CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Tribal women have a special role to play in their cultures. The status of women in an indigenous society is not a static phenomenon but oscillates according to situational patterns. Thus it is likely that the tribal women’s sexuality, self/body image and personality will be shaped not only by folk traditions, but environmental challenges, and changes through contact with dominant communities. How do these women experience, perceive and negotiate their sexuality, self/body image and personality, and further, how they in turn are mediated by education? The present study is an exploration of these questions.

Past studies indicate that sexuality is subject to cultural variation, (pleasurable in one and devalued in the other). In some communities, dominant codes of conduct, sanctify only heterosexual practices as shown by Malinowski 1932 and Davenport, 1965. However, several other indigenous groups reveal a more permissive space for women to experience their sexual needs and possibilities (Mead, 1967; Wekker, 1993 and Gardner, 1995). Though, sexual laxity is flexible within a tribal culture, yet, frequently women even there become victims of sexual exploitation (Mandal and Sahoo, 1990 and Women’s Feature Service, 1990). The relationship between sexuality and marital status of tribal women as reported by (Sain, 1992), reveal this factor to be unaffected by marital status and the trend reflects a preference for Sakhi-Bhav over other dimensions of sexuality. Further, other studies point out that age, too, is a significant factor in determining sexuality (Fooken, 1994; Wang and Lin, 1994 and Brahler and Unger, 1994).
**Self/Body Image** is affected more by age and education, than by marital status in the tribal culture (Sain, op. cit.). Though, majority studies indicate that education has broadened the outlook of indigenous women, nevertheless it has failed to make an impact on the life styles of such women (Panigrahi, Menon and Joshi, 1987). This is due to gender inequalities and socio-cultural biases (Upadhaya, 1983; NEIPA, 1986; Mukherji and Verma, 1987; Chauhan, 1989 and Kulkarni and Krishnamoorthi, 1992). Women promoted as body by the pervasive media, feel social pressure to meet standards of attractiveness (Bird et al., 1979; Hamilton and Chowdhary, 1989 and Gottesfeld, 1994). The older women’s perception of their bodies is even less positive (Janelli, 1986; Van Deusen et al., 1989; Sain, op. cit. and Briggs, 1993).

**Personality** studies (TAT stories) show that tribal women are more feminine and have higher identification with the female protagonist. Their inter-personal aspects of life are projected in their relational identity. Education does seem to be reducing the stresses, but, by and large, tribal women are not free from socio-cultural and economic conditions and patriarchal injunctions. It has also been seen that the single, younger and educated women are rejecting the age-old traditions of their tribal community life as well as polyandry. A gradual alienation is being experienced by the educated tribal women, fulfilling their traditional role. (Garg, 1988; Shirali, 1990 and Shirali and Sain, 1994).

There are very few equivocal studies looking at the sexuality, self/body image and personality of the tribal women, related to education. In this study, Kinnauri tribal women’s sexuality, self/body image and personality was investigated through projective techniques of DAP, TAT, Iconography and DAC (Draw a couple).
Main Hypothesis

I Education of Kinnauri tribal women will make no difference to their sexuality, self/body image and personality.

Tentative Hypotheses

II Marital status of Kinnauri tribal women will make no difference to their sexuality, self/body image and personality.

III Within the marital status, the effect of education will not be seen on Kinnauri tribal women’s sexuality, self/body image and personality.

Sample

The present study was conducted in district Kinnaur, using the method of stratified random sampling. Respondents were drawn from several villages of Kinnaur. A total of 96 Kinnauri tribal women were classified into Single (N=50), Polyandrous (N=26) and Zomos i.e. (N=20) in the age range of (16-60 years) from almost similar socio-economic background; these women belonged two major castes i.e. Kanet (Rajput) and Chamang.

The women were classified on the basis of formal education as the Educated (middle to matric and 10+2) and the Uneducated (0 to middle). Zomos (Buddhist nuns) were divided into two groups according to the years of religious training. The Educated i.e. Advanced (above 20 years of religious training) and the Uneducated i.e. Beginners (five years plus of religious training).

Tools

1. Draw a person test (Karen Machover, 1948).
2. Thematic Apperception test (Indian modification of TAT by Uma Chowdhury, 1984).

3. Iconography (Gita Thadani, 1990), *Kama sutra* miniatures from ‘The Love Teachings of *Kama sutra*’ (translated from Sanskrit originals by Indra Sinha, 1980) and some pictures from ‘Masterpieces of Indian Sculpture: Introduction and Notes’ (Mehta, 1968). Appendix B.

