CONCLUSION

The present study was undertaken in order to make a comprehensive study on the social status of educated working women among the Tangkhul Nagas. Tangkhuls are one of the major tribes of the Nagas inhabiting the Ukhrul District and a small portion in Senapati district of the state of Manipur. With the introduction of western education by the American Baptist Missionary there has been a tremendous change in the life of the Tangkhuls. Women too have access to formal education and as a result of this, they have started taking up jobs outside the domain of their home which further resulted in a shift in the nature of their work. Earlier she worked in the jhum alone but now she works in offices, schools, colleges, hospitals etc. In the light of this change among the Tangkhul women, the present study was conducted in Ukhrul town, the headquarters of Ukhrul District and some areas of Imphal West District and Imphal East District of the state of Manipur.

In the first chapter we have discussed the statement of the problem and the various literature related to the topic under study. In this chapter we have also discussed the objectives of the study that sought to examine the effect of women’s education and employment on the power relations within the family. To be able to carry out the study the researcher adopted Interview method and Structured Questionnaire method. In order to collect information related to the study field work was conducted in three phases. The first phase consisted of collecting materials containing folklores and songs from the elders and knowledgeable persons; the second phase consisted of collecting literature on
the early Christians of Tangkhul society and the formation of modern education. The third and the final phase of the field work was carried out building up rapport and personal contact with the respondents.

In the second chapter we have discussed broadly the traditional social structure of the Tangkhuls beginning with a statement that a Tangkhul village is an autonomous political, social, religious and economic unit. In the political institution the chief of the village was the ruler of the village possessing political power; and religious authority. Though he was the head he could never ignore the counsel of the councilors as he was assisted by them in the day-to-day administration of the village. The village council or Hangya in the village was the highest organ of power and its basic units were the respective clans from which the councilors were selected. All matters affecting the village community became subject to decisions of the village council based on customary laws, constituted by tradition and convention. The representatives of the clans were the chiefs of the clans called Pipa whose position too, like that of the chief, is heritable. Women were never represented in the village council but they were not debarred from the assembly. The respective pipas of the clans were very influential in their own clans. Any dispute within the village was settled by elders of both the disputing parties. If they could not settle the case the matter might be referred to the village council whose decision was final in the village itself. But disputes between two villages, if the disputing village elders could not settle the problem the matter is referred to the Longphang or to the apex body called Longrei or Tangkhul Long for its final decision. The representatives of the Longphang or Longrei bring the disputing parties to
a compromising point. But if the parties involved refuse to comply with the proposal they might pitch a battle and the representatives of the Long would be present there as witnesses. On such occasions and other situations of battles it was the Pukreila or the 'neutral lady' who alone had the power to command the battle to be stopped. As she was neutral she could not be hurt by rule. If in defiance of the rule someone among the warring parties hurt her, severe punishment would follow on the defaulter's party by the combined forces of the other party and its neighbouring villages. Thus the Pukreila had a say in the inter-village relationship in the yester years of the Tangkhul society. Her role as the peace maker preceded the role of the Longphang or Longrei where all the matters beyond the village were referred to since its existence. As does in the village council, the Longphang and Longrei do not have any women representatives to this day in spite of the demands from the women’s organization (Shinaolong).

In the family and kinship system we have seen that kinship is reckoned and recognised both by descent and by marriage. As a patrilineal society, the rule of descent is strictly based on the male line only. Thus, all children acquire membership in their father's clan group which might be a localized group or might spread horizontally over many villages and could never acquire membership in their mother’s clan group. The pattern of inheritance, rules of succession and residence closely followed the system of patrilineal descent. The principle of succession was primogeniture and accordingly the eldest son is responsibility and obligations to the family who would soon be the head of the family after his father. A daughter has very little time to stay in the parental house for she marries and eventually leaves the parental house. A daughter does not have any
legal right on the family property except a small share at the time of her marriage which she carries with her as a form of gifts. Even in the absence of a male child, a daughter cannot claim, as a matter of right, the family property, but would normally go to the nearest male relatives. A daughter after her marriage continues to maintain a tie with her natal family by sharing a responsibility on occasions such as house construction, death ceremony, wedding etc. The daughters according to their status in the kinship order are accordingly distributed portions of the meat killed for the occasion. Marriage is the outcome of youthful courtship followed by the approval of their parents or arranged by the parents. While choosing a partner he or she should bear in mind the rules of clan exogamy. Breach of this strict rule will result to punishment and nullification of the courtship. Monogamy is the most preferred type of marriage. Though polygamy was not prohibited it was discouraged due to heavy expenditure involved in marriage and due to its negative connotation in the peaceful existence of the family atmosphere. Dissolution of marriage or the practice of divorce was very rare though the customs and traditions had the provision for the same as it involved severe punishments. A divorce can cause inter-clan feud or even inter-village feud if the parties involved were from different villages. Divorce could be initiated by either the husband or the wife.

