The present study has been attempted to know the impact of education on the changing status of Tharu women for which an attempt has been made to study their status in the Udham Singh Nagar District of Uttaranchal State (now known as Uttarakhand). The information/data has been collected on various aspects of the study, both from secondary source and primary sources and the findings, observations and conclusion are presented in this chapter.

8.1 FINDINGS OF THE SECONDARY SOURCES

8.1.1 Traditional Status of Tharu Women

- In most tribal societies women hold a high and honourable place. She goes proudly free about the country side. In field and forest she works in happy companionship with her husband. She is not subjected to early child bearing. She is generally married when she is mature, and if her marriage is failure (which is seldom) she has the right to divorce.

- The tribal women in general are not a drudge or a beast of burden. She is found to be exercising a relatively free and firm hand in all aspects related to her social life unlike in non-tribal societies. The tribal women in general and in comparison with Hindu caste women, enjoy more freedom in various walks of life. Traditional and customary tribal norms are comparatively more liberal to women.
• In Tharu Tribe the dominance of women, their rights to property, their maltreatment of their husbands, their active role in fishing, the chase and business negotiations, all these conditions strengthen matriarchal society.

• The position of Tharu women is not that of the family drudge as one may find in some lowly societies. They have considerable freedom and wield great influence in the domestic sphere. The majority of women in the crowded markets and fairs do all the marketing and move about freely, while their husbands only assist them in bringing the articles home, purchased by their wives.

• Her control of the family economy is the main reason why her status is dependent on abundant natural resources. That was also the basis of the family’s sustenance. It also meant that the women engaged more on these resources than the men did, and as such she had a bigger vested interest in creating them as renewable, i.e. in their sustainable use. This vested interest, her relatively high status and the control she exercised over the family economy depended on the resource as a community asset, not as individual property.

• A Tharu widow inherits her deceased husband’s land and other property. She can keep a man as Gharbaitha (servant-husband) at the same time.

8.1.2 Changing Status of Tharu Women

• Their economic modernization through construction of big power projects, opening of mines and construction of large dams is leading to displacement of tribals. Opening of tribal areas through construction of roads is leading to unhealthy influences of modern civilization on tribal society.
Displacement has resulted in the family being alienated from the resource, and its sustenance. From the economic point of view it involves impoverishment. But because the community had built its culture and identity around these resources their alienation also results in the weakening of the community support systems and the culture of sustainable development and mutual dependence that was dependent on it. To the woman it has meant the loss of the very foundation of her higher status.

In many cases due to the effect of urbanization, the tribal men came to urban centres and settled there. They did not go back to the wife’s village and hence their wives had to come and settle in the husband’s residence. This paved way to practice of patrilocal residence where husband had a dominant position and wife was taken as subordinate. Husband was the earner and wife was dependant on him.

As a result of loss of the assets on which their status depended, women are forced to remain at home and only look after the household, without any productive work outside. They become dependent on men to run the family since they become the only income earners.

She had decision-making power in the family as long as the resources belonged to the community as a whole. She as the main decision-maker in the family, controlled production as part of the family. With individual ‘patta’ becoming the only form of land ownership after resettlement, this power is transferred to the man and from him to his son. The woman ceases to be the main decision-maker in the family economy and becomes dependent on men.
• Large-scale ignorance of tribal women in respect of certain rights and privileges officially granted to them hampers their involvement and participation in various patterns of social organization and social control. The tribal women in Uttar Pradesh are not aware of certain new political provisions and processes and even if some of them are, they hardly avail of the opportunity to be a part of the new system at their instance. For example, the tribal women have been officially given a right to be elected as a member of the statutory Panchayati Raj bodies. But one hardly comes across the women elected to such bodies. Non-participation of this nature is a hindrance to the fair deal to the womenfolk at the village level and beyond.

• Because of illiteracy and low education levels the tribals could not get skilled jobs. Thus they form a vulnerable work force, which is open to exploitation. For them only low paid unskilled jobs were available. This worsen their socio-economic status.

• The process of modernisation is adversely affecting the status of Tharu women. Modernisation has provided education, employment, a new lifestyle to Tharu women, but these benefits have come at the cost of losing some of their rights in the family and community. Tharu men are trying to control the activities of women. At a time when the movement for the empowerment of women is active in India and throughout the world, in Tharu society, women's position is moving in the opposite direction because men are actively working to undermine their power and status. Consequently, certain rules and regulations are being incorporated into the socio-cultural system ostensibly to reform and improve the system, but actually, these rules and regulations seek to control the activities of women, which give Tharu men a dominant position vis-à-vis their women.
8.1.3 Government programmes for improvement of education for tribals

- The founding fathers of the Indian constitution were aware of the problems of tribal. Therefore, they made special provisions for their protection and development. The main safeguards include promotion of educational and economic interests and their protection from social injustices and all forms of exploitation.

- Even after providing financial assistance the tribal people could not emancipate their economic condition due to lack of education and skill. Therefore, programme for educational development was felt necessary.