4. DAC (Draw a couple).

**Analysis**

Means, SDs, t-values and Percentages were calculated. Qualitative insights complemented the quantitative findings.

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

**Education**

The Kinnauri tribal women’s self-image/esteem (Self/Body Image /Size); work and relational selfhood (Prominence of Fingers), remained relatively unaffected by education. However, the uneducated women were significantly (p<.01) higher on their ethnic identity (Abstract/Stylistic/Hourglass drawings/Colour red). Many past studies indicate that education has failed to make an impact on the life styles of tribal women. Socio-cultural biases and gender inequality seem to hinder women’s education (Upadhaya, 1983; NIEPA, 1986; Panigrahi et al., 1987; Mukherji and Verma, 1987; Chauhan, 1989; Kulkarni and Krishnamoorthi, 1992 Singh and Ohri, 1993, 1996).
Within the dynamics of husband-wife relationship, both the formally educated and uneducated women expressed prominent themes such as care and concern (19.69% & 24.06%); bonding (22.21% & 22.23%); discord (15.10% & 16.33%) and male dominance (20.75% & 22.89%) respectively. Mental states of supportive/caring/concerned/loving (39.78% & 38.64%); happy (32.65% & 30.55%); conforming (17.70% & 18.06%) and seeking support/reassurance (9.87% & 12.75%) respectively, (all elements of relational self). Both these groups by and large, expressed more positive outcomes. However mental states like unhappy (29.53% & 36.22%), unwell (20.18% & 23.24%) and anxious (10.18% & 13.60%) respectively, by the two groups provide an insight into the tribal women's toilsome life and never ending chores. Their illness got somatized into bodily states, since their need to rest was hardly given recognition or acknowledgement.

However, the formally educated women, perhaps more influenced by the dominant forces; projected male aggression (26.19%) and alcoholism (14.10%). This group was significantly (p<.05) higher on identification with the male protagonist; need achievement and sentience and press nurturance. On iconography preferences, Heterosexual mode of sexuality, mainly depicted in the form of man-woman stimulus material, was preferred significantly (p<.01) and on (DAC), Sakha-Bhav relations, mostly in the form of Brother- sister Jodi (couple) 27.14%.

On the other hand, the uneducated women projected themes of poverty (12.01%), achievement (7.77%), childbirth (12.01%) and lack of children (10.98%). This group had a significantly (p<.05) higher projection of female protagonist, press poverty and Sakhi-Bhav mode of sexuality, again reinforcing the relatedness and connectedness within their cultural milieu. This was further confirmed by the importance given to
Sakhi-Bhav relations, mostly in the form of two female friends Jodi (45.79%).

Marital Status

Marital status did not prominently influence the self-image/esteem; work and relational selfhood and ethnic identity of Kinnauri tribal women. All groups of single, polyandrous and zomos identified more with the female protagonist (M=5.73; M=5.65; M=5.54) respectively, mostly in the form of a wife but also as a sister, daughter or mother; reflecting their feminine preference, but some masculine identity was also projected. They were high on need affiliation (M=14.38; M=13.73; M=14.60) respectively, and press affiliation (M=10.62; M=10.12; M=10.05) respectively. Their outcomes by and large were positive. The zomos were seemingly high on their positive outcomes (M=5.10), perhaps away from the mainstream life, these women seek contentment in their religious pursuits, although an Upasika zomo, also performs her household duties and contributes in the field; besides, taking care of her Guru’s Gompa (nunnery/monastery). This was also reflected through her work and relational self (Prominence of Fingers) which was a little more than the single and polyandrous women. The zomos were highest across the groups on their preferences for Auto-Erotic mode of sexuality. These nuns sublimated this aspects of sexuality into images of Devis, Pragyas or Dakhinis; and also showed preference for Sakhi-Bhav mode of sexuality (M=7.28). The single women preferred the Heterosexual mode of sexuality (M=7.43) and their DAC drawings revealed a liking for the Husband-wife Jodi (28.10%). The polyandrous women, although, occupying a more flexible role in their family; did indicate preference for Sakhi-Bhav stimulus material (M=8.00) and Sakhi-Bhav relations, mostly in the form of Two female friends Jodi (49.10%). It
is interesting that although the polyandrous woman lives as a common wife to brothers, yet, reaches out for female to female relationships. Earlier study by Sain (op. cit.) also reflected *Sakhi-Bhav* preference (Iconography), irrespective of marital status.

**Marital Status and Education**

Within the marital groups i.e. single, polyandrous and *zomos*, the effect of education was not markedly felt on self-image/esteem and work and relational selfhood (DAP). All these women preferred identification with the female protagonist and preferred the Auto-Erotic mode of sexuality, the least.

