CHAPTER V

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The impact that is exerted by education on the socio-economic status of women with reference to type of family, marital status, age at marriage (self and husband), type of marriage, child bearing and rearing (fertility, age at child birth, place of delivery and nature of feeding), husband's educational status, husband-wife relations (spending leisure time with husband, differences of opinion between husband and wife and understanding between husband and wife), decision-making role (making independent decision on family budget, child education and personal matters), social participation (participation in agitation, social function/ceremony along with family members and local social activities), type of occupation (self and husband) and monthly income (self and husband) has been discussed. In this chapter, the work is summarized and conclusion drawn.

Manipur is a small hilly state in the North eastern region of India. It is encircled by nine hill ranges on all sides with a small oval valley at the centre. The state is surrounded by Myanmar on the South East, Nagaland on the North, Cachhar district of Assam on the West and Mizoram on the South and South West.
Manipur has a geographical area of 22,327 sq. km. where hills covered 20,089 sq. km. and valley covered 2,238 sq. km. The state is divided into nine districts – five in the hill and four in the valley. The hill districts are Senapati, Tamenglong, Churachandpur, Chandel and Ukhrul. The valley districts are Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Bishnupur.

Meiteis who are predominantly Hindus and Meitei Mulsims with a small percentage of population lived in the valley areas. Various tribes of Nagas and Kukis and other small tribes who are christians lived in the hill areas. There is difference of customs, dress codes, food habits and belief system between the valley and the hill people.

According to 2001 census, Manipur had a population of 22,93,896 comprising of 11,61,952 males and 11,31,944 females. The total literate persons in Manipur were 13,10,534 of which 7,53,466 were males and 5,57,088 were females. The literacy rate was 70.50 percent where 80.30 percent were males and 60.50 percent were females. Imphal West district had the highest literacy among the districts of Manipur with a total of 3,11,238 where 1,71,996 were males and 1,39,242 were females.

The women population residing in the Imphal West district was determined through documents published by the Government of Manipur. According to 2001 census, there were 54,230 women in the age group 35-59 years in Imphal West district.
In order to examine the socio-economic status, the Meitei women who were in the age group 35-59 years having at least one child had been considered in the selection of sample. Altogether 1008 women selected randomly from 13 Assembly Constituencies of Imphal West district were involved in the study.

A predesigned semi-structural interview scheduled was used as the tool of the study. A pilot survey was conducted on 50 women to pretest the schedule in terms of its reliability and validity. After the pilot survey the scheduled was revised through the knowledge gained during the survey while interacting to the informants. The questions were both open-ended and closed-ended one. The schedule had three sections viz., section-1 (background variables), section-2 (marriage and child bearing and rearing) and section-3 (participation in the family and society).

The personal-interview method was adopted for data collection. At the very outset, the respondents were identified and then they were explained the purposes of the study and made acquainted with the objectives of the present study. After establishing a good rapport, the factual information was elicited from the respondents. The collection of data started from February, 2005 and continued upto August, 2006.

The data was processed through computer with statistical software after thorough checking and scrutinizing. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, univariate and bi-variate tables were introduced and well
known statistical tests like $\chi^2$-test and ANOVA (F-test) were applied wherever found suitable and necessary and accordingly interpretation was made. Some hypotheses were framed on different related areas and the hypotheses were tested by using $\chi^2$-test and F-test wherever applicable.

In order to enable to make a comprehensive study of the impact of education on the socio-economic status of women in Imphal West district, Manipur, the historical background of women education in India and Manipur, status of women in India and social and economic status of women in Manipur during the pre-independence and post-independence period were briefly discussed.

Education in India, during the vedic period was institutionalized and there were very few centres of formal education known as 'Gurukul'. In Budhist period, learning was fostered by monasteries and the children learned from the monks and nuns. During the Medieval period, religion was a dominant factor of society. Among the Muslims, education was instituted on large scale through 'Madrassahs' and 'Maktabas'. In Hindu Society, educational institutions like the Pathsalas, the Tols and the Parishads were developed.

Women education was encouraged in India during ancient period. However, it received a great setback during 200 B.C. to 1200 A.D. Percentage of female literacy went down very rapidly during the Muslim rule. Strong prejudices against women education prevailed among the
people during the British rule. David Hare, established a girls' school in Calcutta in 1820 and conducted it at his own expense. Many Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Pandit Ishwarchandra lent their support to the opening of girls' schools.