- For educational improvement among tribals government runs various programmes. These are:
  
  - Implementation of literacy programmes
  - Grants Under Provision of Article 275 (1)
  - Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub- Plan Areas
  - Girls Hostel and Boys Hostel
  - Vocational Training Centers in Tribal Areas
  - Strengthening Education among Scheduled Tribe Girls in Low Literacy District
  - Grant-In-Aid to Voluntary Organization Working for Welfare of Scheduled Tribes
  - Scheme on Research & Training
  - Scheme of Development of Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGS)
  - Scholarship for Scheduled Tribes, Book Bank Scheme and Overseas Scholarships
  - Upgradation of Merit of Scheduled Tribe Students and Scheme for Coaching
  - Coaching for Scheduled Tribes.
Various programmes for educational improvement in the area are --

- Implementation of literacy programmes
- Construction of school buildings
- Measures to reduce non-enrolment, drop out and absenteeism
- Book aid
- Subsidy for establishment of book banks
- Subsidy for furniture and teaching materials
- Dress aid
- Subsidy to part-time classes for children of age group of 6-14 years
- Subsidy for science education and equipment in SBS
- Opening of part time adult education centres for 15-35 years age group
- Organisation of technical training to youths
- Stipend to trainees

8.2 FINDINGS OF THE PRESENT SURVEY

Findings and observations of the personal survey conducted on 200 Tharu women respondents to find out the level of impact of education on Tharu Women by the researcher in ten villages of Khatima Tehsil under Udham Singh Nagar District of Uttaranchal on various issues are given here.

8.2.1 Socio-Economic background of Tharu Women

- A large number of respondents (56.0 per cent) are Housewives who are also engaged in Farming and a small segment of respondents (13.5 per cent) come from Government Sector. The second largest group of respondents, which constitutes 30.5 per cent of the total sample size, is from Private Sector.
• The majority of the Tharu women respondents (45 per cent) earn between less than sixty thousand rupees per year. The second largest group consists of 37.5 per cent earning between rupees sixty to eighty thousand yearly. 22.5 per cent of the respondents cited earning eighty thousand or above yearly.

• Among the various forms of marriage, the regular Tharu marriage is the most popular among the Tharu as 93.0 per cent of Tharu women respondents enter into regular marriage. The percentages of Marriages -- regular Chutkuta, by force Ghuspaith, and by love Uddari -- are 3.0 per cent, 1 per cent, and 3.5 per cent respectively.

• A very high proportion of the respondents is in the married category. In fact 94 per cent of the respondents are married and live in Udham Singh Nagar with their family members. There were only five divorce cases but it is noteworthy that most of them remarried soon.

• The highest percentage of respondents i.e. 58.5 per cent belonged to joint families. Nuclear families amongst the respondents contacted are in good numbers, 41.5 per cent.

• Majority of the respondents interviewed, live in households where the male is the head of the family. Five of the 200 respondents lived in households where the female was the head of the family.

• In all selected villages of district Udham Singh Nagar 39.5 per cent of the respondents live in thatched houses whereas the Pucca Brick Houses were found in case of 31.5 respondents. And other categories include Tiled Houses (21.5 per cent) and a small number of tin shed houses (2.5 per cent).
Observation: Mainly of the Tharu women respondents are housewives simultaneously engaged in agricultural activities thereby not earning in terms of cash. However, as private contractors or state is acquiring the landholdings, the women are moving outside their homes and engaged in the jobs in private sectors or government sectors.

Majority of the Tharu families in Udham Singh Nagar are generally joint in nature. The joint family system is partly an indication of the Tharu's endeavour to preserve their cultural identity, and partly is the requirement of cooperative farming. It is noteworthy that the percentage of the joint families although, remarkably high, at present, is lower than what it was existing previously as reported by the elders of the community.

It may also be observed from the above details that marriage by force is not large, because love marriage is also considered respectable and is accepted easily. Chutkuta marriage is still in practice because the poor unmarried men who cannot afford the regular marriage choose the option of Chutkuta or Gharbaitha marriage. A Tharu woman can divorce on the grounds of bad character of husband, impotence of husband, fear of co-wife, and better prospects of happiness with another husband.

Although traditional thatched houses are still predominant in the district of Udham Singh Nagar, there is a growing tendency towards other types of houses also such as the Pucca Houses, Tiled and asbestos-sheet houses.

The Tharu community is also famous for its low rates of crime against women. Even though both men and women make extensive use of wine in daily life, women remain comparatively safe in Tharu communities.
8.2.2 Impact of Education on Tharu Women

- Majority of the respondents (83.5 per cent) reported that they have been benefited from government scholarships. Benefits drawn from other schemes were 17.5 per cent from Ashram Type School, 46.0 per cent from Mid Day Meal scheme, 70.0 per cent from Free Book scheme and 53.5 per cent from Uniform scheme.

- An overwhelming number of respondents (83.5 per cent) have started sending their daughters to the schools and 37.5 per cent of the respondents have joined adult education programme. While 30.00 per cent of the respondents expressed their willingness to send their daughters to colleges for higher education, 23.5 per cent respondents indicated that a member in their family participated in competition.

- Before 10 years not a single Tharu owned Jeep (Car) but at present 3.0% respondents have Jeep (Car). The use of objects like Iron, electric fans, double bed and Sofaset/Chairs increased considerably by the respondents.

- A good number of women at the time of going out side their home use western dresses, sari and also prefer salwar-kurta at home. 50.5 percent of the respondents reported that the number of garments they posses is increased.