Apart from the political and social life Tangkhuls had religious aspect of their life as they believed in the existence of the one supreme god called Ameowo. Besides Ameowo, they believed in the existence of other supernatural beings that lived in jungles, fields, precipice, rivers and streams, trees, rocks, etc. They believed that some
of these supernatural beings were good while others were bad and harmful because of which they often make offerings of animals and fowls to propitiate the latter. The communal observances of the Tangkhuls round the year and their religious rites were connected with their principal economic activities and agricultural undertakings. Accordingly, the spirits (kameo) or the gods and goddesses to whom the Tangkhuls make offerings, sacrifices and invocations were broadly divided into *Phunghui Philava*, *Shimlui Kameo* and *Kokto*. One of the distinct feature in the religious aspect was that in one of the most important festival called *Chumpag* the woman or the mother of the house played the role of the priest. She was the priestess who carried out the entire sacrificial ceremony for the whole family. Besides, she also assisted her husband and at times the village priest in carrying out the religious rites at different times of the year. The resemblance of her role as priestess is seen today with the American Baptist Mission inducting women as pastors in the churches in the Tangkhul villages. Tangkhuls also believed that gods and goddesses spoke to them through nature as a result they observed several signs and symbols from the nature to decipher the will of gods for them.

Agriculture plays the most important role in the economy of the Tangkhuls. The *Awunga* and the *Hangva* exercised extensive power in controlling the agriculture and cultivation of the village land. In the past, cultivation of the whole village was affected by the village taboo. The *Awunga* performed the rituals and offered sacrifices to the deity/ spirit for good harvest of the year. Only after he had performed the rites and rituals and sowed the ceremonial seedlings the cultivation of the village for the year
began. Both men and women worked in the field. But in the days of war men were engaged in the defense of the village and men had to safeguard their village and its populace. Thus women and children alone worked in the field. During normal situation they all work together except in hunting and other activities where women could not take part. There were distinct season for carrying out various agricultural activities like clearing the jhum, seedling, weeding, harvesting etc. Tangkhuls practice both jhum and terrace cultivation though the distributions are not even in the whole Tagnkhul area. Agriculture partnership or *yarthot* is a distinct feature that is practiced by the youngsters and the married women. It is a reciprocal give and take form of agricultural work based on mutual adaptation and perfect co-operation. Rice is the stable food of the Tangkhuls. Many other crops and vegetables are grown along side the paddy cultivation. Though agriculture in the traditional period did not directly result in the accumulation of wealth, wealth in paddy and other daily essentials became indirectly connected with accumulation of wealth since the store of food and other consumption goods allowed one to pursue economic gains in other spheres which were earlier intrinsically related to the ritual ceremonies, the ceremonies of prestige or honour. The accumulated wealth was redistributed by way of ceremonial feast or feast of merit (*Maran Kasa*) as a show of pecuniary ability. Because of this the release of accumulated wealth in a conspicuous manner was usually accompanied by a corresponding raise in the social status. Agriculture is the main occupation of the Tangkhul and still plays an important role in the social and economic life of the Tangkhuls in the interior villages and more so in places where only jhumming is practiced. But with the dwindling yields of the land
people become less attached to agricultural work and look for commercial openings offered by the various programmes of development planning under the government of Manipur. Agriculture is subordinated by domestication of animals, handicrafts, trade and commerce etc. where in women take active role in all the aspects as she did in agriculture.

