CHAPTER - IV

Women Education and Employment in Manipur: Issues and Problems
The National as well as the State Government have not been devoting their full attention towards the expansion of women's education. Because of mass illiteracy, most of the people specially living in rural areas are ignorant and superstitious with the narrow outlook. Sufficient funds are not allotted for the education of girls and women as compared to the education of boys. Besides this, the administration of women education is also defective because the administrator are not properly acquainted with the problem of women’s education. So, proper development and significant progress of women’s education could not be achieved in the State. In order to encourage women’s education, able and talented women should be given responsible and administrative position in Educational development.

Problems of women education

Factors responsible for slow development of women's education in the past that corresponds to the low rate of employment are:

(1) Economic difficulties: The financial condition of the people of Manipur were not sound and majority of the people in the rural areas are so poor that they cannot afford even the basic necessities of life. So, many parents are unable to send their daughters to educational institutions. The low enrolment of girls in the educational institutions is mainly due to the poverty and ignorance of the parents. In the early Manipuri society girls used to be
engaged in domestic and household works by their parents. The society never gave emphasis on the women education. Even now majority of the people in the rural areas do not favour education of the girls and majority of women are illiterate. The National Committee on Women Education had demanded that government should take up serious steps for development of women education on priority basis. Further the government should pay special attention to the upliftment of rural people with emphasis on women education in their development programme.

(2) Social difficulties: In our society, people are mostly not aware of the important of higher education of girls, prevalence of age-old superstition customs, traditions, orthodox and conservatism have all affected the development of women education in the state. It is believed that if the women are educated, they will be liberated which is not encouraged by the society. These social evils are great obstacle in the expansion of women education. As such unless this attitude of the people is changed, sufficient expansion of education of women will not be removed and concerted efforts made for the development of women education.

(3) Dearth of trained teachers: There is acute shortage of trained women teachers in the schools of Manipur. Although teacher training programme has been taken up in the State long back, still there is huge backlogs of the untrained women teachers. Apart from this, trained women teachers fail to reap the benefit of their training due to marriage and other household affairs. It would be better if training facilities are provided to elderly ladies on a large scale and providing them part-time jobs.

(4) **Problem of suitable curriculum**: There is widespread dissatisfaction because of a common curriculum both for boys and girls. But significant changes are necessary in the curriculum of girls of the stage of secondary and higher education because of the variations in the physical, social and cultural needs of the boys and girls. So the curriculum for the girls' education should be formed in order to meet the needs of the girls. There is the lack of awareness regarding the introduction of significant changes in the curriculum for women; Mudaliar Commission has also recommended diversified courses of study for the boys and girls. Fine Arts, Crafts and Home science should be made compulsory for girls with view to increase the utility of women education.\(^4\)

(5) **Problem of transport**: One of the main hurdles in the progress of education of girl in the State is the lack of adequate transport facilities. There are a large number of place situated in rural areas, hills and other remote place, where it is not easy to provide means of transportation.\(^5\) At the same time, it is not safe to send girls pedal at distant places. Thus the guardians had to face a lot of difficulties in these respect, similarly rising cost of living forbids us to send them to schools. It is the duty of the government to provide easy cheap and quick means of transport in a large number of educational institutions especially in rural and hilly areas.

(6) **Administrative problems**: Administration also act as an impediment in the development of women's education in the State. Official in charge of the education departments do not show any enthusiasm and interest in this

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5. Das Lakshahira op. cit. p. 289.
direction Inspection is generally lost. The numbers of inspectors are few and insufficient Things proceed rather slowly and race is a very casual. There is a need to adhere strictly to rules in this connection. The conditions of recognition should be strictly followed and efforts made to deny ways and means of increasing the efficiency of educational institutions. Maximum co-operation among the department, guardians, teachers, management and the community all acting in a spirit of accommodation and adjustments is the call of the moment.