- Majority of the respondents (67.5 percent) reported increase in the age of marriage and 53.0 percent of the respondents reported an increase in the expenditure on marriage ceremonies. This indicates an improvement in the economic status of the Tharus.
Observation: It has been observed that educational development programmes have made a significant impact on the life of the Tharu women. A young Tharu woman views with tempting sight every outsider women attired beautifully and try to imitate the same fashion. It implies that the Tharu women are set to become a progressive, enlightened and educationally stronger community.

8.2.3 Changing Patterns in Educational Awareness

- It has been noticed that among various categories of educational level the awareness about various schemes of government on tribal education is very high among Highly Literate group. Similarly, Highly Literate group is more in favour of educational programmes and felt need for more infrastructures for spread of education. The necessity of girls’ education was strongly felt among all the groups whereas coeducation was highly support by the Highly Literate Group followed by Moderatley Literates.

- It is seen that among different age groups the awareness of schemes of government on education of tribal is higher in Young Age Group respond. Young Group respondents strongly feel that Educational programmes are beneficial and more infrastructures for spread of education is required. Necessity of education for girls is felt by all the Young Group respondents. Coeducation system was favoured mostly by Young Group but Middle Age Group and Senior Citizens very much supportive of that idea.

- When the views were analysed on the basis of Economic Status of the respondents, it is observed that awareness about various govt schemes on education of tribal is more among High Income Group respondents where followed by Medium Income Group and Low Income Group. Similarly,
High Income Group felt that educational programmes are beneficial and there is a need for more infrastructure to spread education among Tharu Tribe women. A majority of the High Income Group respondents felt that education is necessary for girls and overwhelmingly favoured coeducation. Though girls education was very much supported by Middle Age Group and Senior Citizens, however, coeducation did not receive their favour. Even Senior Citizens were critical about it.

- Among different Occupational Groups, mostly respondents from Govt Sector are aware of various schemes on education of tribal whereas Private Sector respondents and Housewives are less aware about it. Though Govt Sector respondents mainly found educational programmes as beneficial, however, need for more infrastructures for education was felt almost equally by all occupational categories. Necessity of education for girls is being felt by all the occupational groups but coeducation was mainly favoured by Govt Sector respondents.

**Observation:** The above analysis indicates that aware about various government programmes on tribal education is more among Highly Literate, Young Age Group, High Income Group and Government Sector employees, which consists of educated Tharu Women. Thus it may be said that with increase in educational level, awareness and positive trends towards educational needs is higher among literate Tharu women. The educated women are becoming broad in their outlook and attitudes. They prefer coeducation. Majority of the respondents from these categories consider girls education as essential, which is absolutely a very healthy sign for future of girl education among Tharu community in the times to come.
8.2.4 Changing Patterns on Economic Empowerment

- Among different educational groups it is seen that a good number of Highly Literate respondents possess a bank account and also reported freedom in spending money earned or possessed by them whereas the number is less among Moderately Literate and Illiterate category. Similarly, the right over sale or purchase of property and insisting for registering property in their name is again more among Highly Literate group in comparison to Moderately Literates and Illiterates. Though majority of the respondents from all the three categories responded positively, it was more strongly felt by the respondents among the Highly Literate category that education helps in economic independence of women, which enhances their status.

- On the issues of economic empowerment, the responses among different age groups show more and more Young Age Group have a bank account than Middle Age Group and none of the Senior Citizens have a bank account. But freedom to spend money is mainly reported mainly by Senior Citizens followed by Young respondents. On the issue of right over property and insisting for that, Middle Age Group respondents are ahead followed by Young Age Group. As far as the issue of education helping in economic independence and enhancing status of women is concerned, there was an overwhelming support among the Young Age Group closely followed by other age groups.

- Among various economic status groups, having a personal bank account and freedom in spending their money is reported mainly by High Income Group respondents. Over right on property and registering it in their name, more inclination has been shown by High Income Group respondents followed by Medium Income Group and Low Income Group. It is seen that insistence for registering property in their name is little more among Low Income Group respondents. The response for education helping in
economic independence and enhancing status of women shows that an overwhelming positive prevails among all the categories.

- Among different occupational groups, it is seen that all the respondents of Govt Sector have a bank account whereas Private Sector lags behind and Housewives are way behind. As for freedom in spending their own money is concerned, again Govt Sector respondents have more freedom. Regarding right over property and insisting in registering in their name, it is seen that Govt Sector respondents are more inclined for it followed by Private Sector and Housewives. Majority of the respondents from all the occupational groups felt that education helps in economic independence and it enhances status of women as well.

**Observation:** It is clearly visible that among various groups Highly Literate, Young Age, High Income, Government Sector respondents, which consists of educated respondents, there is a growing tendency of opening a bank account and have control over the money either they earn or possess. The responses of these groups also show that among educated Tharu women tendency to ask for property right and in case of denial tendency of insistence for property rights increases with the increase in the level of education. Also the Tharu women strongly feel that economic independence is the main contributing factor for high status of women as majority of the respondents from all the four categories opined so.