The status of the educated working women among the Tangkuls discussed in the third chapter provides an insight into the problem discussed. The women in the study were mostly in the age group of 35 - 49 years. The men were in the age group of 40 - 54 years. On the average the men were around 6.01 years older than the women.

Most of the respondents in both the categories originally hailed from rural areas. Inspite of their rural background, their present place of residence are almost equally spread over Imphal and Ukhrul town which are urban areas. Majority of the women respondents did not give reasons for their migration from the place of birth to their place of residence. A considerably good number of the wife respondents said that they had migrated because of their job and marriage. Among the men respondents too, a majority of them had not given reasons for their migration from their place of birth to their place of residence. Almost about the same number of the husbands said that they had migrated from their place of birth to the place of residence due to their job. A considerable number of the respondents said that their place of birth was same as their place of residence. Though all the men respondents had taken residence in urban areas almost all of them said that they still had house/ land in their own villages. Majority of
the men respondents had inherited their properties from their parents and some of them had acquired by themselves.

Regarding the educational background, majority of the wife respondents had completed their schooling from village and town. A large majority of the wife respondents had done their Pre-University Course in town. Almost all the women in the study had their graduation and post-graduation level of education in town and city. A majority of the respondents in both the categories had English as the medium of instruction both in school and in post-matric studies.

Comparatively more fathers of the women respondents were introduced to higher education (Matriculate and above) than that of the fathers of the men respondents. On the other hand there was only a negligible difference between the mothers of the men and mothers of women respondents. Mothers of the respondents in both the categories were more illiterate or just literate or less educated than the fathers. It seems more preference was given to the boy child by the parents in the first generation of education.

With regard to educational level of the respondent, majority of the women respondents had their educational level up to graduation. Almost half of the husband respondents were graduated and almost the same number of the husbands had post-graduate level of education. Comparatively more men respondents were introduced to university level of education than the wife respondents. Similar kind of case was observed in the parents of the respondents in both the categories.
Regarding the occupation/profession of the parents of the respondents, almost half of the mothers of the wife respondents were housewives. A good number of the mothers were cultivators too. Among the fathers of the wife respondents, majority of them were in government service. In the case of husband respondents, majority of the mothers were cultivators. A greater number of the fathers of the husband respondents were cultivators followed by government service. Comparatively more fathers in both the categories of the respondents were engaged in government service than mothers. This seems to be corresponding to the difference in their educational level.

Majority of the wife respondents started working at the age of 20-34 years. Majority of the men respondents had been working since 6-10 years and more than 20 years back (at the time of data collection).

Majority of the respondents in both the categories were employed in government sector. Comparatively more women respondents were employed in government service than the men respondents. Majority of the respondents in both the categories were employed on permanent basis. Majority of the wife respondents were within the basic pay range of Rs. 4001-10,000/- Majority of the men respondents were earning within the range of Rs. 5001-25,000/- per month. Comparatively majority of husband respondents earned more than their wives.

Fulfilling one’s ambition was high among both the categories of the respondents in the reason given for taking up the present job. However, fulfilling ambition,
economic necessity and enhancement of social status were the major reasons given by both the categories of the respondents.

Majority of the respondents, both wife and husband, said that they had job satisfaction. Majority of the women respondents said that they had job satisfaction because they enjoyed their work, that they got to give service to people and that it was the fulfillment of their ambition. On the basis of these facts it may be said that educated Tangkhul women were impelled to get into employment or professions not only by economic insufficiency, but also by other socio-psychological motivations. Among the men respondents, fulfilling ambition was high, followed by enjoyment of their work, and that being in job helped them make both ends meet. Thus, the major reasons assigned by the men respondents to their job satisfaction were fulfilling ambition, enjoyed one’s work and that being in job helped them make both ends meet. Among the women respondents who did not have job satisfaction majority of them said that it was because their salary was very low. Reasons for job dissatisfaction among the men respondents were numerous which do not have single dominant reason.

Majority of the wife respondents, who said that they were working because of economic necessity, said that they would continue to work even if their economic condition improved. Almost all the women respondents said that they enjoyed equal status with men at their work places.

