% respondents of tribal; community are happy with the present status of women in their respective religions 6% of the non-tribal respondents and 15% of the tribal respondents have reported that they are satisfied or happy about the position of women in religion. Thus it is seen that less satisfaction is observed among the tribal communities. Women in non-tribal communities are happy with their position in their religion.

8.7. ATTITUDES TOWARDS RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Some religions restricted the women in taking active part in religious ceremonies or activities. A probing question was asked as to whether women feel honored and respected when taking part in such activities. Their response to this is given in table no.8.9&10.

TABLE NO.8.9.

Distribution of the respondents according to **perception about the feeling of being honored in religious activities**

Sr. No.	Feeling of honored	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	9	5.6		
2	Yes	131	81.9	65	46.4
3	No feeling	20	12.5	75	53.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that about 83% of the respondents of non-tribal communities have reported that they have very positive feelings of being honored in taking part in various religious activities and about 13% of the non-tribal community respondents have reported that they do not have any feelings being honored in taking part in religious activities. As regard, to the respondents of the tribal community, only 46% of them have reported that they have positive feelings of being honored in taking part whereas about 54% respondents of tribal community have reported that they do not feel anything in taking part in religious activities. Feeling of honor is observed more among the non-tribal respondents than the tribal respondents.

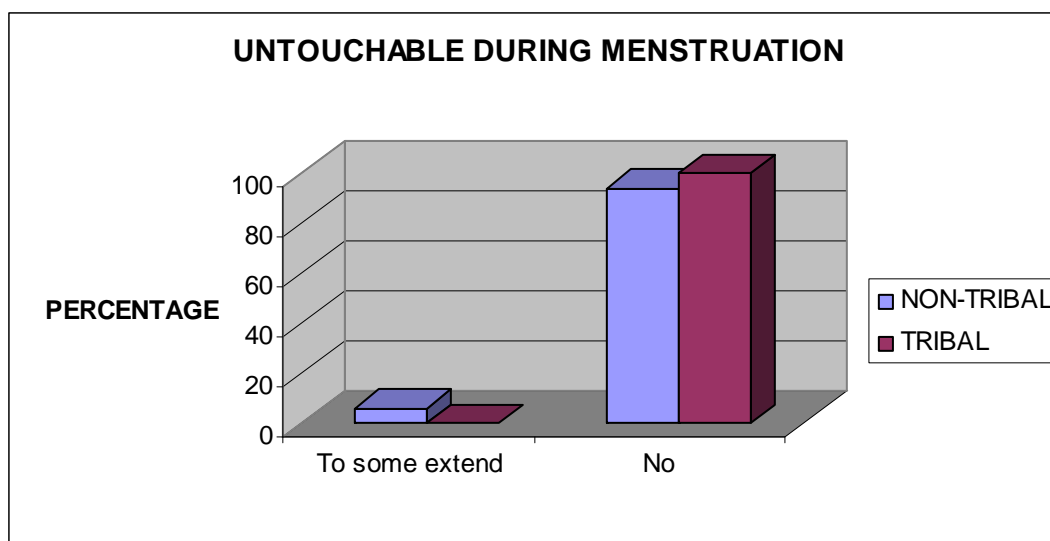
8.8. CULTURAL PRACTICES DURING MENSTRUATION

It is a common practice among the Hindus to place a lot of restrictions on women during her menstrual cycle. She is also restricted in her very much in her religious activities. The concept of purity and impurity is associated with such treatment. The detail about the same is given in table no.8.11.

TABLE NO.8.10.

Distribution of the respondents according to the perception about **restriction during menstruation cycle.**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	To some extend	10	6.3	00	00
2	No	150	93.8	140	100.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

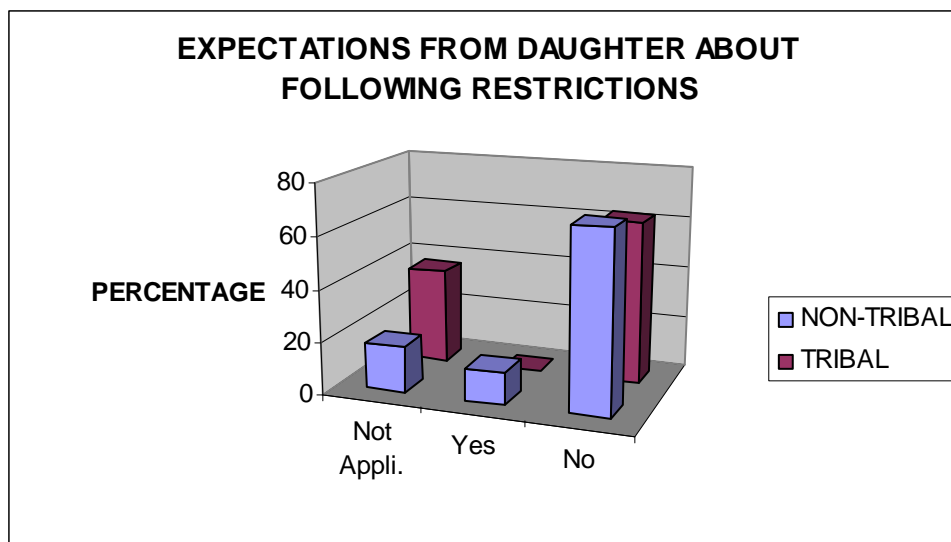


It is seen from the above table that about 6% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that they agree to some extent that woman is impure during menstruation. Whereas 100% of the tribal and 96% of the non-tribal respondents do not agree to this concept. Further, a probing question was asked about the isolation or untouchability during menstruation and about the restrictions imposed on their daughters.

TABLE NO.8.11.

Distribution of the respondents according to **expectations from daughter about following restriction**

Sr. No.	Expectation	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	29	18.1	52	37.1
2	Yes	20	12.5	00	00
3	No	111	69.4	88	62.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table that about 65-66% respondents of both communities have reported that they will not insist such restrictions on their daughters. This clearly indicates that parents have changes in their mindset consistent with the scientific approach to health practices and welfare of the women.

8.9. PRACTICE OF PURDAH

The system of Purdah is practiced in the Muslim communities. The sample consists of only (12.5%) respondents from the Muslim community. Details about whether Purdah system is practiced among the Muslims of Manipur or not is collected and given in table no.8.13.

TABLE NO.8.12.Distribution of the respondents according to **practice of purdah**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	140	87.5	140	100.0
2	Yes	20	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table 100% of the Muslims are following the Purdah system in Manipur.

8.10. ENDOGAMOUS MARRIAGE

Due to migration and the cultural advancement cross-cultural marriages are taking place today, which was not encourage earlier by the traditional societies of the tribal communities . The details in this regard is given in table no.8.14.

TABLE NO.8.13.Distribution of the respondents according to **marriage within own tribe**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	160	100.0	00	00
2	Yes	00	00	125	89.3
3	No	00	00	15	10.7
	Total	160	100.0	140	140

It is seen from the above table that 89% of the respondents of the tribal community have reported that they marry within their own tribe while 11% of the respondents of tribal community have reported that they do not mind marriage outside their

community. Thus I have observed that endogamy is still quite widely practiced among the tribal communities.

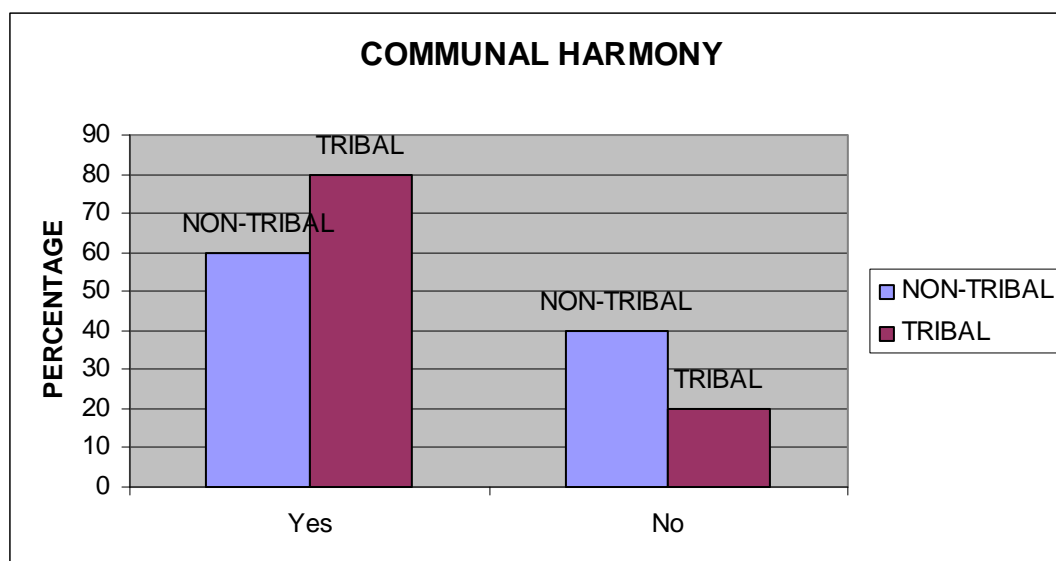
8.11. COMMUNAL HARMONY

Communal harmony within the society is one of the most important aspects for social development. In spite of the vast majority of numerous caste groups, creed, culture and religion there is a preference to live harmoniously with one another. The perception about communal harmony is given in table no.8.15.