**Government efforts towards the development of women education**

Time has swept the concept of women in India. All along women in India remained confined within the four walls of their homes and their immersive strength and potential remained unorganised and unaccounted for. Now, they are increasingly participating in all spheres of activities. The fact remains that the citadels of excellence in academic, policies is no longer the prerogatives of men in India. The general consensus that is emerging in all discussions related to the development of women is that promotion of women education should form an integral part of all development efforts, women education is now considered as a sin-quo-non of Indian’s social and national development to promote the education of girls the Government of Manipur had appointed Deputy Director of Public Instruction to look after the all round development of girl’s education. A separate administrative machinery for female education was established in 1972 as a State Council for Women’s Education. That Council recommended the following programmes for girls education.6

1. Number of girls' school should be increased.
2. Girls education should be free up to class vi.
3. Scholarships should be increased.
4. Number of female teachers should be increased.
5. Free text books should be supplied in rural areas.
7. A high or higher secondary school for girls should be established in the Head Quarter of each Sub-division.
8. Amount of stipend should be increased.
9. Provision for vocational training should be made for the aged widows and destitute women.
10. In each circle an Assistant Inspectors should be appointed.
11. The number of scholarships for studies abroad for girls should be increased.
12. One lady officer equal to the rank of Joint Director should be appointed in each Head Quarter.
13. Supply mid-day meals.
14. The State should educate public opinion in favour of girl's education through Seminar, Radio talks, Audio-visual aids etc.
15. Special allowance may be given to the lady teachers who are serving in the rural and hill areas.
16. Many women's clubs may be set up with Government support where Library facilities may be extended for girls students.
17. Facilities for training in tailoring and Home Science in Higher Secondary Schools as a Vocational Subject.
Adequate sanitary facilities may be provided for girls in the institutions.

In India, the problems of women education have been examined by a number of committees. So, the government of India had recommended many efforts for the development of women education.

The Report of the National Committee on Women's Education of the Government of India in (1964) recommended that the education of women should be regarded as a major and special problem in education for a good many years to come and a bold and determined effort should be made to face its difficulties and magnitude and to close the existing gap between the education of men and women in as short time as possible.

Further recommended that the highest priority should be given to schemes prepared from this point of view and funds required for the purpose should be considered to be in first charge on the sums set aside for the development of education.

In view of the above recommendations of the Report of the National Committee on Women's Education of the Government of India and also in view of the existing gap between the two sexes of the Government of Manipur made efforts to increase the education of women.

These efforts are made to fulfill the following suggested measures by the National Committee on Women Education.

1 Priority should be given to women's education in the future programme of the development of education in the country.
2. Discrimination between the education of boys and girls should be curbed and both should expand on an equal footing.

3. The National Government should encourage States to launch various programmes associated with the development of women's education.

4. Proper facilities and protection should be provided to women teachers serving in rural areas.

And to do away with these acute problems facing by women education in Manipur:

1. Indifferent attitude of the Government.
2. Conservatism of parents.
3. Wide spread of poverty.
4. Backwardness and superstition.
5. Tradition-ridden social customs.
6. Shortage of women teachers.
7. Lack of hostel and School Buildings.
8. Outdated textbooks.
10. Inadequate transportation.
11. Early marriage.
12. Employment of girls in household work.
13. Lack of opportunities for employment.

The National Education Policy (1986) stated that Education would be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women in order to neutralize
the accumulated distortion of the past. It would foster the development of new values through redesigned curriculum, text books, the training and active involvement of educational institutions.⁷

In the removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to and retention in elementary education. National Education Policy stated that the efforts would be made to provide hostel facilities for women student to improve their enrolment in colleges.

Hence, the efforts of UGC and to operationalise and implement this way significant policy for women.

(1) In the ninth plan, efforts were made towards Universalisation of Elementary Education which results in a significant improvement in the enrolment of girls in Schools, the efforts were made to develop linkage between ICDS and primary education.

(2) In the field of women education and child development, the scheme of Adolescent Girls, an officer school of ICDS, aimed at providing a supportive environment for self development, economic independence and self reliance.

On 1st January 2001, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in his new year Message to Indian Women as opined as ensuring gender equality by removing gender discrimination was the key to real empowerment and promotes women's access to equality education, credit, health care, employment and social security.

The Union Government had declared the year 2001 as women's Empowerment year. It was flagged off in January 2001.

Education is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of education.

Women education constitutes a very important part of the entire stage of education, the education which the child receives these provides the foundation of the physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and social development, community education should form an effective means to improve the status and character of living patterns of the people.\(^8\)

The progress made in Manipur towards Women's Education and the establishment of the State Council for Women's Education provides free education to girls students, followings are some of the special incentives provided by the Government of Manipur to attract students and teachers towards women's education through this council.\(^9\)

I. Facilities for girls to appear as private candidates up to post graduate level.
II. Scholarship to girl students who would take up teaching profession.