With regard to the age at marriage, majority of the women respondents got married between 20- 34 years. Majority of the men respondents were also married
between 31-40 years. Majority of the women had their job before marriage. A good number of men respondents were not married when they got their job. Love marriage was dominant among the respondents. Most of the respondents were 6-25 years into their married life. On the marital happiness, there was a slight difference in the experience among the two categories of the respondents as more women rated their married life ‘Happy’ while more men rated as ‘Very Happy’. However, we may say that the respondents were ‘Happy’ in their married life.

Almost all the wife respondents did not face objection from their husbands for working outside their homes. Out of the women who said that they did not face objection from their husband for working outside home, majority of them said that their husbands respected their individuality. A considerable number of them said that additional earning was required in their homes. Out of the women who said that they faced objection from their husband, half of them said that their husbands object because they earned sufficient, another half of them said that because they worked they had no time for him and for the family.

Majority of the wife respondents said that their husbands did not prefer them to be housewives. Majority of the men respondents said that they did not prefer their wives to be home maker even if they earned enough. Still, a considerably good number of the men respondents said that if they earned sufficient they would want their wives to be home-maker. Majority of the respondents in both the categories said that wife’s career did not obstruct smooth running of the household.
Apart from their career a good number of the women respondents were also engaged in household duty, social service and education of children. Half of the women respondents said that they spent between 4-6 hours in their domestic work. A considerable number of them had not specified the hours they spent in domestic chores. Thus, we can say that a large majority of the working women spend much of her time in domestic chores. Majority of the men respondents said that they helped their wives in domestic chores and majority of the women agreed that their husbands helped them in carrying out domestic chores. Men in traditional Tangkhul society were not known for their participation in domestic concerns. It was solely left to the care of the wife or the mother. We see a shift in the nature of the responsibility among the husbands of the educated working Tangkhul women where the husbands sharing a good percentage of their domestic responsibilities though it still remains to be more or less the domain of women.

Almost all the husband respondents said that they helped their wives in child-care. Majority, of the men who said that they took part in child-care, said that they did so because it was their responsibility. Among the men who did not take part in child-care, half of them said that it was because they had no time. Another half of them said that they did not stay with them. The area of involvement in child-care among the men respondents were mostly disciplining and education. A shift in the role of men was observed in the husband’s participation in child care. Men in traditional Tangkhul society were most of the time away or busy in head hunting raids and wars. It was the women who took care of their children with the help of their older children or the in-
laws. When children attained certain age they join the Dormitory or Morung (*Long Shim*) for learning the skills in various field. Disciplining was apart of the Dormitory system.

Half of the women respondents said that they contributed about 75% to 100% of their earnings in running the house. Almost half of them said that they contributed about less than 50% to 50% of their earnings in running the house. Majority of the men respondents said that they contributed about 50%- 75% of their earnings in running the house. Comparatively, more women contributed 100% of their earnings than men respondents in running the house. More men respondents contributed more than 50% of their earnings in running of the house than their wives. Bread winning had always been a join venture of husband and wife among the Tangkhul society and it continues to be so as almost all the respondents from both the categories said that both husband and wife contributed almost equally towards their domestic expenses. Though there is a shift in the nature of work (from Jhum to office) for women there is no change observed in her participation in her bread winning role. She continues to be so as she was in traditional Tangkhul society.

A large majority of the women respondents said that their husbands were not physically violent to them in times of conflict.

In the fourth chapter the nature of power relations in the family and the changes in the traditional social structure had been discussed. The perceptions of the respondents regarding the ideal role of husband and wife were analysed. In their opinion on the ideal
roles of husband and wife, most of the respondents favoured traditional qualities as ideal. A majority of the women and men respondents said that their ideals were according to traditional positions. In short, as perceived by the wife, her educational and economic status did not have an important bearing on her traditional ideal of married life and her ideal role of the husband and wife.

The question of having upper hand in the family seemed undeterred as majority of the respondents in both the categories agreed on the husbands’ having upper hand though a good number of the respondents said that they were equal.

Several questions related to the effect of education and work on family decision-making was unraveled. We try to find out whether or not the educated working women had the same power in the decision making, as her husband in the family. In order to measure the power of the educated working women Vis-à-vis their husbands, important areas of family decision making such as- major expenses and purchases, buying and selling of assets and properties, vacations and outings etc. were examined.