Despatch of 1854 for the first time recognized women education as a branch of a state system of education. Some women schools were opened with Government grants according to the recommendation of Education Commission of 1882. There were 2,600 primary schools, 81 secondary schools, 15 training institutions and one college for the education of women by 1882. In 1891-92, more than 3 lakhs girls took admission in primary school.

Women education made considerable progress during 1905-21. The considerable rise in the age of marriage and the demand of educated men to have educated wives gave further encouragement to women education during that period. By 1947, there were 3,475, 165 girls in primary schools, 281,000 girls in secondary schools and 23,000 in higher education.

After independence, many efforts have been made for promoting women's education. University Education Commission (1948-49) forwarded many suggestions regarding women education. National Committee for Women’s education examined the problem of women education comprehensively. As a result of the recommendations of this
committee, a National Council for the education of women was set up in 1959. State Councils had also been established in the states and Union Territories. However, in spite of all efforts made for promoting women’s education, by 1999-2000, for every 100 boys there were only 77 girls in primary schools, 68 girls in middle schools, 64 in secondary schools, 69 girls in different stages of higher education.

With regard to the historical background of women education in Manipur, Manipuris in ancient days had their own system of literary education. The students had to go to the house of the learned teachers for receiving education. The teachers conducted only indigenous education like literacy, physical education, health and hygiene, games and indigenous medicines. In the hills, education was imparted to the tribal people through the village Morungs or the dormitories in the form of training in martial arts and warfare, administrative, arts, culture, religion and customary laws. But, women did not receive any education and they were assigned only domestic works. However, few girls of some aristocratic families receive education at home by engaging tutors.

In Manipur, schools on the modern lines were first introduced by the officers of the British Political Agency. In 1872, a vernacular school was established in Manipur at the suggestion of the then Political Agent, Major General W.F. Nuthal but it was nearly closed for want of encouragement on the part of the authorities. Sir James Johnstone established an English
School at Imphal in 1885. Subsequently a lower primary School was established at Sekmai in 1892-93 and another primary school was established at Mao Thana in 1893-94. Mr. Pettigrew established a School for boys at Singjamei in 1894 and tried his level best for development of primary education in Manipur.

Women education was started in Manipur in 1898-99 by establishing an L.P. School at Moirangkhom. There were only 12 girls students in 1898-99. The total enrolment of girls rose to 53 by 1900, 62 by 1901, 217 by 1911, 689 by 1931, and 1,594 by 1941. There were 3 L.P. Schools for girls, I.U.P school, 1 high school for girls before independence in Manipur. The date of establishment of girls’ institution were as follows – the first L.P. school for girls was established in 1898-99, one middle vernacular school for girls in 1913-14, two L.P. schools for girls in 1932-33, one U.P. school for girls in 1934-35, the first Girls’ High School in 1935 and the first co-educational college in 1946.

During Pre-statehood period, the number of women students increased to 6,962 in 1951, 62,620 in 1961, and 1,03,707 in 1971. There were 338 girls’ primary and middle schools, 19 Girls’ High and Higher Secondary Schools and one women’s College by 1971. The first women’s college was established in 1965 with great demand and pressure from the public.
During Post-statehood period, the literacy scene in Manipur greatly changed. The female literacy population was 2,03,387 by 1981, 3,55,808 by 1991 and 5,57,068 by 2001. There were 183 girls’ primary schools, 56 secondary schools, and 7 colleges for women by 2001.

Regarding the status of women in India, women occupied a high position in society during Pre-Vedic and Vedic period and it started deteriorating in post-Vedic period. The widely prevalent customs of sati, child marriages, polygamy, pardah, prohibition of widow re-marriage led to a degradation in the status of women. Through social reform movements and social legislations, efforts were made to improve the status of women. However, with the coming of British education systems the status of women started to change. There was improvement in literacy since Independence but there continued to be a large gap between the literacy levels of men and that of women. At present women have achieved a better status but much remained to be achieved. Social evils still continue and women remain suppressed by their husbands and are viewed as inferior in the male dominated society.