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III  Facilities for training in tailoring and Home-Science in Higher Secondary Schools as a vocational subject.

IV  Scholarships to the talented students both boys and girls, for research.

V  The rate of scholarships awarded to the girl students who are willing to serve as teachers in the remote hill or rural areas, and after the completion of their training, may be increased from Rs. 10/- per month to Rs. 15/- or Rs. 20/- per month.

VI  The State Government may utilize the fund allocated for girls' education, exclusively for the purpose and not for any other else.

VII  Education of girls may be made free up to the secondary stage and many stipends and scholarship may be made available to them liberally.

VIII.  Adequate sanitary facilities may also be provided for girls in the institutions.

IX.  The girls School/Colleges may be staffed with lady teacher if available.

X  Short term teacher training course may be institutionalised for women who have completed condensed course under the Social Welfare Board's Project for utilization of their service in rural School.

XI  Preference may be given to female candidates at the time of giving appointment to a Government or non Government post.

XII  Separate education centres for women such as adult education, condensed courses, continuing classes, craft or vocational courses may be opened at suitable places.
Education of women is the key for job opportunities and social equality, Mahatma Gandhi remarked about the importance of women education that if you educate a boy you educate an individual, but if you educate a girl you educate a family, society and ultimately the nation.

Problems of women employees in general

From time immemorial, every society and economic system has utilized the work of women, either at home or outside or at both places. In India, a few decades ago, the employment of women outside their homes was looked down upon because of some religious taboos, social customs natural factors, family motions and other prevailing norms. These restriction are fast weakening and women are moving out of their homes more and more in search of employment. Women today are not only doing physical work in farms, factories, mines and construction but are doing physical as well as mental work by taking up employment in different jobs.

Every society around the globe witness participation of women in all the three sectors of their respective economics. In the developed economics such as USA, UK, Canada, Japan and the Western European Countries work participation of the women against their men counterparts is not lagging behind barring that of naturally unavoidable situations. But in most of the developing and underdeveloped economics their participation in income generation is comparatively low. At present when competency rules women, in addition to their physical weakness are curtailed from perfect success by their bindings of housekeeping, male chauvinism and social taboos.
The problems facing the women employees are greater in the unorganized sector than in the organized sector. No matter the degree of hardship facing these working women according to their working place, the worse is their dominance by men and the inferiority complex compelled to them.

The problems facing by working Manipuri women are:

1. Dual responsibility
2. Social seclusion
3. Male chauvinism
4. Social taboos
5. Religious constraints
6. Wage
7. Indiscipline
8. Illiteracy

In the Indian context the problems even increases. Their increase can mainly be attributed to India's rigid caste and social systems, ignorance, lack of awareness of the provision provided by the constitution, illiteracy and under development.

Manipur, a State of the Indian Republic is famous for its unique history where its women are involved and also the patience and enterprise of the women worth's recognition. The share of the Manipuri women in income generation, contribution to the G.D.P. does not lag behind men.
By and large almost all the women are entrepreneurs. Handloom and Handicraft in the form of small or tiny industry is a phenomenal occupation of this State and is mainly carried out by women. Manipur occupies a high position in production and development of this industry in India. Besides, other enterprising artisan type of industries like pottery (on simple wheels), loom looms, doll making, embroidery, knitting are also carried out by women successfully. The unique Women's Bazaar (Ima-Keithel) of Imphal consisting of three blocks, one for cloths and yarn, one for cloth and black smithy, and the last one for vegetables, fishes, provisions and religious items could furnish women's endurance and participation in every sphere of Manipur economy. Innumerable women are also working in the agricultural (primary), quarrying and construction, (secondary) and service tertiary sectors in addition to the Governmental set ups. They are the bread earners in most of the families. They support their family with their meager incomes.

Working women both in the organized or unorganized sectors are facing most of the problems to be either the "personal problems of their" or "the general economic and social problems arose from industrial employment". A multitude of personal characteristics as well as the name of the given job influenced the workers perception of their problems. Therefore, generally, the "major issues involved in the women labourer problems were given as follows.

**Dual responsibility:** Almost all the women, employed, working or unemployed has a compulsory duty of keeping her house and kitchen. These household chores includes cooking, feeding, rearing children, cleaning, washing, nursing, attending husband, etc., in general. These bounded duties
hinders career building of working woman or their enterprise. This led to the degradation of their competence and respectability in their working sphere.