### 8.2.5 Changing Patterns in Decision-Making

- On the issues of decision-making, in family matters and in financial matters, a very less number of Illiterate category respondents reported to be consulted, whereas the number is considerably high among Moderately
Literates and Highly Literates. The view point/decision of a majority of Highly Literate group is reported to be acceptable whereas in case of Moderately Literate and Illiterate it is comparatively low. Insistence to accept their views/decision is very high among Highly Literates followed Moderately Literate and Illiterate respondents. Acceptance or rejection of decision by head of the family is based on educational level of the female member is felt mostly by Illiterate and Moderately Literate categories. Across all the categories an overwhelming number of respondents opined that the educational level raise the overall status of women.

- Among different age groups, the views on decision making related issues show that as far as family matters are concerned, majority of the Senior Citizens are being consulted whereas when financial matters comes up, Young Age Group respondents reported being consulted more. It is seen that the point of view of Young Age Group respondents is more acceptable and in case of non-acceptance, Middle Age Group respondents are found in the habit of insisting for acceptance. Majority of the respondents from Young Age Group and Middle Age Group feels that acceptance or rejection of views is affected by educational status and that education do empower women.

- Among different economic status groups, High Income Group respondents are consulted more in both family matters as well as financial matters. As for acceptance of their point of view and insistence for accepting the same is concerned, again the High Income Group respondents are ahead. Majority of the High Income Group respondents felt that acceptance or rejection of the decision is affected by educational status. An overwhelming number of respondents among High Income Group and majority among Medium Income Group and Low Income Group respondents felt that education do empower women in decision making.
• Among different occupational groups, in family matters or in financial matters, Govt Sector and Private Sector respondents are consulted more in comparison to Housewives. On the question of whether their point of view is adhered to or they insist on accepting the same is concerned, more respondents from the Govt Sector Group informed this. A majority among all the categories felt that that acceptance or rejection of point of view is affected by educational status and that education do empower women.

**Observation:** From the above analysis, it can be seen that the education plays a vital role in decision-making power. As the education level increases the opinion in financial matters do carry the weight and is preferred. In case of illiterate women, though consultation is taken, however, the decision maker feels free to accept or reject the opinion.

### 8.2.6 Changing Patterns on Personal and Social Issues

#### Marriage

• Majority in all categories (based on educational levels) showed that they have enough freedom in deciding about their marriage. However, the percentage was high among Highly Literate category. All the respondents from Highly Literate category favoured that girls should marry after 18 years of age. The Inter-clan and inter-faith marriages were mostly favoured by the Highly Literate group followed by Moderately Literate category and from Illiterate category. A majority among the Highly Literate was in favour of meeting groom before settling the marriage in comparison to other categories. The approval of widow marriage was seen among all the categories but again it was quite high among Highly Literates. Highly
Literate category strongly disapproves demand of dowry. The Highly Literate category preferred career over marriage, however, none among Illiterate category opined for this.

- A majority of the respondents of Young Age Group favourable on freedom to decide about marriage and preferred that girls should marry at 18 years of age. Majority of them also favoured inter-clan, inter-faith marriage. On the issue of meeting groom before marriage, a good number of respondents of Young age Group followed by Middle Age Group and Senior Citizens. On widow marriage, again Young Age Group respondents overwhelmingly supported it and also they were less inclined for dowry. A good number of the Young Age respondents preferred career over marriage.

- Among different economic status groups, it is seen that majority among the Medium Income Group and High Income Group expressed freedom to decide about their marriage. Preference for girls to marry at the age of 18 years was favoured by majority of the High Income Group respondents. As for inter-clan and inter-faith marriage is concerned, majority of the High Income Group respondents were in favour. As far as meeting groom before marriage and widow marriage is concerned, a majority of the High Income Group Respondents were inclined. Low Income Group mainly favoured the dowry issue. High Income Group respondents mainly favoured preference over career.

- Among different occupational groups, the views on the marriage related issues show that among Govt Sector the respondents reported more freedom and opined that girls should marry at 18 years of age. Inter-clan and Inter-faith marriages are favoured mostly by Govt Sector respondents and meeting groom before marriage and widow marriage was also mostly favoured by Govt Sector respondents. Dowry is being favoured mostly by
the Housewives, however, none among Govt Sector respondents favoured it. Preference over career is mainly shown by Govt Sector respondents.

Observation: The views among different educational, age, economic and occupational groups show that Highly Literate, Young Age, High Income and Government Sector Groups, which consists of educated Tharu women, have progressive views. Thus with the increase in educational level views on marriage are changing rapidly. It was clear that there is a growing tendency of inter-clan and inter-faith marriages among educated Tharu women; they are more inclined to see the groom before marriage, and they have started preferring career over marriage.

Health

- Views of different educational categories show that keeping hygienic conditions at home was preferred by majority of the respondents from all the categories but more respondents from Highly Literate category reported maintaining hygienic conditions at home. As for consulting a doctor at the initial stage of illness and accepting immunization for children, a higher number from Highly Literate category reported so. When asked about whether they use/used any of the family planning measures, none among the Illiterate group favoured this, however, a overwhelming number among Highly Literate segment and a good number among the Moderately Literates said yes.

- The responses when analysed in view of the age groups of the respondents i.e. young, middle aged and Senior Citizens, it has been observed that more Young Age group respondents use to maintain hygienic conditions at home. For consulting doctor at the initial stage of illness, and immunization for children, more and more Young Group
respondents responded positively. Family planning measures are found to be very popular among Young Group respondents.