TABLE NO.8.14.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about **communal harmony**

Sr. No.	Communal harmony	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	96	60.0	112	80.0
2	No	64	40.0	28	20.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the above table that 80% tribal community respondents and 60% non-tribal community respondents have reported that they observed communal

harmony which helps to enhance or strengthen the process of women empowerment. There are several factors that bind different communities together such as economic activities, social gatherings, festivals, marriages etc. seen in table no.8.16

TABLE NO.8.16.

Distribution of the respondents according to perception about the **occasion of communal harmony**

Sr. No.	Occasion	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Applicable	84	52.5	28	20.0
2	All	41	25.6	58	41.1
3	Economic	9	5.6	17	12.1
4	Festival	5	3.1	4	2.9
5	Socio-economic	21	13.1	33	23.6
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that socio-economic activities and festivals are some of the main factors that bind the community together. 26% of the non-tribal and 41% of the tribal respondents have reported that different communities come together in all these activities. 12% of the tribal communities and 6% of the non-tribal communities have reported that people come together for economic activities. Festivals are the main occasions that exhibit communal harmony as reported by 3% of the respondents of both communities. 24% of the tribal respondents and 13% non-tribal respondents have reported that socio-economic factors are the factors for communal harmony. 41% of the tribal respondents and 26% non-tribal respondents have reported that these occasions bring the community members together and there is utmost satisfaction experienced.

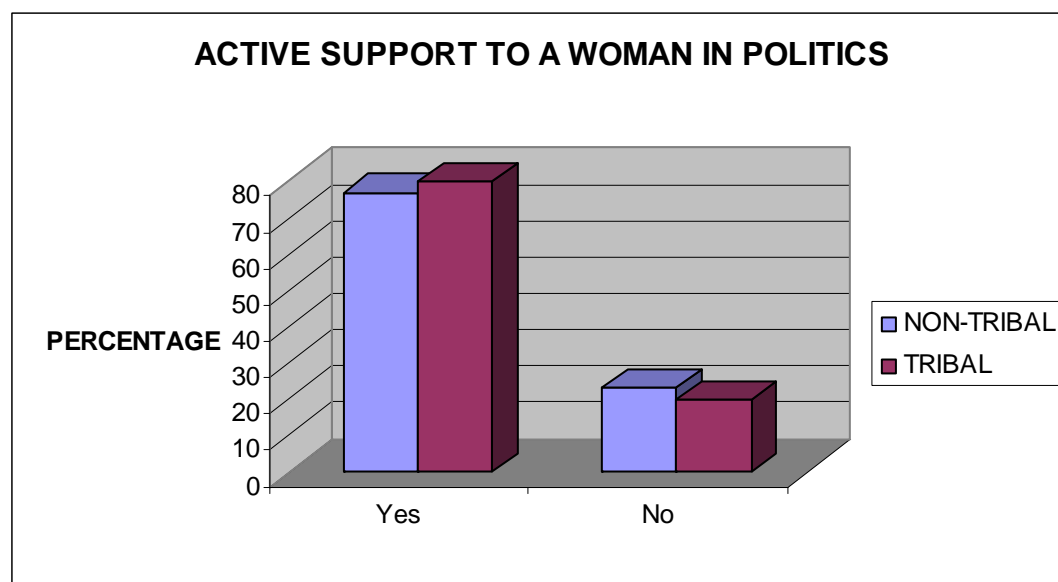
8.12. SUPPORT FOR WOMEN IN POLITICS

The ninety-third constitutional amendment of India has encouraged women to take active part in politics. In this case, the women belonging to the tribal community are not very advanced. However this constitutional amendment has encouraged women in politics. This is one of the most crucial aspects of empowerment of women. The details about the active support of relatives/ family members to the women who are in politics is given in table no.8.17.

TABLE NO.8.16.

Distribution of the respondents according to **active support to a woman in politics**

Sr. No.	Active support	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
2	Yes	123	76.9	112	80.0
3	No	37	23.1	28	20.0
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

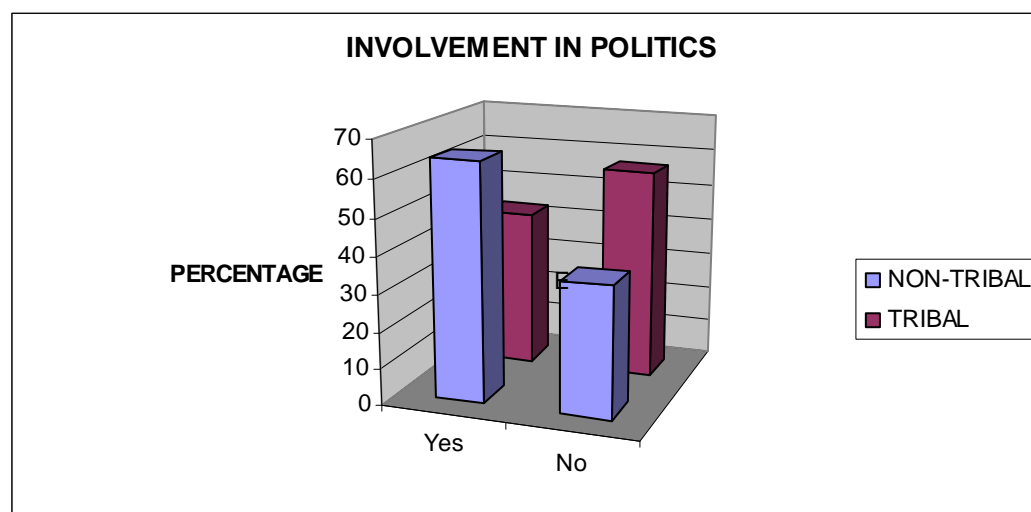


It is seen from the table above that 80% of the respondents of the tribal communities and 77% of the non-tribal communities have reported that they get very strong support from their family members. This indicates that there is adequate scope for their empowerment. 23% respondents of non-tribal and 20% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they are not supported by the family or society to take part in politics. In this connection the perception about involvement of women in politics is also given in table no.8.18.

TABLE NO.8.17.

Distribution of the respondents according to **involvement in politics**

Sr. No.	Involvement	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	103	64.4	60	42.9
2	No	57	35.6	80	57.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table above those 43% of the respondents of the tribal communities and 65% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that they are actively involve in politics. However 37% of the non-tribal and 57% of the tribal respondents have reported that they are not involved in

politics. Thus it can be said that political participation of women is observed more among non-tribal communities rather than the tribal communities.

8.13. BROAD AREAS OF INVOLVEMENT

In continuation of above discussion a probing question was asked about the broad areas for active involvement of women in politics. The details in this regards is given in table no.8.19.

TABLE NO.8.18.