Social seclusion: In Manipuri society many families are still following the norm that women to attend kitchen barefooted, covering head in presence of her elder brother-in-law and father-in-law, etc. These led to inconveniences physically and mentally disturbing her efficiency. Even though she is a government employees has to do all this customs.

Male chauvinism: Though this is a fact of the past some women still suffers at the hands of their men counterparts.

Social taboos: Few taboos are in persistence at present. Women working or moving at late night, wearing suitable outfit to serve her service, touching certain tools, etc. are notable. But considerable awareness had been brought about to broader outlook as situation demands. It was found that not only in the field of cottage and household industries mainly handloom and handicrafts but also in the field of agriculture, Manipuri women have been taken the major participation. But, ploughing was done only by men.

Religious constraints: Some constraints still prevailed in this sphere and independence is still to be achieved for mental development.

Wage: Favourable method of the wages of labourers of such units were to be directly related to their work performance i.e. on the basis of more work more pay, for which purposes, necessary appliance has been used of these specified units. The wages structure of the labourers were changed from time to time.
depending upon the type of works and the type of production. For more complicated and skilled works the rate of wages were increased.

On the other hand, women labourers were given less pay than their male counterparts for the same job. That was because of the traditional belief that women should not be as equal with men. There is parity of wage between man and women. In regard of unskilled labour men are entitled to Rs. 80/- and women Rs 70/- a working day. This is the latest wage rate fixed by the Government of Manipur in 2002. This is tentative. The wage discrimination does not persist in regard of skilled labour.

In the present scenario it is very disgusting that women are ill treated in every sphere. This societies motif towards women needs to be altered. Perhaps certain signs are visible in improving the position of the women and giving them an equal status, we still have to eradicate the attributes to this problem. Late arrival of formal education, constraints in imparting knowledge through western education, the superstitious orthodox motives are some notable agents. To do away with these problems and encouraging and enhancing the status of women, a qualitative vocational education should be imparted with more emphasis to women. A sincere committed positive outlook would curtaining help

**Indiscipline**: Indiscipline was occurred largely due to the lack of interest in the particular job on the part of the labourers. Indiscipline among the female labour in these units were found because of the lack of interest, policies of the trade union, etc. The background of the labourers were also reflected by their education, commitment to the job, political, social, cultural and religious environment had a considerable impact on the attitude of the female labour.
In view of the great losses that has occurred because of prevalence of indiscipline among female labour; management has always been kept and alert worth the changing attitude of the labourers and has been taken their corrective and preventive measures in time.

Illiteracy: Education was discouraged to Manipuri women in the early periods and till today, this system has been continued mostly in rural areas. Illiteracy was a major problem on the part of Manipuri women labourers. They could not be used gainfully in productive jobs and thus, illiteracy always stood in their way to enter the income earning and income generating activities.

Role of ILO in the development of women labourer’s status

Women’s participation in the labour force has been increasing everywhere. The problems connected with the protection and welfare of women in any industry have received considerable attention by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and it has resulted in extensive legal measures in many countries including India.

ILO has helped not only men but also women whether they worked in the field, in the factory or at the home”. It has recognised the equality of woman with man and pleaded for her rights; its object was to build a world in which every human being will enjoy a life of freedom and dignity of economic security and equal opportunity.

The ILO was set in by the year 1919 as a part of the League of Nations for the promotion of universal peace through social justice. It has stressed,
ever since its inception in 1919, that the interest of women as workers were generally indistinguishable from those of men.

The main roles of ILO were to tackle the problems faced by the women labourers gradually, educating nations all over the world that has to recognise the needs of the woman-worker as a human being, who must be given full opportunities to develop her qualifications freely and to play a full and effective part in social and economic life.

In India, through the agencies of ILO, certain conventions and recommendations were given to the women labourers for the protection and welfare of them:-

Conventions

1. Maternity Protection, 1919
2. Night work (women), 1919
3. Night work (women), Revised, 1934
4. Underground work (women), 1935
5 Night work (women), Revised, 1948
6 Equal Remuneration, 1951

Recommendations

1 Lead Poisoning (women and children), 1919
2 Equal Remuneration, 1951

Assistance given by Indian labour code to Indian women labour under the code of conduct of ILO

Besides the conventions and recommendations placed by ILO, the Indian labour code have included some other assistances for the welfare of the Indian women labourer

1. Recruitment: There were no restriction for the recruitment of women in all the establishments throughout India except for the tea plantation in Assam.

