CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSION
Women at various level engaged in the 'library & information science' profession in the state of Manipur, are the 'target' of the present work. 'Role' played by them and 'image' they acquire as professional, problems encountered by them in the profession, environment in which they work, the family-social-cultural-economical background with which they live in – are all the components taken care of in the study. As backdrop

- 'Subject' methodology, hypotheses, objective, limitation of the works are introduced (chapter one);
- 'Literature' related to the theme was scanned (chapter two);
- 'Target group' was examined at social-cultural-economical background (chapter three); and
- 'Professionalism' developed in librarianship was reviewed at international-national-local level (chapter four).

The 'scope' of the work had been limited to the study of the 'occupational role' played by the women professionals of the
libraries of Manipur;
- their achievements and limitation (during recent years);
- their professional and family commitments; and
- their studentship at the threshold of the profession.

Data were collected from women professionals at various levels and library organisations through different methods like questionnaire, interview, discussion, and observation and from studying documentary-records. After classification, data were presented, analysed and interpreted with the aid of statistical-methods/techniques (in Chapter-V).

Observations of all these areas have displayed the outcome of the study, which have justified the hypotheses drawn at the initial stage. Some of the important observations may once again be rephrased for ready reference:

- 'Women studies' has become a very important subject, globally, for investigating the areas related to the women section. Studying
- 'women professionals' working in the libraries have also been subject of interest as part of the 'women studies' in recent times.
- In the Indian state, too, the 'subject' has been given enough importance by the researchers, though, not much work has been done on it (on 'women professional in libraries' in particular) in the North Eastern Region. The state (Manipur) has yet to find any serious investigative study on the subject.
- The women-segment, in Manipur, has long traditional bindings with social-cultural-economical-political activities. They have also been engaged in different professions since long. Also, they are sincere and comfortable to/with family-commitment and duties and responsibilities to all the members of the family.
• In most of the countries (including developed countries) as reported through the research-studies, women-professionals have been dominating the libraries in number, though, they are behind in securing higher positions. They also do ‘more work’ than their male counterparts. But, they maintain ‘low profile’ in demanding more salary and higher status, as compared with male professionals. In some of the cases, the ‘gender-discrimination’ have also been witnessed.

• Like other parts of the country, Manipur, too, has been witnessing the dominance of the women-segment at the entry-point of the profession (i.e. in the studentship). They dominate their male counterparts not only in number but in producing academic-output also (most of the time, they occupy ‘top positions’ in the merit lists).

• Women segments in Manipur get ‘service-opportunities’ more but ‘promotional-opportunities’ less after 1980s.

• Professional contributions of most of women outside the normal work in libraries is very insignificant—neither they become members of the ‘Library Association’ nor they are habitual writer or professional field—they at large, are also not very enthusiastic in building ‘personal collection’ and in reading professional literature (they read only when they require).

• Most of the respondents have agreed that their ‘services in the libraries’ are not ‘challenging in nature’ nor the ‘tasks are complicated’ or related to ‘decision-making’.

• Majority of women professional are however quite alert in maintaining professional relationship with ‘colleagues’, ‘juniors’, and ‘others’, but to a large number of them, there is hardly any ‘satisfaction in the jobs’.
• ‘Women professionals’ (majority of the respondents) feel ‘secured’ in the library job and find no discrimination (as compared with male counterparts) from the authorities, though they always do not get ‘co-operation’.

• Even with all limitations, the majority of the respondents prefer the profession not only for present birth but for next birth also and not only for their own selves but also their children and friends.

As said earlier, the study has found the following hypotheses, drawn at initial stage of the work, correct:

• Size of women-professionals is quite substantial in this small state.

• Women professionals are unable to dominate the profession as leading-group, though they have been frequently outnumbered their male counterparts at the threshold of the profession (i.e. as students), neither they are successful in producing professional outputs (like publications).

• Most of them have family-commitment, which sometimes stands against their advancement in career.

• ‘Occupational status’ of the women professionals is very low.

• However, they contribute professional’s services to the society at their best, overcoming the barriers.

To promote better understanding of women’s contributions to social process within social, technological and environmental changes, ‘women studies’ is a critical input. It also attempts to examine the ‘conceptual obstacles that make the women invisible in many areas of scientific inquiry’. The ultimate goal is ‘to remove structural, cultural or attitudinal causes of gender
discrimination and to empower women to achieve effective participation in all areas of national and international development.

The present investigation, based on the above observations, has finally arrived to a number of conclusions, some of which sound almost prophetic:

- Women are ‘already predisposed toward self-sacrifice by the traditional expectations of society at large’;
- An individual’s “high or low sense of entitlement may have effects on their actions”;
- Women do not feel as entitled to higher income as do men;
- Women work significantly longer, do more work, work more efficiently than men;
- Mere quantitative expansion will not lead to the achievement of raising the status of women;
- Historically, “profession with numerical dominance of women have been segregated from a power base. Two of the traditional explanations cited are the service relationship to the clientele and the lack of life-death decision making requirements”;
- Wider women’s access to the LIS-education-course breaks the gender stereotypes;
- They could not blend their interests nicely, though, they somehow put forward their diverse demands related to their occupational role;
- Their adaptability with the limited recourses, as observed, have denied them to satisfy the users;
• Areas such as reference, classification & cataloguing, collection-development, serial-management, database-management requires specialized knowledge. Most of the libraries in the present study are not able to do justice to these areas;

• They have few and limited scope in career advancement programme. Also they have strong family-commitment compared to their male counterparts. This commitment, as observed, discouraged them of accepting and discharging greater responsibilities in the professional-activities;

• Unfair treatment from the male authorities was, however, not surfaced at present case;

• Inability to cope with demands (requirements) made this section sufferer in service-career, not because of discriminatory attitude;

• A link between the female majority in librarianship and women’s lower sense of entitlement has also been identified; and, finally

• Family-commitment and involvement in family matters have compelled the women-workers to do injustice to their professional-fortune.