- Among various income groups, it is seen that High Income Group respondents keep hygienic conditions at home as all the respondents responded positively. For consulting doctor at the initial stage of illness and immunization for children, High Income Group respondents were more forthcoming. Preference for family planning measures is quite visible among High Income Group females but the acceptability of family planning measures is very low among Low Income Group.

- The views on health related issues among different occupational groups show that a high number of respondents working in Govt. Sector keep hygienic conditions at home. Consulting doctor at the initial stage of illness and immunization for children has also been reported mostly by the respondents of Govt Sector. The Govt Sector respondents overwhelmingly support family planning measures where all the respondents said yes they use any of the family planning measures closely followed by the respondents of the Private Sector. However, a very less number of respondents from the group of Housewives seems to like family planning measures.

**Observation:** This shows that as the educational level increases, awareness about health also increases as reported in keeping hygienic conditions at home, going to doctor or use of immunization or family planning measures is concerned. Definitely education is affecting the thinking of the Tharu women. Among educated groups all such practices which are prevalent in a modern day society are being reported to be adopted.
Occupation

- In various educational categories, mainly the Illiterate category respondents have reported that they are doing job under pressing circumstances. However, majority of the Highly Literate work willingly. As for appreciation for employment is concerned, Highly Literate group told that their husband or family is appreciative of their working in comparison to Moderately Literate or Illiterate group respondents. About leaving job on improvement of economic conditions, none among the Highly Literate category was in favour whereas a majority of the respondents from Illiterate group said yes. Majority of Highly Literate category and Moderately Literate category do not want to continue in their family occupation.

- Mostly Senior Citizens reported that they are working due to some pressing circumstances whereas majority of the Middle Age Group and Young respondents did not report so. As for appreciation for work, the Young respondents said that they do get appreciation for work. In case of improving economic conditions, a few Young respondents would like to leave their job whereas. Family occupation is favoured all the Senior Citizens.

- The views of different economic groups on the issues of occupation show that more Low Income Group respondents are working for some pressing circumstances whereas only very few of the High Income Group respondents have reported this. As for appreciation of work, majority of the High Income Group respondents said that they get appreciation while Medium Income Group and Low Income Group respondents did not report to get much appreciation. In case of improving economic conditions majority of the High Income Group respondents are not inclined to leave their jobs. Similarly, a few among High Income Group preferred family occupation.
• Among different occupational groups, a very less number of respondents from Govt Sector said that they are working for pressing reasons. As for appreciation of work, Housewives get less appreciation whereas Govt Sector and Private Sector respondents have said that they do get appreciation for work. In the case of improving economic conditions, a good number of respondents of the Private Sector would like to leave their jobs whereas only less Govt Sector respondents opined so. The respondents mostly show the preference for family occupation from Housewives group.

Observation: This means that the educated Tharu women are not only working for financial gains but they are becoming career oriented. Educational levels have raised their ambitions. They are more inclined to change their family occupation and adopt different fields. It was observed that they are more inclined to get job of teachers or wish to run ‘Angan Badi’ sponsored by the Government.

Cultural Patterns

• In different occupational categories, a large number of respondents in the Highly Literate category feel that their traditional patterns are changing. In observing rituals, a less number of Highly Literate category reported that they are strictly following the traditional patterns while observing rituals. However, percentage among Moderately Literate and Illiterate group is very high who still follow the traditional way. As regards their participation in religious activities, a low number of Highly Literates attends religious activities. A high percentage from the Highly Literate respondents celebrates festivals other than their traditional festivals. The percentage among Moderately Literate group was less and it was very low among
Illiterate category. Change in the life style pattern of Highly Literate group is reported very high.

- Among different age groups, the view on cultural pattern related issues shows that Young Age Group respondents in majority says that they feel there is a change in their traditional patterns. Senior Citizens mainly reported conducting rituals in traditional pattern. In response to their participation in religious activities, a low number of Young Group respondents accepted their participation in comparison to Medium Age Group and Senior Citizens. Similarly, celebrating festivals other than traditional one’s has been mostly reported by the Young Group respondents. The change in life style has also been accepted by more and more Young group respondents.

- Among different economic groups, all the High Income Group respondents reported that they feel a change in their traditional patterns closely followed by Medium Income Group. Conducting rituals in traditional pattern is less prevalent among High Income Group whereas it is little more prevalent among Medium Income Group but very high among Low Income Group. Participation in religious activities is mainly prevalent among Low Income Group. A majority of the respondents from High Income Group celebrate other than their traditional festivals. A change in the life style is being felt by all the respondents of the High Income Group closely followed by Medium Income Group Only few of the Low Income Group respondents felt so.

- Among different occupational groups, all the Govt Sector respondents reported that there is a change in their traditional patterns. A good number among the Housewives and Farming Group also felt so. As for conducting rituals in traditional pattern, Housewives reported favourably in majority followed by respondents of Private Sector and then Govt Sector.
Participation in religious activities was less among Govt Sector respondents. Celebrating festivals other than traditional one’s has been mainly reported by the respondents of Govt Sector. All the respondents of Govt Sector followed by Private Sector and Housewives categories report change in life style.