A good number of the wife respondents said that it was their own decision to take up the present job. A considerable number of them also said that they took the consent of their parents and their husbands. Still, a considerable number of them said that they took the consent of their husbands in taking up the present job. Thus, we can say that some of the wife respondents took the decision on their own and also some with the consent of their parents and husband. It is seen that the higher educational qualifications have prompted the women to take up some career of their own.
Half of the women respondents said that they did not give financial assistance to their relatives without husband's permission. Another half of them did so even without husband's permission. Majority of the men respondents said that they give assistance to relatives without wife's permission. Thus, out of the total respondents, majority of them help their relatives without their spouse's permission though more husbands give assistance than the wives.

Majority, in both the categories of respondents, said that they had freedom to make decision regarding their own earnings. Majority of the women respondents said that they could spend money for themselves and their children without husband's permission. Majority of the husband respondents said that children seek permission from both the parents in matters where parent's permissions were required.

A large majority, in both the categories of the respondents, said that major decision on expensive purchases was a joint decision of both husband and wife. With regard to the decision on domestic and inexpensive items majority of the wife said that it was she who made decisions. A majority of the men respondents said that decision on domestic and inexpensive items was a joint one. A slight contradiction is observed in their opinion in this regard. However, it is to be noted that women were a part of the decision-making in domestic affairs. In matters of buying and selling of acquired assets, a little more than half of the women respondents said that it was a joint decision. A considerable number of them said that it was the husband who took decision in such occasion. Among the men, a large majority of them said that it was a joint decision. A considerable number of them also said that it was the husband who made the decision in
such occasion. Thus, we can say that though both husband and wife make decisions together there is a tendency of man having dominant share. Decision on family outing was a joint one as majority of the wife and husband respondents said so. Majority of the respondents, in both the categories, said that in times of conflict on domestic matters it was the husband’s opinion that prevailed.

On the basis of the data it is found that the educated and earning status of women has resulted, to some extent, the power re-allocation in the husband-wife relationship. No definite co-relation could be found about the amount of money earned and the corresponding decision-making capacity that the working women hold. A co-relation was observed about the level of education of the wife and their power relationship as all the women did have educational qualifications equal or more than their husbands, and this has a significant influence to the power that they hold.

The employment of women functioned to increase her power vis-à-vis her husband because she earns money and keeps control over it. It gives her more confidence and because she is earning money she has a new concept of her own worth, and is assertive.

In regard to the statement: “A wife should consider her husband as superior and be submissive to him in everything”. Nearly half of the wife respondents agreed with the statement. Almost half of the wife respondents disagreed with the statement. The husband respondents were divided almost in equal numbers between “yes” and “No” while a few of them were uncertain as to agree or not to agree. In this regard we can say that majority of the respondents in both the categories agree with the statement. Another
statement: “In domestic matters women should not exercise authority over men.” Majority in both the categories of respondents did not agree with the statement. From the two statements it is observed that the respondents do recognize and accept men to exercise certain degree of authority over wife. But absolute authority is not acceptable to them.

General attitude of the respondents with regard to sex role and difference is also taken into account in this chapter. A greater number of the respondents interviewed in both the sets favoured women’s participation in politics which indicated a shift from the traditional idea of women being confined in the domain of family and home where she took care of everyone and everything in the family. We also saw that the respondents agreed in the existence of sex differentiations in their own homes or had observed one, and they were of the opinion that no such differentiation would be made among their children with regard to privilege, but treat them on equal terms. There was still some reservation observed when it comes to the respondents’ opinion on the landed/immoveable properties as according to them they are still bound by the customary laws which does not permit them to give away their landed properties especially the ancestral property to the daughters though they may will away their self acquired property.

Thus we can conclude that the findings may be seen as retention of traditional family structure with an increase shift to modernity. Though there is a power reallocation in the family among the husband and wife; the husband does continue to exercise some degree of power over the wife. The educated working women too, by
recognizing, approving and accepting the traditional ideas for women’s and men’s role, have accepted their women status to that of their husbands.

The hierarchical relations between men and women are part of a patriarchal culture that has been historically nurtured by religion, and by economic and legal factors, among other. These are entrenched in the social structure, in the consciousness of most women, and of nearly all men.