Distribution of the respondents according to **reasons for active involvement**

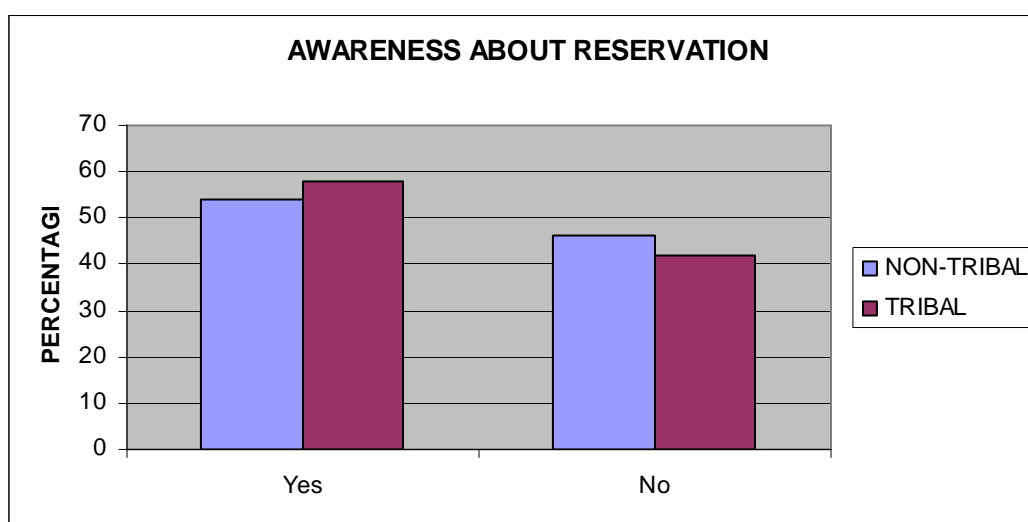
Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Decision maker	4	2.5	00	00
2	Panchayat	3	1.9	00	00
3	Party worker	3	1.9	1	.7
4	Voting	93	58.1	59	42.1
5	NRSP	57	35.6	80	57.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that 58% respondents of non-tribal and 42% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they take part in voting or casting their votes during elections. Involvement as party workers is reported by a negligible number of non-tribal respondents. However, most of the respondents of both tribal and non-tribal communities have not responded to this question. This indicates that active participation in politics is still lacking in both the communities. In continuation of this table, information about the awareness of reservation of women in politics is collected and given in table no.8.20.

TABLE NO.8.19.

Distribution of the respondents according to **awareness about reservation for women in the political field.**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	86	53.8	81	57.9
2	No	74	46.3	59	42.1
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

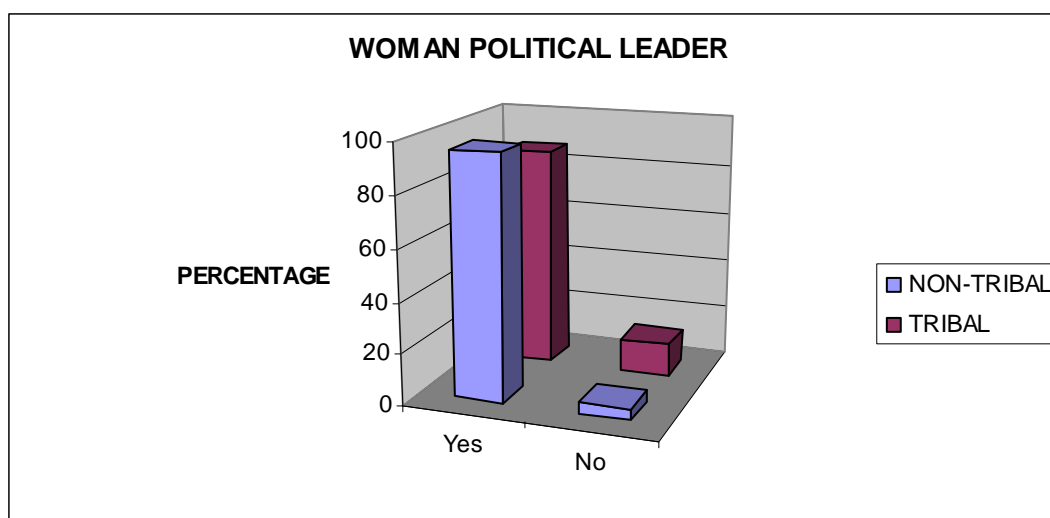


It is seen from the above table that hardly 55% of the respondents of tribal communities and non-tribal communities are aware about reservation. This indicates that in Manipur there is a need of motivation for awareness about women's reservation. In continuation of this question and informal question was asked about the information about women political leaders. The same is given in table no.8.21.

TABLE NO.8.20.

Distribution of the respondents according to **information about woman political leaders**

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	153	95.6	122	87.1
2	No	7	4.4	18	12.9
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table that 89% of the respondents of the tribal communities and 96% of the non-tribal respondents have reported that they acknowledge women political leaders. This indicates that, though women are not encouraged by the family or society as a whole, they do involve in politics to a certain extent and acknowledge women political leaders.

8.14. INFORMATION ABOUT WOMENS' ORGANISATIONS

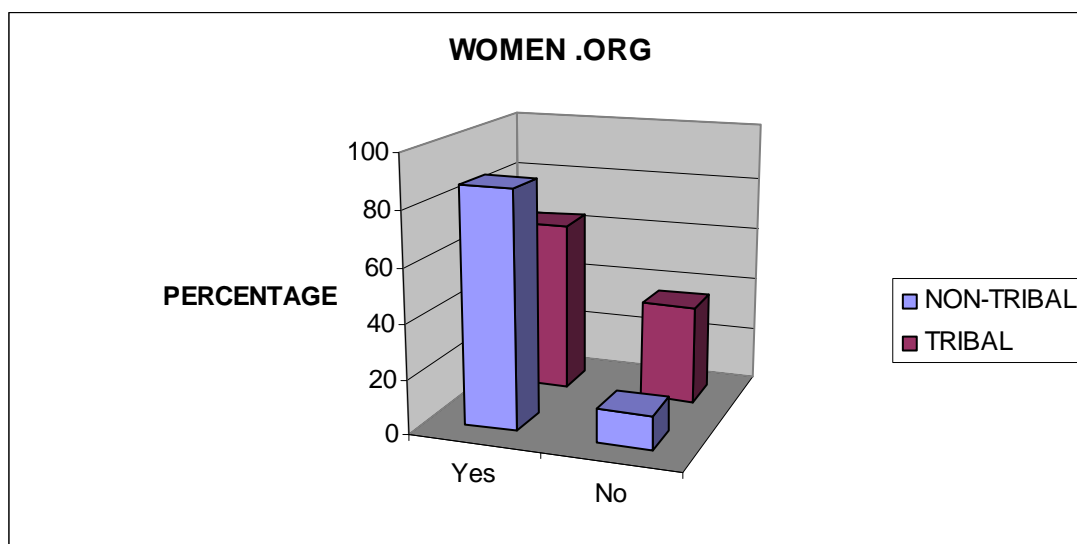
An informal question was asked about the availability of women's organizations either in village or city. This is an important aspect because the women

organizations serve the basic purpose for women empowerment. The detail about the same is given in table no.8.22.

TABLE NO.8.21.

Distribution of the respondents according to information about availability of women organizations

Sr. No.	Response	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	140	87.5	89	63.6
2	No	20	12.5	51	36.4
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0



It is seen from the table that about 64% of the respondents of the tribal communities and 88% the respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that there are women organizations in their localities. It would be interesting to know how far they are associated with these organizations. Following are some of the women organization as reported by the respondents: Apunba Ima rup, Khagenpali Apunba Lup, Meira paibi, Mahila Mandals, Christian women association, Kuki Women Union, Mother association, Naga women society, Ramji

women society, Rural women upliftment, Self help group, Women development, Women society, Women upliftment society, Zomi mother organization.

8.15. INVOLVEMENT OF FAMILY MEMBERS

Male members or sons are always encouraged and supported to take part in politics while female members or daughters are expected to sit at home and do the entire domestic work. An informal question was asked as to whom the respondents will support a son or a daughter if they are equally qualified to take part in politics. Detail about their perception about involvement of son or daughter in politics is given in table no. 8.23.

TABLE NO.8.22.

