PREFACE

Manipur is very infamous for various reasons. There are varieties of problems that the people are facing. If there are the problems of insurgency on one hand, there is the plight of massive unemployment on the other. There are frequent instances of strikes, bandhs, economic blockades, etc. Shortage of essential commodities is not a rare occasion which is caused due to improper road transport which can be either due to natural calamities like landslides or man–made reasons (eg. Bandh, economic blockade, etc.). On top with that, people are also facing many political and social issues; the issue of HIV/AIDS is one of them.

HIV/AIDS has become a household name. But it does not mean that people are fully aware of it. The discussions on HIV/AIDS mainly focus on fear, contempt and disgust. Though two decades have gone since the discovery of the virus in the state, the mindset of the people still remains as young as ever. There are various government and non–government agencies that are dedicated for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS in Manipur. Inspite of that, the number of infected persons is still on the rise and the level of awareness is still a matter of doubt.

It is learnt that the HIV which remained confined to the circle of the infecting drug users through sharing of needles has now passed on to their spouses and children. There are now a big number of HIV positive widows and children. Many of the women are victims of harassment at
home and outside as well. They are stigmatized by their families and their societies. Even the medical personals and the NGO workers do not spare them.

Though there are many preventive measures taken up as well as the care programmes by various agencies the nature of care and treatment which the people with HIV/AIDS receive was what was thought as best for them and not what they really need.

Their need and desires are unearthed through their narrations and their interpretations of their experiences. So, it becomes very important to share their experiences and learn from them. This can be captured through the study of their lived experiences. Lived experiences are better studies phenomenologically.

The first chapter is an introduction to the issues of HIV/AIDS. The chapter deals with some social issues of HIV/AIDS related with women and culture.

In the second chapter, the methodology employed in the present study is presented.

The findings of the present work are discussed in Chapter 3 through Chapter 6. In Chapter 3, an in-depth study of their past life was made based on their experiences narrated. Their perception from their past experiences and their variant emotions are captured in this chapter.
Chapter 4 is the study of the experiences of living with AIDS. The hardships that they come across, and the challenges that they are facing are described here.

In Chapter 5 a detailed account of the perception of death in the minds of the women under study was carried out. This chapter has been incorporated because death has always been associated with HIV/AIDS. And it becomes worth while to study the topic.

Chapter 6 highlights the way women with AIDS cope with their life. Various strategies adopted by these women came into surface.

The last chapter is an overall systematic summing of all the findings of the previous chapter with reflections on them. Some concluding remarks were also mentioned in this chapter.

The present research work was carried out to understand the unmet needs of women with AIDS through the study of their lived experiences. The findings of the present work can be utilized to meet the needs and desires of people living with AIDS.