2. Repatriation: Every women labourer was allowed the right of repatriation before the expiry of 3 years. But the right of a married woman extended only to herself and her children. A family could also be repatriated before 3 years of the labourer’s death.

3. Hours of Work: ILO recommended maximum hours of work for women labourers in factories and mines – 48 hrs and 58 hrs in plantations per week. Again, it was laid down those adult women workers were restricted in factories, plantations and on the surface of mines for work not more than 5 hrs at a stretch without a rest interval of at least half an hour.

4. Holiday and Leave: The Labour Law Act provide for annual leave with wages for all workers who have already worked for 12 consecutive months, within the subsequent 12 months. In factories and plantations, leave was given at the rate of one day for every 20 days during the 12 months period, and at the rate of 14 days for the 12 months service to the weekly paid employees. Wages were paid for the leave period at a daily rate equal to the average full time earning of the worker.
5. **Health and Safety**: ILO has authorised State Governments to safeguard women against the dangers arising out of lifting heavy weights. A maximum load of 65 lb has been prescribed for all adult women, 45 lb. for adolescent females and 30 lb for female children. All the States have followed the above given rules except Uttar Pradesh.

6. **Dangerous operations**: The Factories Act 1948 of India through the ILO authorised the State Governments to prohibit employment of women in dangerous operations. The Central Government, under the Mines Act, 1952 also has the right to make regulations for prohibiting, restricting or regulating the employment of women in mines, or any class of mines or in any particular kinds of work which were attended by danger to the life, safety or health of women workers. The Factories Act, 1948, also prohibited women from being employed for pressing cotton in any part of a factory in which cotton opener was at work.

7. **Bathing and washing facilities**: Separate latrines and bathrooms should be provided for women working in mines, plantations and factories as regulated by the Acts of ILO.\(^{11}\)

8. **Creches**: Factories and plantations employing 50 or more women must maintain creches for children below the age of six. Children below two years of age are to be given milk in factory creches and wholesome food between 2 to 6 ages. Rest intervals must be allowed to nursing mothers.

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11. Ibid. Pp. 33, 38
Thus, the ILO has been working to secure equality in practice for women by guarding her from the hazards to which she is peculiarly liable by assuring that account is taken of the fact that she bears the greater share of responsibilities for home and children, and by equipping her with skills and education so that she may enjoy the same opportunities as man. The ILO again stresses that “The women of the world have an equal interest with the men in the ILO’s declared intention to build a world in which all human beings shall enjoy lives of freedom and dignity of economic security and equal opportunity.

National initiatives for the welfare of employees

The Oxford dictionary defined employee welfare as “efforts to make life worth living for workmen”. These efforts have their origin either in some statute by the State or in some local custom or in a collective agreement or in the employer’s own initiative. An employer whether male or female may voluntarily initiate employee welfare measures in his/her undertaking with the following objectives to:

1. Give expression to philanthropic and paternalistic feelings.
2. Win over employee’s loyalty and increase their morale.
3. Combat trade unionism and socialist ideas.
4. Build up stable labour force, to reduce labour turnover and absenteeism.
5. Develop efficiency and productivity among employees.
6. Save oneself from heavy taxes on surplus profits.

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7 Earn goodwill and enhance public image.
8 Reduce the threat of further government intervention.
9 Make recruitment more effective.

Women employee's welfare programmes in India

Directive Principles of State Policy in our Constitution have made the need for the welfare of employees as:

Article 38: The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political shall inform all the institutions of the national life.

Article 39: Under the norms of Article 39, the State shall, in particular direct its policy towards securing that:

1) The citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood;

2) The ownership and control of the material resources are so distributed as to subserve the common good;

3) The operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment;

4) There is equal pay for equal work for both men and women; and

5) The health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter a vocation unsuited for their age or strength.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid. p. 225.
Women employees education in India

With the growth of our labour movement and the far-reaching technological changes taking place in our industry, the occupational, civic and political responsibilities of our women employees have very much increased. To enable them to discharge these responsibilities educational programmes of various types and contents have become an imperative need today. It is rightly believed that without such programmes our women employees will not be able to boldly meet the challenges of the high-tech industrial society which is likely to emerge in the 2000 A.D. If we add to this prospect the present trend towards shorter working hours and larger paid holidays the importance of worker's education as a method of utilization of spare time further increases.

