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