Distribution of the respondents according to **involvement of son or daughter in politics**

Sr. No.	Reasons	Non-Tribal		Tribal	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Can't say	20	12.5	12	8.6
2	Daughter	20	12.5	17	12.1
3	For them to decide	2	1.3	14	10.0
4	Son	118	73.8	97	69.3
	Total	160	100.0	140	100.0

It is seen from the above table that about 74% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities and 70% of the respondents of the tribal communities have reported that they would like support their son in active politics, whereas 12% of the respondents of both communities have reported that they would like to support their daughter in active politics. About 13% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities and 9% of the respondents of the tribal communities did not comment on this aspect. The rest of the respondents of both communities have left this decision to their children. Thus, from this information I can infer that the son is preferably given more encouragement in politics.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, factors related to religious and political status of women have been discussed as it is quite evident that there is a close connection between religious and political status of women and their empowerment. This includes respondents' grand-parents religion, respondents' religion, and conversion from one religion to another, participation of respondents in religious activities, position of women in religion, support of women in politics, respondents' political participation, and women organizations.

As regard to respondents' grand-parents' religion, most of the non-tribal grand-parents follow Hinduism, traditional Meitei's religion also observed. Islam is practiced by some of the non-tribal communities. Traditional tribal religion or Animism was followed by many of the older generations of the tribal communities. Conversion is observed more among tribal communities than the non-tribal communities. Opinion of changing religion helped in improving their social status more evident among tribal respondents than the non-tribal respondents. Respondents of the tribal communities have more freedom to take active part in religious activities than the non-tribal communities. However, though higher participation in religious activities, non-satisfaction or unhappiness of women's position is observed more in tribal communities than among the non-tribal communities. Women in non-tribal communities are happy about their position in their religious area.

About 80% of the respondents of the tribal communities and 60% of the respondents of the non-tribal communities have reported that they observed communal harmony which helps to enhance or strengthen the process of women empowerment. Endogamous marriages among the tribal communities are still predominant even today. Purdah system is practiced by the Muslims in Manipur. Feeling of honor due to participation in religious rituals is observed more among the non-tribal respondents than the tribal respondents.

Participation in decision-making, party worker are reportedly negligible in number in both the communities. This indicates that participation of women in politics is still lacking. Preference or support of son to participate in politics is the rule of the day in both the communities.

CHAPTER IX

9.1. CONCLUSION

Women empowerment is an ongoing process. However there are many factors such as socio-economic, political, religious, cultural, physical and mental conditions, that play a vital role in either slowing down this process or encouraging this process on a fast pace. Today, women are being gradually recognized as important, powerful and meaningful contributors to the life of men and society, but till a few decades back their condition was pitiable. Ideologies, institutional practices and the existing norms in society have contributed much to their exploitation rather than their progress and growth as worthy and useful citizens of any country and also inhibited their capability to compete with their male counterparts in all walks of life.

In spite of the legislative measures adopted in favor of women in our society after independence, the explosion of education, the liberality of many parents in giving equal opportunities to their daughters, and growth of careers that are woman oriented, countless women in many urban as well as underprivileged rural areas of India still continue to be victims of the consequences of illiteracy, exploitation, harassment and deprivation of rights and privileges.

As a woman myself, his prompted me to take up the study of the process of empowerment among the women of Manipur and present a comparative picture of the process of empowerment among the tribal as well as the non-tribal communities of some of the prominent districts of Manipur. Also to analyze the various social, economic, cultural, religious, political and occupational factors that have an important bearing on the process of empowerment of women of Manipur; to find out if these factors inhibited or encouraged the empowerment process. The preceding paragraphs consist of the brief summary of my entire research work; the significant conclusions reached have also been mentioned. Based on my study I have also listed some valuable suggestions.

Majority of the respondents, from both the tribal as well as non-tribal communities were generally between the age groups 25-40 years. 88% of the non-tribal respondents were from the urban areas while 90% of the tribal respondents come from rural areas. Child marriage is not a common practice in both the communities, however early marriages of girls below 18 years (1.9%) is observed among the non-tribal communities (refer table no. 4.1, page 160).

Parents of respondents of non-tribal communities were found to be more educated than those of the tribal communities. It was also found that percentage of educated husbands was more in non-tribal communities that is about 78%, than among the tribals (54%). These positive factors have contributed to the fact that the respondents selected from the non-tribal areas were more educated than the respondents of the tribal communities. From this it can be reiterated that education does play a very significant role in the empowerment process. Among the women of Manipur education, has played a very important role in the empowerment process (refer table no.3.8. page.139).

The type of family setup as well as the size of the family was also considered, to see if it played a significant role in the process of empowerment among women. Joint family system was observed prominently in non-tribal communities whereas surprisingly nuclear family setup was observed more among the tribals. (refer table no.3.15, page 152). Size of family in non-tribal communities is comparatively larger than the tribal communities as joint family system is predominantly followed by the non-tribal community (refer table no. 3.10, page 143). However the type of family setup has not hindered the non-tribal women of Manipur from being empowered, thus from this I can conclude that the type of family does not have an important bearing on women empowerment however, the attitude of the family towards a woman's progress is what really matters. Many families of the respondents of the non-tribal communities have respected the aspirations and capabilities of their womenfolk and encouraged them to go ahead. As far as the tribal communities are concerned, it is not the family type or size that has been an

inhibiting factor in women empowerment, rather the socio-economic condition of the families that have slowed down the process of empowerment among their women.

As far as age at marriage of the respondents is concerned, though negligent percentage (1.9%) have reported to get married before 18 years of age, a majority of people from both the communities get married at the age between 18-25 years. In relation to the age difference between the husband and wife, it was observed that about 70% respondents of non-tribal communities have 1 to 5 years of difference, whereas among the tribal communities the age difference was comparatively more. It is generally believed that women are faster after child birth therefore men usually prefer to take a woman who is much younger than him as his wife. This wide disparity in age has to a certain extent prevented an open and friendly relationship to develop between the husband and wife therefore many a times the women's aspirations remain dormant. Thus I find age disparity as inhibiting factor in the empowerment process of women especially those belonging to the tribal communities of Manipur.

As stated earlier, large size of family is observed among the non-tribal communities, therefore, number of respondents staying with in-laws is observed more in non-tribal communities (60%) than the tribal communities (40%). From my observation I have found out that the women living with husband's kin do have restrictions imposed on them and to a certain extent the in-laws do become an inhibiting factor in the process of their empowerment. However among the tribals this is not very significant as other cultural factors have an important bearing on their empowerment process.

Considerable difference is observed among the tribal and non-tribal respondents in the amount of respect received from the family members. 68% of the respondents from tribal communities and 83% respondents from the non-tribal communities have reported that they are well respected by their family members. As we have

said earlier, since the non-tribal women have access to more opportunities of education, career options and employment, I have observed that the non-tribal women are well respected in their families as well as in the society.

Only 32% respondents of non-tribal communities and 27% respondents of tribal communities have reported that they have regular contact with their parents after marriage. This shows how far women have freedom to keep regular contact with their own parents whenever they like to. Majority of the respondents in both the communities have reported that they are being controlled by the family (refer table no. 4.7, page 160). In spite of their education, job and income, women are controlled by the family. The father and the husband are reported to be the main members of the family who control women among the tribals whereas the husband and in-laws are reported to be the main persons who exercise authority on women among the tribal communities of Manipur (refer table no. 4.8, page 169). The non-tribal communities have reported to be more in favor of being under control however, more respondents of tribal community have reported to be uncomfortable or unhappy of being under control (refer table no. 4.9, page 171). This points to male autocracy however has not significantly seen to affect the process of empowerment among the women of Manipur.

Discussions between husband and wife on family matters is observed in both the communities however respondents of tribal communities are freer with the spouse than the non-tribal communities (refer table no. 4.12, page 175).

With regards to number of children, majority of the respondents in both the communities prefer to have 2-4 children. Preference of son is observed in both the communities. The sex ratio of Manipur state according to 2001 census is 978 females to 1000 males. Some of the common reasons expressed by the respondents over the preference of a male child to that of a female child is for the reasons that the son will be more capable, he carries the name of the family and the lineage forward into the future and also he will be the moral and physical support of the

parents once they grow old. Daughters are considered to be a burden for the family, less capable, and somebody else's property after marriage. The daughter is not considered to be a permanent member of her parents' family (refer to table no. 4.17, page 182). This attitude has contributed to the slowing down of the empowerment process among women.

When it came to settlement of familial differences, majority of the respondents of both the communities have reported that they just keep quiet in order to solve the differences or problem. They do not speak up or argue for their rights. However, 20% of the non-tribal and 24% of the tribal respondents have reported that they expressed their views and articulate their views when solving differences between the spouses (refer table no. 4.20, page 186). This is one of the excellent indicators of women empowerment that I have observed among the women of Manipur.