The first important document to express the need for educating employees in trade union philosophy and methods was our Second Five Year Plan. As a result, the government of India set up in 1958 a semi-autonomous body called the Central Board of Workers' Education (CBWE) with the following four objectives as to:

1) Develop stronger and more effective trade unions through better trained officials and more enlightened members.

2) Develop leadership from the rank and file and to promote the growth of democratic process in trade union organization and administration.

3) Equip organised labour to take its place in democratic society and to fulfill its social and economic responsibilities, and

14 Ibid. p. 232.
4) Promote among workers a greater understanding of the problems of their economic environment and their privileges and obligations as union members and officials and citizens.

Suggestions for the improvement of women employees education are as follows:

1) In our country, there are a large number of institutions and agencies which are engaged in women employees educational activities. It is therefore, necessary to review the role played by them and suggest ways and means of collaboration and co-operation among them so that instead of duplication, multiplication of activities takes place.

2) All women employees educational programmes must be planned with realism and flexibility and must clearly indicate the needs of the women employees which they are designed to cover.

3) On account of the poor financial position of our trade unions, education always reaches the lowest priority in their schemes. Hence, the grants-in-aid given by the CBWE to the unions should be made more alternative.

4) Only women employees with right attitude, abilities and intelligence should be sponsored for these courses.

5) The officials of the Board should be provided with higher status, better emoluments and attractive service prospects.

6) Follow up studies should be made to evaluate the benefits of this scheme.
Employee’s State Insurance Act, 1948

This Act covers all workers (whether manual, supervisory or salaried employees) where wages (excluding remuneration for overtime work) do not exceed Rs 6,500 per month. The coverage can be extended by the State Government with the approval of the Central Government. The Act is administered by the E.S.I. Corporation, an autonomous body consisting of representatives of the Central and State Governments, employers, employees, medical profession and Parliament.\(^\text{15}\)

Benefits of the Employees’ State Insurance Act, 1948

The Act, which provides for a system of compulsory insurance, is a landmark in the history of social security legislation in India. An insured person whether male or female is entitled to receive the following types of benefits:

1) Medical Benefit: An insured person or (where medical benefit has been extended to his/her family) a member of his/her family who requires medical treatment is entitled to receive medical benefit free of charge. Such medical benefit may be given either in the form of outpatient treatment or as in-patient treatment in a hospital which may be either run by the ESI Corporation or by any other agency.

2) Sickness Benefit: An insured person, when she is sick, is also entitled to get sickness benefit at the standard benefit rate corresponding to her average daily wage. These rates are given in Rule 54 of the Employee’s State Insurance Rules 1950

\(^{15}\) Ibid. 238
3) Maternity Benefit: An insured woman is entitled to receive maternity benefit (which is twice the standard benefit rate) for all days on which she does not work for remuneration during a period of 12 weeks of which not more than 6 weeks shall precede the expected date of confinement. The Act entitles a woman employee claim maternity leave from her employer if she has actually worked for a period of at least 60 days in the 12 months immediately preceding the day of her expected delivery.

The Act further provides for the payment of medical bonus of Rs. 250 to the confined woman employee. The obligation to pay this bonus does not arise in case of employers who provide pre-natal and post-natal care free of charge.

Since the benefits under the Act are allowable only to a woman who has worked for at least 160 days in the 12 months immediately preceding the day of expected delivery many employers try to wriggle out of this provision by keeping a large number of women employees as ‘temporary’ and casual workers. The Committee on the Status of Women in India (1974) has therefore, recommended the following changes in the Act:

a) A central fund should be created by levying contributions from employers. The administration of the fund should follow the pattern already established by the ESIC.

b) For women retrenched for short periods and employed on the same jobs, the period of unemployed should not be treated as discontinuation of service for their eligibility for this benefit. For casual labour a minimum of 3 months of service should be considered as qualifying service for this benefit.
c) In order to eliminate unjust denial of maternity benefits scrutinizing of applications should be done by a Committee of the management and trade union representatives. The latter should preferably include a woman. This will provide greater incentive to woman employees to participate in trade union activities.