**Observation:** Educational impact is proving instrumental in changing the life style patterns and religious beliefs of the Tharu women as views among different educational, age, economic and occupational groups show that Highly Literate, Young Age, High Income and Government Sector Groups, which consists of educated Tharu women, have progressive views. In observing rituals, the traditional patterns are fading away with the development of educational levels. The changes reported by the Illiterate category are also due to changing environment around them and certainly includes the attitudes of educated persons around them.

### 8.2.7 CHANGING PATTERNS ON POLITICS

- Among educational categories, mainly respondents among Highly Literate category reported that they do have affiliation with political party or social organizations engaged in women affairs. Moderately literate and illiterate category reported less inclination. When it comes to participation in Village Panchayat activities, Highly Literate category participation is more participative compared to Moderately Literate and Illiterate categories. Freedom to cast their vote is reported by majority of the respondents from Highly Literate category and Moderately Literate category. Inclination towards contesting elections themselves was moderate among all the groups. It was reported from majority of the respondents from all the three categories that education helps them in safeguarding their interests -- at home, in the society and elsewhere.
It was seen that among different age groups affiliation to any political party has been reported mostly by Senior Citizens followed by Young and Middle Age Group respondents. However, affiliation to social organization for women is mainly reported by the Young Group. Majority of the Senior Citizens have reported their participation in village panchayat. Among Young Age Group, a very less number of respondents shown interest in village panchayat. As for freedom in casting of votes is concerned, Young Group respondents reported more freedom in comparison to Middle Age Group and Senior Citizens. A majority of the Middle Age Group respondents have said that they have thought of contesting election closely followed by Senior Citizens. However, very few of the Young respondents said so. All the respondents among Young Group and a majority among Medium Age Group felt that the education helps women to safeguard their interests. A less among Senior Citizens felt so.

The responses among different economic status groups show that Medium Income Group respondents have little more affiliation to political parties in comparison to High Income Group and Senior Citizens. However, affiliation to social organization of women is very high among High Income Group followed by Medium Income Group. Participation in village panchayat has been reported mostly by Medium Income Group closely followed by High Income Group. Among Low Income Group it is fifty-fifty. As far as freedom in casting of vote is concerned, all the respondents of High Income Group and a majority of Medium Income Group said that they have freedom. However, the percentage is very low among Low Income Group. An inclination for contesting election is more among High Income Group respondents. All the respondents in the High Income Group and an overwhelming number among Medium Income Group think that the education helps women to safeguard their interests. A good number of respondents among Low Income Group also feel so.
Among different occupational groups, more Govt Sector respondents have affiliation to a political party. A very less number among Housewives and very few among Private Sector reported so. Affiliation to social organization for women is also more among Govt Sector respondents followed by Private Sector respondents and Housewives. Participation in village panchayat is equal among Govt Sector and Private Sector respondents whereas it is low among Housewives. Freedom in casting of vote has been reported by all the Govt Sector respondents closely followed by Private. However, lesser number of Housewives has freedom in casting their vote. A majority among Govt Sector respondents has thought of contesting elections. All the respondents of Govt Sector felt that education helps women to safeguard their interests closely followed by Private Sector respondents and Housewives.

**Observation:** With the above narrative we may find that the education feeds hope towards increasing political aspirations in Tharu Women. Higher education even nurtures hopes to get involved in the political process to safeguard their own interests and also with the increase in education level the inclination for political affiliation increased but is still not very high.

### 8.2.8 Changing Patterns on Modernization

Among various educational categories, Highly Literate and Moderately Literate respondents love to use English words in their day-to-day life more. Among highly literate category, a good number of respondents have modern household/personal equipments like TV, fridge, mobile phone, camera, etc. which is higher than other two categories. As for the question of knowing their usage also Highly Literate group know much better than other categories. Western dresses and western food are the liking of the
Highly Literate category and a good number of respondents among Moderately Literate also showed interest. However, there is a very little interest shown by Illiterate category. There is a growing tendency among Highly Literate Tharu women for either driving a scooter/car or are interested in learning it followed by Moderately Literate and Illiterate category respondents. Majority of Highly Literate category use modern cosmetics at home and go to beauty parlour too. It is little low among Moderately Literate category whereas the Illiterate group is not in the habit of using such items or going to beauty parlour.

- Among different age groups, all the Young Group respondents reported that they use English words in day-to-day life None of the Senior Citizen respondents do not keep modern equipments like mobile phone whereas almost half of the Middle Age Group and majority of Young Age Group respondents posses them and also know their usage. Likely of western dresses and western food was mostly reported by the Young Age Group respondents. Among Middle Age Group Senior Citizens a less number of respondents reported and inclination towards western dresses and western food. As for as driving or liking to drive scooter/car, none of the Senior Citizens shown inclination, whereas Middle Age Group and Young Age Group respondents shown more and more inclination. For use of modern cosmetic items and going to beauty parlour, Young Age Group was clearly ahead in comparison to Middle Age Group and none Senior Citizens.