Monogamy is dominantly followed by both tribal (100%) and non-tribal (86%) community in Manipur however, there are about 14% of individuals among non-tribal communities practice polygyny.

The plight of divorced women is not very good. The divorced women are generally not supported morally by members of both the communities. However, they are not restricted from participating in various social activities in both the communities. There is no difference in the perception among the widows in both the tribal and non-tribal communities. However, supportive treatment is comparatively high in tribal communities than non-tribal communities. Lower social status of widows, divorcees and separated women is observed in both tribal and non-tribal communities (refer see table no. 5.7&8, page 201&2). This is not healthy for the progress of the women of Manipur and their process of empowerment.

Gender discrimination is observed in both the communities 57% among non-tribals and 63% among tribals however, unequal treatment is higher in tribal communities than non-tribal communities. Males in the society are the ones who ill-treat women

at the community level. The husband and in-laws are the ones who ill-treat women at family level (refer table no. 5.6, page 199). Women in both the communities tolerate ill-treatment which is one of the main challenges to initiate the process of women empowerment.

The system of dowry and Mehr is practiced only among the non-tribal communities whereas bride-price is practiced more commonly among the tribals. Most of the respondents in both communities have expressed that the practice of dowry, bride-price, Mehr should be stopped as it contributes to the lowering of the status of women (refer table no. 5.33, page 229). Most of the respondents in both the communities are not aware of right to property and as such they do not have any share in their parents' property (refer table no. 34&35, page 230&1). This is one of the elements that obstructs the process of women empowerment

Women working on their own farms are observed more in tribal communities than the non-tribal communities. As compared to non-tribal communities, the respondents of the tribal communities depend on farming and agriculture. However, large land holdings are observed more among the non-tribals than the tribal communities (refer table no. 5.18&19, page 214&5). This definitely proves that tribal women have the hidden potentials in them to become good entrepreneurs as is evident from the skills they exhibit in the fields of agriculture, weaving, basketry, farming etc. The women of Manipur need more exposure to educational opportunities and vocational training, to bring out these talents in them and make them more self-reliant.

When women economically self-reliant, they become authoritative in allocating their earnings for the family according to their will, prioritize their needs and free to take important decisions related to the development of themselves as well as their family. Women of both the communities who are employed have expressed that they have to work in order to support their family and some work because they want to become financially independent (refer table no. 6.2, page 237).

Working six to eight hours a day is the usual working hours and about five to six days are the usual number of working days in a week (refer table no.6.3&4, page 238&9).

The monthly income or salary of the respondents ranges between, Rs. 3,000 to 10,000 and above. Income of the individual depends upon the educational qualifications and the nature of work they do. Higher income is observed more for respondents of non-tribal communities than the tribal communities (refer table no 6.5, page 240). As the non-tribal respondents are more educated and have better jobs, it is evident that they earn more. Monthly payment in cash is naturally followed. Most of the respondents are of the opinion that there is no inequality between men and women in wages. Bus, bicycle and own vehicle are some of the means of transportation used by the respondents (refer table no. 6.10, page 246).

Almost everyone feels that they have equal facilities with men but heavy pressure at work, strike and competition are some of the main difficulties faced by the respondents during their past working experiences (refer table no. 6.12, page 248). Women are not always allowed to spend their salary as they wish in both the communities (refer table no.6.14, page 251). They have to consult with the parents or elders before spending their own income. Usually the head of the family spends more money for family matters (refer table no 6.16, page 253).

Very less proportion of women 49% in non-tribal and 28% in tribal respondents reported that they take active part in the decision-making process at home. Considerably low proportions of women 56% in non-tribal communities and 39% of tribal respondents have their own bank account. In spite of education or the fact that women are employed there is considerable influence of family members on various aspects of a women's life.

There has been a significant lack of good and adequate health facilities for the tribal communities. Hereditary diseases are prominently observed in non tribal communities whereas they are quite negligible in proportion among the

respondents of the tribal communities. About 50% of the respondents of both the communities have reported that the distance of health centers is about 1 to 2 km away from their villages. 21% of respondents in tribal community have reported that the distance of health center from their house is even more than 6 km away. Availability of proper health care especially for women is much better among the non-tribals than the tribal communities that are comparatively quite neglected (refer table no.7.3, page 266). As far as the Immunization programs for the children are concerned, the overall situation is very poor; however, the non-tribal communities are more aware about proper health care and health facilities than the tribal communities (refer table no. 7.4, page 268). Availability of balanced diet or nutrition is much better among the non-tribal communities as compared to the tribals who lack very much when it comes to proper health care, adequate health facilities and a proper well balanced diet. Because of the pressures of domestic work and the difficult terrains tribal women often neglect their health and even the family members do not care much. (refer table no. 7.5, page 269). In my observation this does have a deleterious effect on the well being of a woman.

Individuals indulging in various habits such as chewing tobacco, pan and consuming liquor or intoxicated beverages is observed more in non-tribal communities than the tribal communities (refer table no. 7.6, page 271). It is surprising that women also indulge in these habits which lead to many health problems as well as increasing the incidence of cancer and other such diseases among them.

Regularity of medical check ups during pregnancy is observed more in non-tribal communities while this facility is lacking for the tribals. (refer table no.7.8, page 273). Curiosity to know the sex in the child while in the womb of the mother is observed in both the communities, whereas the sex determination tests are conducted more by women of the non-tribal communities rather than tribal communities (refer table no. 7.9&10, page 275&6). Nutritious food is available for pregnant women in non-tribal communities and delivery at home observed more in

tribal communities. Thus women of the tribal communities face problems of infection and even death after delivery as unsanitary practices are followed in tribal communities post pregnancy. Family planning is practiced more among in non tribal communities than the tribal communities (refer table no. 7.16, page 283).

A healthy lifestyle is an indicator of progress in any society. Moreover, for a family to function well women in the family should lead a healthy life, and must be well taken care of as she bears the entire burden of taking care of the family members and attending to all their needs. In fact, she is the most indispensable part of the family. However, in many communities it is the women and her needs that is neglected most, not only by the family but by the woman herself. Thus I feel that the health has an important bearing on the process of empowerment. Women who lead a healthy lifestyle do so because they give importance to themselves and such women do not stop at trying to progress in all aspects of life.

Religion from time immemorial has played a very important part in the life of the individual. In the case of the respondents' grand-parents' religion, most of the forefathers of the non-tribals followed Hinduism and traditional meitei's religion. Islam is another religion followed by some of the members belonging to the non-tribal communities. Traditional tribal religion or Animism was followed by many of the forefathers of the tribal communities (refer table no. 8.1, page 291).

What has been observed for many years is that tribal people are more susceptible to conversion than the non-tribal communities. Conversions have helped in improving the social status of the tribal people; this is what has been said by about 49% of the respondents of the tribal communities. Respondents of the tribal communities have more freedom to take part in religious activities than the respondents of the non-tribal communities (refer table no. 8.5, page 295). Although greater involvement in religious activities, and more respect given to women in the religious field is observed more among the respondents of non-tribal communities than the tribal communities. Women in non-tribal communities are much happier about their

position in their religion. Feeling of honor when participating in religious rituals is observed more among the non-tribal respondents than the tribal respondents (refer table no. 8.9, page 299).

About 80% of tribal respondents and 60% of the non-tribal respondents have reported that they observed communal harmony which has to a great extent influenced the process of women empowerment.

Endogamous marriages in the tribal communities is still most commonly practiced even today (refer table no. 8.14, page 303). The practice of purdah system is still quite relevant among all the Muslims in Manipur.

Participation of women in politics is less both in tribal (43%) and non-tribal (64%) communities. Women are active as party members of various political groups' However women are not given much privilege to occupy places of position and authority. This indicates that participation of women in politics is still lacking. 46% respondents of non-tribal communities and 42% respondents of the tribal communities are still not aware about the reservation privileges of women in politics. Preference or support of son to participate in politics is the rule of the day in both the communities (refer table no.8.22, page 311).

One of the core areas that more or less both the groups are deficient at, is when it comes to the availability of good and adequate sanitation facilities and the basic amenities such as drinking water in every home. In this case the respondents belonging to the non-tribal communities are much better off compared to the tribal communities. Cooking gas is available for 87% of the non-tribal respondents whereas only 40% of tribal respondents have access to cooking gas facility. 87% of non-tribal community respondents have electricity at home whereas only 11% respondents of tribal community have electricity.