Some effect of education was seen within the marital groups. The uneducated single women were significantly (*p*<.05) higher on ethnic identity (Abstract/Stylistic/Hourglass drawings/Colour red). Colour red symbolizes sexuality, regenerative and life giving energy (Eisler, 1988; Mookerjee 1988 and Shirali, 1990), than the formally educated single women. Falling into a similar trend, were the results of the uneducated polyandrous and beginner *zomos*. All the unschooled (single and polyandrous) and beginner *zomos* showed a higher preference for female identification. The formally educated (single and polyandrous) and advanced *zomos* for male protagonist. The formally educated single women were significantly (*p*<.01) higher on need autonomy and so were the advanced *zomos* (*p*<.05). The uneducated single women were significantly (*p*<.05) stressed by infidelity; the uneducated polyandrous women by sex (*p*<.05) and the beginner *zomos* by press affiliation (*p*<.01). Both the beginner and advanced *zomos*, projected highest positive outcomes and least negative outcomes. The uneducated (single and polyandrous) and beginner *zomos* were higher on *Sakhi-Bhav* mode of sexuality; whereas the
formally educated (single and polyandrous) and advanced zomos on Heterosexuality.

A concise summary in the form of profiles, synthesizing the major trends seen in the different groups is presented below:

**PROFILES**

**The Formally Educated Women**

The formally educated Kinnauri tribal women had a low ethnic self-esteem and self worth. Their TAT stories projected most commonly, themes of familial bonding, care and concern, marital discord and male dominance. These women projected high male oppression (alcoholism) and male aggression; and significantly (p<.05) higher projection of male heroes; need achievement (p<.05) and need sentience (p<.05) and press nurturance (p<.05). These women had more positive than negative outcomes, indicating an adjustment with their given social conditions; were significantly (p<.01) higher on Heterosexuality dimension of sexuality on the Iconographic pictures; their DAC drawings projected more Sakha-Bhav relations, in the form of Brother-sister Jodi (couple); but also gave preference to Two female friends Jodi.

**The Formally Uneducated Women**

The women whom formal education had by passed, were significantly (p<.01) higher on ethnic self esteem and self worth as projected in Abstract/Stylistic/Hourglass drawings. Colour red was used most frequently in their drawings. Their TAT stories projected most commonly, themes of familial bonding, care and concern, marital discord and male
dominance; were high on poverty, achievement and lack of children; and they were a little high on the unhappy mental state. These women were significantly (p<.01) higher on female heroes; were stressed by press poverty; (p<.05); had more positive than negative outcomes and projected significantly (p<.01) higher Sakhi-Bhav dimension of sexuality; their DAC drawings projected more Sakhi-Bhav relations, especially in the form of Two female friends Jodi.

Single Women

The single women were a little high on self-esteem, self worth (size) in their self-image. They identified the most with the female heroes; expressed a high need affiliation and some need sex and abasement. They were highest on press affiliation; projected more positive outcomes; preferred Sakha-Bhav relations in their DAC drawings, especially in the form of Husband-wife Jodi; but also indicated Sakhi-Bhav liking in the form of Two female friends and Two women Jodis.

Formally Educated Single Women

The formally educated single women identified more with the female heroes; were high on need autonomy (p<.01); projected more positive outcomes and had the highest preference for Heterosexual dimension of sexuality.

Formally Uneducated Single Women

The unschooled single women had a high ethnic identity projected through Abstract/Stylistic/Hourglass drawings, made use of colour red frequently (p<.05). They identified more with the female heroes; had a high press
affiliation; were stressed by infidelity (p<0.5); projected more positive outcomes and preferred Sakhi-Bhav dimension of sexuality.

**Polyandrous Women**

The polyandrous women projected a slightly high ethnic identity and use of colour red in their drawings. They identified more with the female heroes; projected a high need affiliation and press affiliation and to some extent need succorance. Amongst the different groups, they were highest on negative outcomes. Sakhi-Bhav pictures and DAC drawings, especially in the form Two female friends Jodi were the most preferred by these women.

**Formally Educated Polyandrous Women**

The formally educated polyandrous women identified more with the female heroes; were significantly (p<0.05) higher on need achievement; also projected high press affiliation and had less positive outcomes. These women preferred Heterosexual dimension of sexuality.

**Formally Uneducated Polyandrous Women**

The unschooled polyandrous women had the highest identification with the female heroes; projected high press affiliation, were significantly stressed by sex (p<0.05) and had the least positive outcomes. These women gave highest preference to Sakhi-Bhav mode of sexuality.