- Views on modernization, when looked Economic Statuswise, shows that all the respondents from the High Income Group use to speak English words in their day to day life followed by Medium Income Group. All the respondents of High Income Group, and a good number among the Medium Income Group have modern household/personal equipments. All the respondents knew operation of these equipments from High Income Group but very less of the Medium Income Group and very meager among
the Low Income Group respondents knew their operation. For liking towards western dresses and western food, High Income Group respondents were clearly ahead. Use of decorative items to beautify home was mostly reported by High Income Group followed by Medium Income Group and Low Income Group. Inclination towards driving was mostly shown by High Income Group followed by Medium Group and Low Income Group. All the respondents from High Income Group said that they use modern cosmetics items and also go to beauty parlour. This tendency is less prevalent among Medium Income Group and Low Income Group.

- Among different occupational groups, the replies on issues of modernization indicates that all the respondents from Govt Sector use English words in their day to day life followed by Private Sector and Housewives. Having modern household/personal equipments has been reported mainly by the Govt Sector respondents. Knowing how to operate these equipments is again mostly reported by Govt Sector respondents closely followed by Private Sector respondents but only few of the Housewives said yes. Liking for western dresses and western food was very high among Govt Sector and Private Sector respondents. Using decorative items to beautify home has been reported by all the respondents of Govt Sector followed by Private respondents. Driving scooter/car or liking for it is very high among Govt Sector respondents followed by Private Sector. Only a handful of Housewives shown their interest. Modern cosmetic items use and going to beauty parlour is very high among Govt Sector respondents. A majority of the respondents from Private Sector also are in the habit of using them. However, among Housewives the number is very low.

Observation: It is observed that Highly Literate, Young, High Income and Government Sector respondents are more inclined towards modernizations.
The above results show that Highly Literate category of Tharu women are in the quest for modernization. The impact of education is clearly driving them towards adopting more and more ways and tendencies as are found in a modern day society.

CONCLUSION

Mainly of the Tharu women are housewives but simultaneously engaged in agricultural activities thereby not earning in terms of cash. However, as private contractors or state is acquiring the landholdings, the women are moving outside their homes and engaged in the jobs in private sectors or government sectors.

Majority of the Tharu families in Udham Singh Nagar are generally joint in nature. The joint family system is partly an indication of the Tharu's endeavour to preserve their cultural identity, and partly is the requirement of cooperative farming. It is noteworthy that the percentage of the joint families although high, at present, is lower than what it existed previously as reported by the elders of the community. Thus there is a growing tendency of nuclearization in family structures.

It may also be said that marriage by force is not large, because love marriage is also considered respectable and is accepted easily. Chutkuta marriage is still in practice because the poor unmarried men who cannot afford the regular marriage choose the option of Chutkuta or Gharbaitha marriage. A Tharu woman can divorce on the grounds of bad character of husband, impotence of husband, fear of co-wife, and better prospects of happiness with another husband.
Although traditional thatched houses are still there in the district of Udham Singh Nagar, there is a growing tendency towards other types of houses also such as the Pucca Houses, Tiled and asbestos-sheet houses.

The Tharu community is also famous for its low rates of crime against women. Even though both men and women make extensive use of wine in daily life, women remain comparatively safe in Tharu communities.

It has been observed that educational development programmes have made a significant impact on the life of the Tharu women. A young Tharu woman views with tempting sight every outsider women attired beautifully and try to imitate the same fashion. It implies that the Tharu women are set to become a progressive, enlightened and educationally stronger community.

Traditionally, women in Tharu Tribe enjoyed a higher status in their society. Indian anthropologists have mostly accepted the fact that women occupy a position of power in the Tharu tribe. Women lived with fewer restrictions and enjoy respect in the family and in the community. They enjoyed enough social and economic rights to give them autonomy in their day-to-day lives. Married life for women was peaceful and they have considerable freedom in sexual relations within the marriage relationship. Crimes against Tharu women continued to be quite low while women across India are struggling for their empowerment, Tharu women have long enjoyed an empowered lifestyle. The main contributing factor for their equal status in their society was that they contributed positively towards economic pursuits by participating equally, if not more, along with men-folk in economic activities and earning livelihood.

However, the infiltration of plainsmen has brought downward changes in the status of Tharu women. As a result of loss of the assets on which their status depended, women were forced to remain at home and only look after the household, without any productive work outside. They become dependent
on men to run the family since they become the only income earners. Because of illiteracy and low education levels, for them only low paid unskilled jobs were available. As they got exposed to the wider world and to the communities considered to be more developed and so called civilized they started imbibing or aping the values of the ‘upper class’ communities in an effort to be accepted by them which has resulted in the deterioration of their status in all spheres of life.

The founding fathers of the Indian constitution were aware of the problems of tribal. Therefore, they made special provisions for their protection and development. The main safeguards include promotion of educational and economic interests and their protection from social injustices and all forms of exploitation. It was felt that even after providing financial assistance the tribal people could not improve their economic condition due to lack of education and skill. Therefore, programme for educational development was felt necessary and in accordance with that efforts were underway to strengthen education among tribals in general and tribal women in particular.