As regards to the toilet as a basic amenity a very pathetic condition has been observed. Proper toilet facilities are available in only 28% of the non-tribal communities and only 6% in the tribal communities. This again clearly shows that

the tribal community are grossly lacking in basic services needed for survival and even in the non-tribal community it needs to be improved.

(refer table no. 3.13(a), page 147).

A clear difference is also observed in the size of the house and number of rooms. Respondents of the non-tribal communities have large sized houses with adequate number of rooms (refer table no. 3.11, page 144). Women of tribal communities spend considerable amount of time in fetching water for drinking and domestic use (refer table no. 3.13(b), page 150). The life of the tribal woman is etched with lot of difficulties hence this has hampered the empowerment process among them. They are left with no time, energy to fulfill their aspirations as they are constantly burdened with the responsibilities of the house. Moreover motivation to attain an education and pursue a career is very negligent among the tribal respondents.

Taking an insight into the colorful aspect of the tribal and the non-tribal communities, I have observed their love towards festivities. As far as festivals are concerned, Christmas and Kut are most favorite festivals of the tribal respondents whereas Holi, Ningolchakouba, Laiharaoba and Id are some of the most favorite festivals of the non-tribal respondents (refer table no. 5.3, page 195). Gossiping, watching TV, weaving, gardening, visiting friends, art & craft are some of the activities that recreation womenfolk indulge in during their free time (refer table no. 5.5, page 198). Arts and crafts is the most popular hobby whereas reading is the most popular hobby of the tribal respondents (refer table no. 5.4, page 197). Going to market, visiting friends and relatives, learning art & craft and involvement in cottage industries are some of the ways where women interact with the outside world (refer table no. 5.6, page 199).

The most common language spoken by the non-tribal communities is Manipuri, whereas Rongmei, Tangkhul and Thadou are the some of the major dialects prevalent in the tribals communities. The Kukis and the Nagas are the two prominent tribal communities in Manipur (refer table no.3.5&6, page 134&5).

Thus my overall conclusion of this intensive project that I have undertaken, in order to study the process of empowerment among the women of Manipur and the working of various significant factors on this process, is that the women of Manipur are still trudging the path of empowerment. Various social, cultural, economic, religious and political factors have contributed to the empowerment process but not to the extent that they must contribute. However, in spite of these factors and the hurdles they impose, the women of Manipur are putting efforts to raise their standard of living. But the tribal women are still lagging behind as compared to the non-tribal women who were enabled to move forward. Much can be done for the tribal women as there are lots of provisions made by the government of India as well as the state governments for the upliftment of these women. It is for the society and to a very great extent the family members to encourage and support the woman to pursue her dreams and use her potentials to make a considerable difference in the society and to the nation as a whole.

9.2. Suggestions

It is true that Modernity and Christianity has brought about changes among the people of Manipur in general and women's condition in particular. However, it is noted that there still some areas untouched that continue to chain women in both the tribal and non-tribal communities.

Following are some suggestions made for the empowerment of women in Manipur.

1. Legal provision for equal rights of ownership and inheritance among men and women should be made for both the tribal and non-tribal women in Manipur. Through this provision, gender discrimination should be discouraged and reduced.
2. There is need of equal participation of women in decision-making process at the individual and the family level. Women should have an equal say in the family matters.

3. Politics remains another area where more women participation should be allowed. Participation of women in both the communities should be supported; only then maximum effectiveness can be achieved.
4. Religion is also another area where status and role of the women should be improved. There should be equal involvement of men and women in all the areas of religious activities and administrations.
5. Condition of women's health especially the tribal community should be seriously looked into. Medical assistance should be available to all women. Special care and attention should be provided to the expectant mothers.
6. Adequate health facilities such as primary health centers that are well equipped with medical staff and medicines must be made available to the people at a reachable distance. Moreover the people should be educated on the use of these health facilities provided to them as most of the tribal communities for instance rely on traditional medicines and ways of treatment. Women are still cloaked in cultural restrictions.
7. Regular immunization, free eye checkups and health awareness programs must be made available to the tribal communities.
8. Awareness programs on the ill effects of alcohol, tobacco and pan on health should be conducted regularly.
9. Basic amenities such as tap water, electricity, drainage, and proper toilet facilities should be made available to all the homes especially among the tribal communities.
10. Over all development of tribal women is needed as they are lacking almost in all the walks of life as compared to the non-tribal women.
11. Women themselves have to recognize their contribution in the domestic work, rearing children and their role in the family and society. And men have also to be made aware of the role of women in the home and the society and accept women as individuals not merely helpers or subordinates.

TILAK MAHARASHTRA UNIVERSITY

Ph.D. Dissertation

Title: **A sociological Study of the Status and process of empowerment of women among the major tribal and non-tribal communities of Manipur since Independence (1947)**

QUESTIONNAIR/SCHEDULE

Dear _____

I am working on my Ph.D. Dissertation in the above-mentioned university and I am in need of your valuable cooperation by answering this questionnaire. All information provided will be confidential and for research use only

Thanking you

Tinkhonei Haokip

Please Tick (✓) wherever is applicable to you.

Section A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Name of the respondent: _____
2. Address: _____ District _____
3. Pace of residence: Rural/Urban
4. Age: _____
5. Marital Status: Single / Married / Separated / Divorced / Widow
6. What is your mother tongue: _____
7. Caste: SC / ST / Not known / Other Caste specify: _____
8. If ST, which tribe: (e.g. Any Kuki/Naga/Mizo etc.) _____
9. Religion: Hindu / Christian / Muslim (specify) _____
10. Educational level: Illiterate / Primary / Secondary / Undergraduate / Graduate / Postgraduate / Vocational training like tailoring / Weaving / Artist / other
11. What is your occupation?: Housewife / Cultivator / Private school or College teacher / NGO worker / Social worker / Private business / Mission worker / Government worker (specify) _____

Section B. FAMILY INFORMATION

1. How many members in your family? _____
2. What is the size of your house? _____
3. If you are living in urban:
 - (a) How many rooms in your home? _____
 - (b) Basic amenities and facilities available to you: Water / Electricity / T.V. / Toilet / Fridge / Vehicle
 - (c) Cook food by using: Gas / Kerosene stove / Fuel / Other (specify) _____
4. If you are living in a rural
 - (a) How many rooms in your home? _____
 - (b) Basic amenities and facilities available to you: Food / Shelter / Drinking water / Fuel / Sanitation / Milk / Cattle / Security
5. Do husbands relations live with you?: Father / Mother / Brother(s) / Sister(s) / Cousins / Uncle / Children (not your own) / other _____
6. Type of family: Only husband and wife / Husband, wife and children / Husband, wife, children and in-laws / other _____

7. Are your parents educated?: Yes / No
8. If married, is your husband educated?: Yes / No
9. Are all your sister/s and brother/s educated?: Yes / No
10. What is the age difference between you and your husband?: _____
11. Your age at marriage: _____
12. Would you like to live separately with husband and children?: Yes / No
13. After marriage, do you move to different place of residence?: Change from rural urban / From urban to rural / No change
14. If join family, do you have common kitchen and own all your properties in common?: Yes / No
15. Do you think that you are given due respect in your family (considering to your age, education, job etc)?: Yes / No
16. If married, are you allowed to keep contact with your parents and relatives: Always / Sometimes / Often / Rarely / Never
17. If not allowed, state the reason: _____
18. Do you feel that you are under controlled by husband and family?: Yes / No
19. If yes, by whom?: By Father / Husband / Brother(s) / Others _____
20. What do you feel of being under control? _____
21. How many meals do you eat per day?: One / two / three _____
22. Do you eat food: After all family members have eaten / with family _____
23. If married, do you discuss any of the following subjects with your husband?: (a) Household expenditure (b) Discipline at the house (c) Husband's behavior outside (d) Education of the children (e) Behavior or problems with in-laws
24. How many children do you have/If not married, how many children would you like to have? (a) Son _____ (b) Daughter _____
25. Do you prefer a boy child?: Yes / No
26. If yes, why?: Once a daughter marries she belongs to another family / Girls are less capable than boys / Girls are less useful than boys / Any other _____
27. Have you yourself received a differential treatment from your parents?: Yes / No
28. Do you give preferential treatment to you son/s?: Yes / No
29. Does a daughter get support in case of neglect in the family?: Yes / No. If yes, how?: _____
30. How do you settle differences of opinions in the family?: By keeping quiet / Executing my right / Allow them to settle / Articulating my view / Tribal council / Relatives
31. Is your husband faithful to you?: Always / Not always / Not all the times / Can't say
32. Type of marriage in your community: Monogamy / Polygyny / Polyandry
33. If Hindu, is child marriage practice in your community?: Yes / No
34. What festival/s do you like the most?:
35. What is your hobbies?: Dance / Singing / Reading / Art & crafts / other _____
36. What do you do (recreation) during your free time? Witch TV or movie / Listening folk music / Sing songs / Gossiping / Swimming / other _____
37. Do you go out of the house for: Market / Work / Visit to relatives / Visit to friends / Parents, brothers, sisters / Visiting religious place / Learning some craft / Education of some type / Hospital or clinic
38. If you are divorced, does the society: Reject you / Support you / Criticized you / Respect you / other _____