**Zomos**

The zomos were a little high on work and relational self-image, identified more with the female heroes; expressed highest need affiliation; a high press affiliation and the highest positive outcomes. Across the groups,
Auto-Erotic mode of sexuality was the most preferred by these women, but within the group, were highest on *Sakhi-Bhav* dimension.

**Advanced Zomos**

The advanced *zomos* (with over 20 years of religious training) projected a high female identification; were significantly (p<.01) higher on need autonomy; expressed highest positive outcomes and preferred the *Sakhi-Bhav* dimension of sexuality.

**Beginner Zomos**

The beginner *zomos* (with over 5 years of religious training) projected a high female identification; were significantly (p<.01) higher on press affiliation; expressed more positive outcomes and were high on *Sakhi-Bhav* dimension of sexuality. These Buddhist nuns were highest in their preferences on Auto-Erotic dimension of sexuality. Attributing this to divinity was perhaps in accordance with their religious identity.

**CONCLUSION**

This study reveals that irrespective of schooling or marital status, a marked search in the lives of Kinnauri tribal women takes them towards women to women relationships. Perhaps, this depicts their cultural order, within which they root themselves and live. Within the realm of a tribal community, associating, working and relating with other women like themselves; they seek relationality, selfhood and confirmation. Wherever, schooling has a direct bearing on their lives, a gradual shift towards heterosexuality is recorded in their responses. While education appears as a homogenizing aspect, leading to the mainstream of modern life, yet we
must not forget that they in their state of cultural embeddedness are not free from hardships and stresses of tribal life. Their life is also restricted and enclosed by male pressures and dominating voices.

As revealed by this study, the women bypassed by formal education, exercise their agency within their cultural space. By not questioning their culture, adjusting to their social realities, they pay a heavy inner cost, both physiological and psychological. In mediating and negotiating their realities, they do not perceive themselves as victims either. The tribal woman's positive outcomes can thus be understood as reflective of her agency in exercising her personhood. Paradoxically, it can simultaneously also be seen as a pressure, under whose burden, her voice loses its expression and gets silenced by the dominance that encloses her life space.

Thus, in the given social reality, through schooling, any and every woman gets initiated into an exceedingly difficult journey. While slowly moulding her towards the dominant culture, education generates a process of self-estrangement that gradually distantiates her from her own roots. Embedded within her culture, the tribal woman, prior to the advent of education in her life; did have an established role to play within its daily routine. As she loses her own moorings, education, in the real sense, fails to provide her with any authentic anchorage. As she now joins her city counterparts in their endless and often frustrating search for identity; she has yet to realize that within the given patriarchal structure, confirmation of identity for almost any woman remains more of an elusive illusion rather than a tangible possibility. Now struggling for achievement and autonomy, the indigenous woman, too searches for sentience pleasures. Within the confines of patriarchy, she confronts multiple barriers, some obvious and explicit, others subtly implicit. Trapped in even more difficult spaces, she finds herself negotiating both the home and work front by paying a heavy
personal cost. As her responsibilities increase, the essential question still remains - is this the meaning of identity and selfhood for women? Is not the formal educational system in its present garb, with its blind spots and biases, insensitive to less privileged people? Homogenizing diversity does it not lead to more problems? What is needed with education is a transition in social processes; a movement toward 'degenderization'; a more egalitarian re-distribution in the sexual power between the genders and respect for diversities. Until and unless socio-political change will not move along with educational programmes (that sensitively reflect and contextualize their 'true' states); women, whether tribal or otherwise will continue to devalue and appropriate their selves to the dictates of the dominant culture.

LIMITATIONS

While engaging with issues around sexuality, self/body image and personality as mediated by schooling, more questions were raised in the process of this work. Thus, unable to respond to all of the emerging concerns, this study, like any other, has its own limitations.

1. The present endeavour, trying to balance the subjective readings of projections through quantification and complemented by a qualitative synthesis, could have been enriched and further strengthened by greater qualitative orientation. This could have led to deeper insights.
2. Iconography was used as an innovative tool. Its validation needs further support.
SUGGESTIONS

1. A comparative study of the indigenous and urban women could be done. Such an effort could historically situate the differently lived realities of women in their respective domains.

2. Parallel gender studies can also be undertaken with the ‘Lamas’ of Kinnaur.

3. This study reveals a potential for future in-depth, qualitatively oriented work, documenting the lives and selves of tribal women. There is much scope in the future, to explore the life narratives of Kinnauri and other indigenous women in India. Perhaps, a synthesis of the narrative methodology, along with projective tests would help us more towards a holistic understanding of their lives and times.