On the status of women in Manipur, women hold a very high social status in primitive period. There was equality between men and women. Women were the head of the families. The position of women in a subordinate status has been legitimized with the coming of Hinduism in Manipur.
During the pre-independence period, women in Manipur were not confined inside the house as it was done in other states of the country. They were very industrious. They performed most of the work of the state except the heaviest and as such they were the mainstay of the family circle. All the marketing was done by women. All the work of buying and selling in public and carrying to and fro of the articles to be sold were done by women. At home also they were busily engaged in weaving and spinning. But with all their industry and usefulness women hold a very inferior social position as recorded in 1886. However, in 1908 the position of women were recorded very high. All the internal trade and exchange of the produce of the country was managed by them.

Regarding the marriage system, there was no strict rules for marriage in ancient period due to matriarchal system. Later laws of marriage developed as the society was dominated by men. There was no early marriage and widows could re-marry. The young couples were allowed to see and approve of each other. Various types of marriages like Hainaraga Hongba (Arranged Marriage), Chellaga Hongba (Eloped Marriage), Kainakatpa and Loukhatpa were recognized in the society. Arranged marriage was socially the most respectable form of marriage. Polygamy was practiced since early days. At present polygamy is allowed but it is the exception rather than the rule. There was no strict customary law regarding divorce. The couple could separate without any formalities. But a divorced woman could not expect to marry a bachelor.
Concerning participation in social movement, Manipuri women played an active and vital role. The first Nupilan (women's agitation) of 1904, the second Nupilan of 1939, Nisha Bandh Movement, Meira Paibee Movement were some of the glaring instances of women's collective power in Manipur. But, in spite of their invincible courage and great role in social life, women took less part in decision making process and they generally accept what male had already decided. Many social restrictions were also placed on them which made women subordinate to men.

Manipuri women also played an important role in the economic life. Besides the household works and looking after the family, women took part in weaving, agriculture, marketing of both agricultural and industrial products. Women of Manipur were highly skilled in weaving. Weaving was the most important crafts of the state practiced by almost every housewife and they were capable of weaving all the clothes needed for the family.

In agriculture, women participated in all operations except ploughing. They performed their work mostly in teams called 'Khutlang'. They also worked as hired labour. Some educated women in rural areas formed self help groups and started running farms of crops, piggery, pisciculture and animal husbandry.

Women took an important role in internal trade and marketing. Women's market of Manipur is one of the largest markets of the country exclusively managed by women. Different commodities like, vegetables,
fish, clothes, jewelleries, utensils, etc. were sold in this market by the women.

However, with the coming of modern education in Manipur, educated women were entering government, non-governmental or self employed activities for earning money. Number of women in the service sector was also increasing. Women's attitude towards male-dominated occupations have also changed and during the last decade, many Manipuri women had joined police force.

The contribution of Manipuri women in Socio-economic transformation and upliftment is highly immense and they deserve a high status in the society. But in spite of their great contribution, the status enjoyed by Manipuri women is low.

For review of related literature, some classic research and contemporary studies related to the present work had been reviewed. Reviews on the association of education and other variables like marriage, marital stability, type of family, child bearing and rearing, decision-making, social participation, spouse's qualification, occupation and income had been discussed. Among them, the most relevant studies were studies conducted by Fatima (1989) and Biswas (1999) on the education of women and preference for nuclear families; Houseknecht and Spainer (1980), Martina and Bumpass (1989), Greenstein (1990), Singh (1996) and Vaijayanthemala, Kumari and Panda (2004) on education and marital

The above review of literature revealed that many studies had already been made by many educationists and researchers in this field in other states of India and other countries. Some of these studies were found in the form of theses both published and unpublished, journals, reports, abstracts and books.

The educational and socio-economic background of women and review of related literature were made for the purpose of reference for the
present study. For analysis purposes, educational status had been classified into six categories—illiterate, under matric, matric, under graduate, graduate and post-graduate. The data was further analysed and the conclusions and the findings of the study are as follows:

1. **Wife's educational status and type of family**

   Nuclear family has higher percentage than that of joint family irrespective of educational status of wife. However, the percentage of nuclear family decreases (except for graduate) as educational status raises. In other words, percentage of joint family increases as educational status raises. The evidence of significant test-value also shows that there is a relationship between educational status and type of family as most of the illiterate and less educated women belong to nuclear family while majority of the educated women belong to joint family.