39. Are you allowed to take part in any social activity?: Yes / No
40. If you are a widowed, do you?: Stay in the same house with your children / Go back to your parents / Other _____
41. Do you have the power to control over the family property?: Yes / No
42. If no, who control?: Parents-in-law / Brother/s-in-law / any other _____
43. How the society treat you?: Look-down upon / Reject / Supportive / Respect / No change
44. Is your social status change to?: Low / High / No change

Section C. SOCIAL & ECONOMIC

1. Do you feel that you are treated as unequal with men by your community?: Yes / No
2. If yes, how often?: Always / Occasionally / Sometimes only / Don't know
3. Are you ill-treated in any way?: By use of abusive language / Beating / Mental torture / Any other _____
4. By whom?: Parents / Husband / In-laws / Employer / Male co-workers / Male friends / Female co-workers
5. How do you react?: By keeping quiet / Protest your right / Report to the authority or police / Articulate your views / Taking help from Kin / NGOs
6. If you are living in rural, are you working on your own fare/land?: Yes / No
- (a) If yes, how big is your farm/land? _____
- (b) If no, do you take it as a?: Leased / Daily wages basis
- (c) Do you need to get water/fuel from elsewhere?: Yes / No
- (d) If yes, how much time is spent to collect water?: _____
- (e) How much time is spent to collect fuel?: _____
- (f) Any joint (men & women) activity in farming?: Yes / No
- (g) What work you/women do on the farm?: _____
7. If you living in urban, under which agency are you working?: Public / Private / Self employed / other _____
8. Why did you choose to work?: So support my family / To be financially independent / To show my ability to ear / Because I am educated / Any other _____
9. What are your daily working hours?: 1-3hrs / 3-5hrs / 5-8hrs / 9hrs and above / No fixed hrs.
10. Numbers of working days in a week: 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7
11. How many break times do you get during your working hours in a day?: One / Two / Three / Four / No break at all
12. What is you income?: 100-1,000 / 1001-3,000 / 3001-5,000 / 5001-10,000 / 10,001 and above / No fixed
13. Payment is done: Daily / Weekly / Monthly
14. Whether payment is made in terms of: Kind / Cash / Any other _____
15. Do you get less wages than men?: Yes / No
16. If yes, why?: You work lesser / Less qualitative / Work slow / Less productive / It is the custom / Because you are a woman / Any other _____
17. Distance of working place from your home/village: Walking distance / Less than 1km / 1-2 kms / 2-5kms / 6 and more kms
- 18 How do you go to the work site?: Bu bus / Bicycle / My own vehicle / On foot / any other (specify) _____
19. Do you have equal facilities with men from your employer in times of accidents?: Yes / No
20. What difficulties have you faced during your past working life?: Cite a few incidents?:
-

21. How fare are you dependent on the family for your economic needs?: Fully/Partly/Not at all.
22. Are you allowed to spend for yourself: Always / Sometimes / Never
23. Are you allowed to spend for your children?: Always / Sometimes / Never
24. If you are allowed, is it because you are earning?: Yes / No
25. Who spend money the most in the family?: Head of the family or husband / Yourself /Other members
26. Are you consulted before taking decision for any investment?: Always / Sometimes / Never
27. Are you consulted at the time of taking decisions regarding expenditure for important occasions such as marriage, etc.?: Always / Sometimes / Never
28. Do you consult your husband, elders before you spend your personal income?: Always / Sometimes / Never
29. If you are employed, how do you spend your income?
 - (a) Hand it over to the head of the family: Partly / Fully
 - (b) Spend it as I wish
 - (c) Spend it according to wishes of elders
 - (d) Cannot spend without the permission of my husband
 - (e) Cannot spend without the permission of the head of the family (if other than husband)
 - (f) Any other _____
30. Do you have bank account in your own name?: Yes / No
31. Are there any Women's Organizations, NGOs or local groups which encourage small savings schemes / rural credit / environment protection / water conservation?: Yes / No
32. Have your parents or relatives given any ornaments at the time of your marriage?: Yes / No
33. If yes, state its values: _____
34. Who is the custodian of such ornaments?: Myself / My husband / Head of the family (if other than husband) / Others (such as mother-in-law, etc.) _____
35. Have your parents or relatives given dowry on your marriage?: Yes /No
36. If yes, state its value: _____
37. Who is the custodian of such dowry?: _____
38. Have your parents received bride price on your marriage?: Yes / No
39. If yes, state its value: _____
40. Is there any time you are criticized of being costly by your husband / in-laws because of bride price?: Always / Sometimes / Never
41. If Muslim, have you parents received 'Mehr' at the time of your marriage?: Yes / No
42. Do you feel dowry', 'bride price' and 'Mehr' should be discontinue?: Yes / No
43. Do you feel 'dowry', 'bride price' and 'Mehr' lowered the status of women?: Yes / No
44. Do you have a share in your parents' property?: Yes / No
45. Are you aware about Indian/Hindu Law Code about property rights inheritance?: Yes / No
46. What do you fell that makes women strong and independent?: Education / Job / Income / Equal status with men / Freedom to decide no. of children / Men sharing burden of house work and child rearing / Decision to stay unmarried / Good health care / Political rights / Security from violence

Section D. HEALTH

1. Any hereditary sickness in your family6?: Yes / No
2. How far is the hospital/clinic from you?: Walking distance / 1km / 1-5km / 6 and more kms
3. Do your girl child gets proper health care?: Yes / No
4. Do your girl child gets vaccinations?: Polio / Measles / Chicken pox / Hepatitis / Other _____

5. Do your girl child gets proper nutrition?: Yes / No
6. Do you indulge in any of these habits?: Smoking / Chewing tobacco / Drinking alcohol
7. Do you think these habits are injurious to your health and your child?: Yes / No / Don't know
8. Do you have regular medical check up during pregnancy?: Yes / No
9. At the time of pregnancy, were you worried about the sex of your child?: Yes / No
10. Did you make any special efforts for getting a male child?: Yes / No
11. Have you had any Sex Determination test during pregnancy?: Yes / No
12. If no, do you know anyone who undergone such procedures?: Yes / No
13. Did you eat proper meals during pregnancy?: Yes / No
14. Where did you deliver your child?: Home / Clinic / Hospital
15. Do you go to you parents for delivery?: Yes / No
16. Any health problems after delivery?: Yes / No
17. Have you undergone sterilization?: Yes / No
18. Have you adopted any family planning devices?: Yes / No
19. If yes, what type?: _____
20. If no, state the reason/s _____
21. Who persuaded you to adopt family planning?: My own decision / Husband / In-laws / Friends / Doctors
22. Do you consult doctor/anybody regarding this?: Once / Occasionally / At regular intervals / Not at all