The education is proving instrumental in providing bigger opportunities to Tharu women to earn and be economically independent and regain their status, which got a jolt because of changes brought in by displacement, exploitation and their contact with the mainstream society. The education is freeing themselves from traditionalism, superstitions and orthodoxy. The education is transforming the role and status of Tharu women. Marriage and work for educated Tharu women are of great social interest and importance in their present day society. The changes in the institution of family and marriage have been set in motion by them. The pattern of social relationship within the family is changing. The emergence of educated Tharu women is an indication of the significant socio-economic changes taking place in the tribal society. The views and opinions expressed by the educated Tharu women on various issues like education, economic empowerment, decision-making,
personal and social issues like marriage, health, occupation, cultural patterns, etc., politics and modernization clearly reflect significant changes. It is evident that Tharu women’s role and status have been changing due to educational opportunities provided to them. Thus, education has not only been working as a tool for Tharu Women to regain their lost ground but simultaneously helping them in moving towards modernity of the mainstream society.

**BEARINGS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

At the end bearings and relationships with the findings in the context of earlier studies may now be narrated.

1. Dr S.K. Srivastava (1958) in his anthropological work on “The Tharus: A Study in Culture Dynamics” aimed to examine the contacts of the Tharu with the wider society in Nainital. The aim was to indicate the extent and nature of changes in the culture of the Tharus of Nani Tal Tarai as a result of either deliberate adoption or unconscious imitation of the higher cultures. An endeavour was also made to further analyse whether changes have come in Tharu culture through processes of simple adoption of acculturation, acceptance and adaptation or assimilation. Psychological change that has resulted from culture contact is one of the most important aspects of this study.

The present study reveals that that though modernization has provided education, employment, and a new lifestyle to Tharu women but at the same time the process of modernization is drawing them away from their traditionalistic characteristics.

2. Reddy, P Adinarayana (2004) in his study “Total Literacy Campaign: Problems and Prospects” finds that the position of literacy among tribal
is extremely poor and poorest among the Tribal Women. Majority of the Tribal Women are illiterate. It would be a Herculean task to bring about any social and economic change among the tribal if their literacy levels do not improve in general and that of their women in particular.

The present study finds that though the status of education was poor among tribal women, it is slowly but steadily increasing and thereby there is an upward social and economic change in the status of the Tharu women.

3. Koseno (2005) in his thesis entitled “Changing Role and Status of Educated Angami Women: A Case Study of Kohima Village” submitted to the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong aimed at two objectives viz. (1) to find out how education helps to raise the occupational role and status of women in Angami society, and (2) to find out how the changing role and status of educated women and modern education impact upon the family, marriage and decision-making in the Angami society. The findings of the thesis suggest that due to education the role and status have been changing. The modern education has substantially influenced the socio-cultural life of the Angami women. Education opened up the minds of the Angamis into a New World, new ideas and change.

The present study also shows that the education is proving instrumental in providing bigger opportunities to Tharu women to earn and be economically independent and regain their status, which got a jolt because of changes brought in by displacement, exploitation and their contact with the mainstream society.

Kehtra ka ek Bhogoulik Adhyayan” has concluded that with the passage of time though there is an upward trend in socio-economic status of Tharu Tribe, a diminishing trend has been noticed in the original cultural setup. Thus neither the development is continuous nor is it equally affecting the Tharu Tribe as a whole. He further states that based on the findings of his study, though their educational and economic status has been strengthened, erosion in their traditional values has been noticed simultaneously.

In the present study, the researcher has noticed that with the increase in the educational status of Tharu women their traditional ways are changing fast. The views and opinions expressed by the educated Tharu women on various issues like education, economic empowerment, decision-making, personal and social issues like marriage, health, occupation, cultural patterns, etc., politics and modernization clearly reflect significant changes.

5. Subhash Chandra Verma (2009) in his work entitled “Amazing Tharu Women: Empowered and in Control” examined the positioning of women in the Tharu tribe in relation to family, social structures, customs and rituals on the basis of empirical data. He finds that the Tharu women, who claim to have Rajput blood in their veins and are thought to be the descendants of Rajput queens, occupy an empowered space, both in the family and the community. It concluded that the Tharu community continues to be one of the few tribal communities of India in which women still enjoy a reasonably empowered status. However, situation is changing now. Tharu men are trying to control the activities of women. At a time when the movement for the empowerment of women is active in India and throughout the world, in Tharu society, women’s position is moving in the opposite direction because men are actively working to undermine their power and status.
The present study also reveals that though the Tharu women enjoyed reasonably empowered status, however, the infiltration of plainsmen has brought downward changes in the status of Tharu women. As a result of loss of the assets on which their status depended, women are forced to remain at home and only look after the household, without any productive work outside. They become dependent on men to run the family since they become the only income earners. Because of illiteracy and low education levels, for them only low paid unskilled jobs were available. Also, as they got exposed to the wider world and to the communities considered to be more developed and so called civilized they started imbibing or aping the values of the ‘upper class’ communities in an effort to be accepted by them which has resulted in the deterioration of their status in all spheres of life.

The present study finds that the education has not only been working as a tool for Tharu Women to regain their lost ground but simultaneously helping them in moving towards modernity of the mainstream society. The Tharus women’s increasing interest in education is undoubtedly an encouraging sign, more so, because children and women are being included in the process of education. It is mainly due to the spread of education that the Tharu are trying to emancipate themselves from superstitions and orthodoxy. Thus, the present study suggests that keeping in view the positive impact of education in all spheres of life of Tharu women, it is desirable that educational programmes for tribal women be strengthened by removing bottlenecks so that this trend continues and flourish.