2. **Wife's educational status and marital status**

   Educational status of women does not have any role towards her marital status. In other words, educational status of wife whether illiterate or literate is not a contributing factor of divorce or separation.

3. **Wife's educational status and age of marriage**

   Age at marriage increases as educational level advances except in the case of under matric. Under matric has a lower mean than that of
illiterate. Illiterate and under matric women married around the age of 22 years while post-graduate women married at the age of around 29 years. The very highly significant test value indicates that there is a significant difference of age at marriage among the wives of different educational status as more educated women got married later than illiterate or less educated women.

Similarly, there is a difference of mean age at marriage of husband over the educational status of wife. Illiterate women have corresponded with the low age at marriage of husbands while the husbands of post-graduate women have married late. Thus, it indirectly shows that there is a strong relationship between the educational status and age at marriage.

4. **Wife's educational status and type of marriage**

A vast majority of the respondents performed eloped marriage while a very few of them performed arranged marriage. Similar pattern is found in all educational status. And the significant test value shows that there is a relationship between wife's educational status and marriage by elopement.

5. **Wife's educational status and child bearing and rearing**

In this study child bearing and rearing includes fertility, age of mother at child birth, place of delivery and nature of feeding.
5(i) **Wife’s educational status and fertility**

Illiterate women on an average have highest number of children i.e., 4 children, while higher educated (post graduate) women have lowest fertility i.e., 2 children. There is decrease in mean fertility as educational status improves and their difference of mean are found to be significant. It indirectly supports the fact that education of women curtails their fertility levels. Thus lower fertility is related with the spread of higher education.

5(ii) **Wife’s educational status and age of child birth**

Average age of mother at birth increases as educational status enhances. In other words, educated mother is found to have child later than that of uneducated mothers. Thus education of woman entails late child issue and consequently less fertility in her life span.

5(iii) **Wife’s educational status and place of delivery**

Irrespective of educational status, 73 percent of the women of the study sample have delivery at hospital, followed by 13 percent at home with traditional attendant called maibi, 8 percent at home with doctor and 7 percent at private nursing home. It is further observed that as educational status raises, the cases of delivery in the hospitals increases. It is also noticed that institutional delivery is more common among the better educated women and home delivery is found mostly among the illiterates.
5(iv) Wife's educational status and nature of feeding

62 percent of the women used breast as well as bottle (mixed) feeding to their kids while 37 percent used exclusively breast feeding to their children and 1 percent used only bottle feeding. When it is classified with respect to educational status, it is evident that percentage of breast feeding raises as education of women improves. Hence, there is a strong link between education of mothers and their nature of feeding.

6. Wife’s educational status and husband’s educational status

There is a relationship between educational status of wife and educational status of her husband since less educated wife’s husband is also less educated man. And a very highly significant test value shows that there is a strong difference of educational status of wife according to the educational status of husband. It indirectly highlights that there is a strong relationship of educational status between the two sexes.

7. Wife’s educational status and husband-wife relations

Educated women spend more time with their husband during leisure in comparison with the less educated women. Hence, educational status has a strong impact on women’s spending leisure time with husbands.
It is further found that educational status of wife has certain relationship with the differences of opinion with her husband i.e. the higher the educational status of wife the less the differences of opinion between husband and wife.

And, it is also observed that the education of women has certain role towards the regulation of understanding between the couple i.e., the higher the educational status of the wife the more the understanding with the husband.

8. Wife's educational status and decision making role

On an average, better educated woman could make independent decision on family budget matters, child education and personal matters more than the illiterates and less educated women. Thus, education empowers her to take decision independently.

9. Wife's educational status and social participation

Illiterates and less educated women participated more in women's agitation than the highly educated women. Further, it is seen that the educational status of women cannot influence their participation as well as family members in social ceremony/function. And the participation in local social activities decreases as educational status of women increases.
10. **Wife's educational status and type of occupation**

Educated women have higher percentage of having better occupational status. Illiterates and less educated women correspond to skill workers / housewife. A very highly significant test value shows that there is difference of educational status of wife according to her type of occupation. Thus education of women has certain link with her occupation.

Similarly, the husbands of majority of the educated women are government employees while most of the illiterates and less educated women have non-salaried husbands. Hence, education of wife is found to be strongly related with the type of occupation of her husband.