4) Disablement Benefit: An insured person is entitled to receive disablement benefit for any injury arising out of and in the course of his/her employment. The injury may be caused either by accident or by an occupational disease. The Act distinguished between 3 types of injuries viz., temporary, permanent total and permanent partial disablement. Artificial limbs are also provided at the cost of the corporation to those who lose their limbs as a result of employment injury. Spectacles, dentures, pacemakers, etc., are also provided to insured persons free of cost, depending upon the nature of the case. It should be remembered that although the disablement benefit for an employment injury has been provided for both in the Workmen's Compensation Act and in the Employees' State Insurance Act, compensation for the same injury cannot be received twice.

5) Dependent's Benefit: If an insured person meets with an accident in the course of his/her employment and dies as a result thereof, his/her dependent, i.e., legitimate sons and legitimate unmarried daughters get pension. The sons get it up to the age of 18 years and unmarried daughters get it up to the age of 18 years or until they marry, whichever is earlier.

6) Funeral Benefit: The eldest surviving member of the family of an insured person who has died is entitled to receive payments for the expenditure
incurred on funeral. However, this amount cannot exceed Rs. 1,500. The amount should be claimed within 3 months of the death.

7) Gratuity Benefit: Under the Act gratuity is payable to an employee on the termination of his/her employment after he/she has rendered continuous service for not less than five years. Again, gratuity is payable at the rate of 15 days' wages based on the rate of wages last drawn by the employee for every completed year of service or part thereof in excess of six months. But the amount of gratuity payable to an employee shall not exceed Rs. 3.5 lakh.

Assistance of the Government for the development of women labourer's status

With the launching of the First Five Year Plan in 1951 for the whole country, the process of planned Economic Development for our State has also been started.

The development of the economy of a State was closely related to the development of various industries. Growth of a fruitful industry depends upon the labourers. In fact, Manipur has been found to be a rich source of natural resources. However, it is low in industries because of the various problems such as lack of infrastructure facilities, financial assistance, transports, lack of labourers, etc. Even then, Manipuri women take a major role in the development of the State's economy.

Therefore, the State Government has set up various development programmes for women labourers as a means to improve the State's economy through labour welfare organisation. The developmental programmes are :-
1. **Administration of labour laws**: The objective of the scheme was to make improvement of administration /enforcement/implementation of the Law/Acts for ensuring maintenance of harmonious industrial relation without strike, lock-outs in the industrial establishments, payment of wages, compensation, bonus, gratuity, etc. by the employer to their employees and regulation of employment and condition of services of various workers.

2. **Women labour welfare scheme**: A scheme for giving financial assistance to women workers employed in handloom, fishery, leather works and agriculture whose annual income does not exceed Rs. 5000 has been taken up in the following cases to promote welfare of workers:

   a. Post-matric education of children and other dependents of the worker.
   b. Maternity purpose of a women worker and wife of a male worker.
   c. Accidental death, prolonged illness or permanent disablement of the worker.

3. **Legal Aid to women labourers**: To provide legal aid to workers or trade unions of workers where the services of workers employed in the industrial establishments were terminated by either discharge or dismissal by the employers, to enable them to get the benefits of the services of an advocate at Government cost.

4. **Industrial Training Institute (ITI)**: For giving job opportunities/facilities and producing skilled workers for both sexes so as to promote self-employment, 6 ITIs located at Imphal, Saikul, Ukhrul, Tamenglong, Tadubi & Jiribam have been functioning in Manipur. Total intake capacity of these ITIs is 532. Out of the six it is, only the Imphal ITI is permanently affiliated to the
NCVT enabling it to get grant-in-aid from the Central Government. The remaining ITIs which are yet to be affiliated are below the prescribed national norms. New trades viz. (a) Dress making (b) Knitting with hand & machines (c) Painting are being opened. One unit of 16 seats in electronics is opened and action for opening more trades has been initiated.

Thus, in Manipur, the labour force participation rate of female is low as compared to male. This was because of the lack of industries as well as shortages of finance of the State. After all, there was also the tradition of gender division among the workforce. Though, there were so many reasons for lowering the work participation rate among the Manipuri women, their participation in household industries particularly in handloom and handicrafts were very high. This was because of that these industries were monopolised by the women both from the traditional point of view and as income generating activities and also this type of industry can be set up with little investment and without much infrastructure.