‘Occupational image’ (OIM i.e., ‘collective perception formed by the opinions of others about some one’) of the women professionals working in the libraries of Manipur, as observed, has never been high. To have high OIM, the professional has to develop his/her occupational identity (OID i.e., self perception). The OID determines “how the professionals see themselves in relation to their functions” as well as to their target groups. In case, the professional has been failed to develop his/her OID through the commitment-sincerity-involvement to his/her respective services/works, the OID can never
be high to their working environment. At present survey, a larger section of women-professionals have not been able to develop their own OID and, therefore, their OIM in the reading community has not so far been established. Most of them take the work as "job for earning livelihood" and therefore, their involvement to the work only as par 'routine schedule'. Neither they cultivate such perception, which may lead them to think that the upper level of the OIM made them successful-professionals. However, it is also fact that most of the studies conducted in the developed countries have found two basic conclusions: (i) for librarians, OIM 'traditionally has been negative'; and (ii) OID of the library-professionals has hardly been examined.

It is however fact that the women particularly housewives in general, cannot ignore their commitment and responsibilities to their family members (i.e., children, seniors and other dependents). This family-involvement, observed at present study, has been a great barrier for them to achieve success or satisfaction /occupational identity and image (OID and OIM) in their professional-career. It also prevents them to perform their occupational role perfectly.

Based on the observations and conclusions arrived, the present study has to suggest that the women professionals working in the libraries of the State should have to change their attitude and outlook to their work. Sound background in education, inclination to continuing education, adaptability with information-technologies (ITs), inquisitiveness, comfortability with decision making processes, positive approaches towards challenging-tasks and risks - are some of the occupational role identities to be cultivated. At the same time, a fresh thinking has also been required for the professionals to deal family matters separately. Professional’s identity of any woman employee should not be equated with family identity, though social pressure demands the same. Therefore, women- professionals working in the libraries of Manipur
must take initiative to learn more about the requirements of users, psychological aspect of different user-communities, financial resources, service-programme of the library;

must search the ways to make themselves aware/informed on those issues which could increase their skills related to resources-management (money, manpower, material) and information 'storage, dissemination and retrieval';

must increase their participation and visibility in local, regional and national LIS arenas (increased participation will not only help them to be better informed about LIS-issues but will also enhance their capability and confidence in the decision making process);

must find some means for individual self-improvement which may convert them from passive-onlooker to active participators in the management;

must admit that success in the system is partly due to personal qualities;

need to help users/readers (of the library)’ to ‘formulate the right questions and develop the skills to address the questions using the various tools and methods available to the library’;

should develop the temperament to welcome the ‘changes’ in the expectation from the libraries;

need to know more about what will be expected of them if they are to be evaluated properly;

should do their best to come up to the expectations of the community to which they are serving;
- Should act as a watchdog to the needs of users of library and try to provide required information in the shortest possible time;
- need to develop their personality in taking 'risk' and 'own decision' in administrative process or in service programmes;
- should not make 'family involvement' as an excuse for not doing justice to their professional duties;
- should come out from the 'conceptual obstacles' (like, family-commitment) that make them 'invisible' in many areas of the profession;
- should try to share 'family problems' with other members of the family and allot more time for the professional work;
- must share the common platform (like seminar, conference meeting) for exchanging their ideas with others and for overcoming their 'shyness', 'hesitation', and 'inferior complexity';
- must be active member of 'library associations', 'women association/organisation', and other social/cultural organisations to change their attitude and to make themselves free in dealing with public: and
- must take the opportunity to join training courses/refresher courses/continuing education programme for updating their knowledge and making themselves comfortable with the use and handling of new information technologies (ITs).

Making themselves comfortable to these requirements of the personal trait are very important for women-professionals in case they want to see themselves in the equal status with their male counterparts. The criterion considered for acquiring individual status/ promotion/ award/recognition/
entitlement in any professional carrier include: job performance, research and publication, service (public service and professional service), academic and professional qualifications, refresher and training courses, adaptability of ‘information technology’ (ITs), decision-making and risk-taking capabilities, user friendly attitude. The women-professionals should be aware of all these criteria and active to qualify themselves at every aspect. Keeping oneself in low-entitlement in the professional carrier should not be the target of any professional.

While the women-professionals need to change their attitude and approach towards their works and services to the users, the library-management (which is mostly male dominated in the present case) is also required to provide equal treatment and opportunity to the women section, in case any of such situations comes. For the said purposes, what the library management has to do is to:

- create such working environment where women section feel free to discharge their best output;
- practice such work-schedule which is prepared with the consultation of the women employees;
- consider the necessity of their family-commitment as far as possible, without compromising the quality and quantity of library-output;
- allot the work according to the psychological background of the workers (both male and female);
- provide equal opportunity and treatment to all the staff (both male and female);
• encourage the women workers to undergo training-courses so that they can update their knowledge and feel comfortable in handling and use of new technologies;

• arrange some alternative opportunity for training/updating knowledge in the work-spot for those who are unable to go outside because of family and personal problem;

• ‘consider including entitlement components in staff training, workshops and conference programmes’;

• involve women-section in the decision-making-process, in the work of risks and in the challenging-tasks;

• encourage them to participate in professional seminars/conferences and to have advanced courses;

• guide those employees (both male and female) who are in the bottom-level because of their family-commitment and inferior complexity, so that they can extend their best services;

• have dialogue with the women-workers at regular interval to know and understand their problems, if any; and

• equip library with all modern technologies (ITs) and provide all kinds of facilities to all the staffs for handling those equipments.