11. **Wife's educational status and monthly income**

Educational status of wife has certain link with her monthly income. Illiterate women have an average monthly income of Rs.1843 which is lowest, under matric have Rs.2633, matric have Rs.2832, under graduate have Rs.4234, graduate have Rs.6920 which is highest and post graduate have a little less average than that of graduate women. Thus women education has a significant role to enhance family income.

There is also a direct link between educational status of wife and her husband's monthly income. Husbands of post graduate women have highest average monthly income of Rs.11,496, graduate women have Rs.9,672, under graduate women have Rs.7,747, matric women have
Rs. 7,044, under matric have Rs. 5,959 and lowest monthly income of Rs. 4,366 belongs to illiterate women. It shows that more educated women have more earning husbands and less educated women have less earning husbands.

**MAIN FINDINGS**

The main findings for the present study are given below:

- Majority of the educated women belong to joint family system.
- Educational status of wife whether illiterate or literate is not a contributing factor of divorce or separation.
- More educated women got married later than illiterates or less educated women and the husbands of more educated women also married late.
- Most of the women whether educated or uneducated married through elopement.
- Higher the educational status of the women, smaller the number of children.
- Better educated women experience late child birth than that of less educated women.
- As educational status raises the cases of delivery in the hospitals increases.
- More educated women breastfed their child than the illiterates and less educated women.
- Less educated wife's husband is also less educated man.
- Educated women spent more time during leisure with their husbands than the illiterates and less educated women.
- Higher the educational status of wife, lesser the differences of opinion between husband and wife.
- The higher the educational status of the wife, the more the understanding with the husband.
- Better educated women could make independent decision on family budget matters, child education and personal matters more than the illiterates and less educated women.
- Illiterates and less educated women participated more in women's agitation than the highly educated women.
- Educational status of women cannot influence their participation as well as family members in social ceremony/function.
- Participation in local social activities decreases as educational status of women increases.
- Educated women have higher percentage of having better occupational status than the illiterates and less educated women.
- The husbands of majority of the educated women are government employee while most of the illiterates and less educated women have non-salaried husbands.
- Higher educated women have higher income while less educated women have less income.
- More educated women have more earning husbands and less educated women have less earning husbands.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

From the above analysis, the impact of education on the socio-economic condition of the women may be classified into the following two ways- the variables which are probably influenced by education and the variables which seem to be having little or no influence of education.

The variables which are probably influenced by education are:

1. Late marriage
2. Small family Size
3. Late child birth
4. Safe delivery
5. Breast feeding
6. Couples' similar educational levels
7. Spending more time during leisure with husband
8. Lesser differences of opinion of couples
9. More understanding with husband
10. Independent decision-making
11. Better occupational status of couples
12. Higher income of couples
The variables which have little or no influence of education are:

1. Family system
2. Marital status
3. Type of marriage
4. Social participation

Although the nuclear family system is generally higher in the case of educated people because of their mobility, but our results from the present study are on the negative side. As educational status raises, the joint family system increases. Joint family system seems to be very prominent among the highly educated women in the society. This will be probably due to cultural factor in which the high income earning sons who usually have educated wives would look after their aged parents, a culture prevailing in the Meitei society.

Regarding the marital status, divorce or separation may take place among the couples irrespective of their educational status. In this context, education has nothing to do with separation or divorce. Concerning the type of marriage, eloped marriage without distinction of educational status is predominant in this society as people of Manipur generally have the preference of marrying a known person having similar interests and understanding. About the social participation, the educated women seem to be in an inferior position to that of illiterate or less educated women.
The overall impression of the study is that the impact that is given by education on the socio-economic dimensions of the women may be said to be in a desirable direction.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study deals with the impact of education on the socio-economic status of women in one valley district of Manipur. It is a micro-level study. However, such a study may be conducted at a macro-level covering some more districts or the whole state of Manipur so that we can have more and further insights into the problems under the study on the one hand and the findings of the study can be generalized on the other.

The present study focuses only on the relationship between education of wife and her socio-economic status. In this context, the relationship may be examined with reference to some more variables like political participation, legal awareness, moral standards and participation in religious activities.

The present study deals with only one age category of women. But, such a study may also be conducted by comparing and contrasting women of 2 or more different age categories.

The present study is confined to only female subjects. But, such a study may be conducted on both the sexes in rural and urban areas of different parts of the country and a comparison made.