Section E. RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

1. Which religion did your grand-parents practice? _____
2. Which religion do you practice?: Tribal religion / Hindu / Christianity / Islam / Buddhist / Other _____
3. Do you know your original tribal status?: Yes / No
4. If belonging to a tribe, which religion did you convert to?: Christianity / Hindu / Buddhist / Islam / Other _____
5. Has your conversion changed your status and role in community?: Higher / Lower / Same / Don't know
6. Are you religious?: Yes / No
7. Are you allowed to take part in all religious rituals and ceremonials?: Always / Sometimes / Never
8. Do you have a particular religious dress code? Yes / No
9. If yes, specify _____
10. Are you allowed to participate in the Mosque/Temple/Church?: Yes / No
11. If yes, in what ways?: Only in prayers / Leading prayer / Worship / Conducting prayer / Preaching / Chanting of scripture / Decision making / Priest / Ordained ministers / Religious teacher
12. Are you happy with the position of women in your religious activities?: Yes / No. If no, why and what should be done _____
13. If Hindu, what caste, sub-caste do you belong? _____
14. Do you perform Puja?: Always / Sometimes / Never
15. Do you believe in religious rituals?: Yes / No
16. Do you feel that you are honored when you are allowed to take part in religious activities?: Yes / No / No feeling
17. Are there any religious acts which are regarded incomplete without a women?: Yes / No

18. If yes, state the name of such rituals: _____
19. In religious functions sometimes women are regarded as untouchable. Do you agree?: Fully / To some extent / Not at all
20. If agree, give some examples: _____
21. Are there any reasons as to why a woman is not allowed to participate in religious function? If so, state them. _____
22. Do you/will you insist that your daughter/s follow these restrictions?: Yes / No
23. If Muslim, do you follow: Muslim laws / Native state laws / Tribal laws / Don't know
24. Do you observe Purdah?: Yes / No
25. Do you marry within your won tribe, caste, sect, even if you are Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist etc.?: Yes / No
26. Do different religious groups mix freely?: Yes / No
27. If yes, in what respects?: Economic activity / Social gathering / Festivals / Marriage / Political activities / Rallies / Protest movements

Section F. POLITICS

1. Do you support women's involvement in politics?: Yes / No
2. Why? _____
3. Are you involved in politics?: Yes / No
4. If yes, in what way?: Panchayat / Village authority / Voting / Candidature / Party workers / Decision making / other _____
5. According to the sixth Schedule, the Local Governing Body are vested power for developmental program, how far is the work carried out?: Satisfactory / Not satisfactory / Not up to the mark / don't know
6. Are you aware of the reservation for women in politics?: Yes / No
7. Do you know any woman political leader?: Yes / No
8. Is there any Women organization in your village/city?: Yes / No
9. If yes, specify _____
10. Supposing both your son and daughter are equally fit for politics and your were to choose one of them, whom will you prefer?: Son / Daughter
11. Why? _____
12. Do you read newspaper/political new magazine/ watch TV programs on political issues?: Yes / No
13. If faced with problem who do you approach?: Village panchayat / Police / Family / Kin

Section G. OPENED ENDED

1. What do you think you need to be free, secure and capable?
2. Do men in your family/community give your respect? Treat you as subordinate? Neglect you?
3. Do women themselves treat themselves as weaker and subordinate to men? Should men beat wives?
4. Do you feel that conversion to another religion has freed you from low caste, status or discrimination due to tribal status?

5. As converted tribes to Christianity/Hinduism/Islam etc. do you get government reservation facilities in education, jobs, and scholarships?
6. Are there political and religious organizations other than Christians who are trying to spread Hindu or Islam religious Ideas in your community? Yes / No. If yes, Name the organization and what work are they doing?
7. Did kinship bonds influence conversion and close blood relations in your family all convert to another religion? Do all family members practice one religion?

1.5. RESEARCH DESIGN

1.5.1. Problem of the study

Critics of the Indian family system say that the Indian women do not enjoy equal rights with men in social, political, religious and economic fields; they are ill-treated and cannot claim any share in the family property. The condition of rural women is far worse than that of the urban women. Women, as individuals, an autonomous political being, are treated unequally and unjustly by society. Their basic and fundamental rights are being constantly violated. They have been dehumanized and silenced for centuries and consequently have been unable to express their views. If this is the case, tribal women in Manipur are twice oppressed; firstly as women and secondly as tribal women. The condition of non-tribal women in Manipur is better as compare with the tribal women.

Nehru, the first Prime Minister of the Independent India, clearly contended that while women participation in the nationalist upsurge was crucial, the women of India have an additional task, and that is to free themselves from the tyranny of manmade customs and laws. They will have to carry on this second struggle by themselves for man is not likely to help them. It is true to Manipur women they have to bear the whole burden of struggle for women emancipation themselves.

1.5.2. Significance of the study

Women's empowerment is a crucial issue facing women as a whole and Manipur women in particular today as they themselves have become better aware of the need and as they struggle to reaffirm their indigenous identity, rights, values and dignity as human beings and have become determined to stand against the threat to their existence perpetrated by ideologies of sexism, colonialism, materialism and individualism. Thus, for Manipur women, the struggle for gender equality is to be launched not only within the confines of the home and the community but also at the state and national arenas and platforms where negotiations for socio-economic cooperation and understandings are accomplished. Women have no contribution as they have no control over their lives and natural resources. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, clearly points out, if an ancestral treasure lying buried in a corner of the house unknown to the members of the family were suddenly discovered what a celebration it would be for the occasion. Manipur women's

marvelous power is lying dormant. If the women of Manipur wake up they will dazzle the Nation.

1.5.3. Objectives of the study

1. To study the concept of empowerment and its various dimensions among different communities in Manipur.
2. To study the Status and process of Empowerment of tribal and non- tribal women in Manipur.
3. To bring to light the reality and causes of the existing social inequality between men and women in Manipur with a view to challenge the structure of both the Hindus and tribal societies of the state.
4. To enhance self-esteem and confidence among the Tribal and non- tribal women.
5. To promote women-men equal participation in developmental processes in Manipur.
6. To create a room to encourage women of Manipur to fight for their rightful contribution in the society.
7. To educate men counter partner of Manipur regarding women empowerment in their societies.

1.5.4. Hypotheses

1. Customary laws like male inheritance and Religious factors are the root causes of inequality among men and women in tribal societies of Manipur.
2. The culture of Manipur society, the customs and patterns of behavior, are not different as far as tribal and non-tribal women are concern.
3. Status of tribal women is lower than that of the non-tribal women in Manipur.
4. Women's position and degree of empowerment is defined by gender and gender relations in both tribals and non-tribal societies in Manipur.
5. Level of literacy along with Education is a powerful and multi-pronged force in improving women's status in Manipur.
6. Inequality in gender relations is embodied in various societal institutions but is reproduced daily in the household of tribals and non-tribal communities of Manipur.
7. Conscientization with regard to gender equality is low among women as seen in their educational aspirations for girls and boys in Manipur.

1.5.5. Sampling design

A Stratified Random Sampling Framework will be adopted in this study in which the population will be first divided into a number of groups, which may be based on a single criterion or on a combination of two or more criteria. Participant and non-participant observation will be used in the study as well.

1.5.6. Tools for data collection

The study will be based on both primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources include both published and unpublished books, dissertations, and journals. There will be questionnaire and Interview Schedules. Besides these, reference will be made to stories, folktales, sayings and folklores of Manipur local folk-writings and literature for an in-depth understanding of the tribal and non-tribal culture and history of Manipur. The researcher shall try to have qualitative analysis along with quantitative analysis.

1.5.7. Limitation of the study

The population of the study is in Manipur, which is thousands of miles away from the place of study. Due to the limitation of time, distance and money, a large number of selecting sample will not be possible. Therefore, it will be a purposive study on a small sample. It is not a survey study. The researcher needs to contact women from both urban and rural areas, which will be a difficult and an expensive task. The researcher, therefore, will be concentrating only on four districts where all the ethnic class of people and religious groups are found.

1.5.8. The chapter scheme

Chapter 1	Introduction, background of the people, the problem and research design
Chapter 2	Review of literature
Chapter 3	Data analysis and interpretation
Chapter 5	Findings and Suggestions
Appendix I	Bibliography

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APPENDICES



Thadou Kuki Cultural troop



Thadou Kuki dance



Rongmei cultural troop



Rongmei dance



Meitei/Manipuri dance



This market place is called "Mothers' Market". It is only for women vendors. They sell everything from fruits and vegetables, to salt and spices, textiles, kitchen utensils, etc.



Men and women (tribals) jointly participate in jhum cultivation right from the time of clearing the forest till harvesting.



Tribals at work (seedling) Jhum Cultivation