CHAPTER 1
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Introduction

It is said that women constitute about fifty percent of the world’s population yet their status has been significantly low in comparison to men. In many societies, she merges her identity with that of her husband and hence perceives herself as a subordinate person. Even today, relations of subordinating and controlling women in the society, a social construct based on the principle of male domination, continues to linger in the guise of tradition, religion and philosophy. Just a few decades ago did the issues relating to women’s well being that enhances their status at home and at society have come to receive better attention. This turn around has much to do with the spread of education in general, and education of women in particular, empowering them to assume responsible office of decision- making and financial independence in the world so far dominated by men. However, slow and irregular development in this sphere since the last century, has brought about a substantial change in the perception and attitude with regard to the status of women in the world at large. This development, with regard to the status of women, which is spreading in diverse sections of the society has offered a vast field of sociological interest.

Women every where hold some measure of influence or informal power. The degree varies with the gender system of their culture, the status of class, caste,
community, or religious sect to which they belong, the state laws under which they live, the economic and political position their nation holds, the international structure of power, and their personal attributes of life histories. Everywhere some women may hold more power, in the sense of the interpersonal influence they exert, than the men with whom they associate. However, except with some matrilineal tribal groups, women as a category nowhere hold formal power or publicly recognized authority equivalent to that held by men. Women’s formal power also varies by class, culture, race, religious sect and national status, but it is always less than that of man in the same position.¹

There is a rapid transformation in recent years in the role and status of women in different spheres of life. Status and role are also interlinked with the concept of power and position. The dominant opinion in Women’s Studies today is that a role confers social, economic, political or cultural power on the individual. In other words, status is determined to a great extent by the power enjoyed by men and women in the domestic and social spheres. Today status is evaluated also in terms of social and economic indicators such as income, property or opportunities and skills that open up opportunities of employment, better health etc. Access to or denial of these services confers or denies power to an individual or group. Many also understand power to mean one’s ability to take independent decisions on personal matters like education, career, marriage, fertility, divorce, remarriage, etc. even in the face of opposition or as “women’s ability to determine important events in their lives, even when others are opposed to them”.² In the present-day context education, economic independence, employment and political participation are the major indices of women’s status in a
society. These indices are adjudged on the basis of power in the social, economic, political and religious fields.³

In India, since independence women have gained enhanced status both legally and socially. The growth of education and technological advancement has led to the entry of a large number of women into different sectors of modern life. It has been said that the growing trend of educated women working in the society has elevated the status of women in the society and that she has come to acquire a more or less equal position with her husband in the family. In course of this development, the educated working women have not only broken the traditional domestic drudge image, but are now more actively involved in decision-making both at home and beyond and are emerging with more respectable status in the society.

The term ‘status’ refers to a position of an individual in the social structure defined by his or her designated rights and obligations.⁴ Each status position is expressed in terms of a role. Since each individual occupies a number of distinct statuses within a society, he or she performs a variety of roles. Status is realized through one’s role. The concept of status is used to indicate that the ordering of individuals in terms of attributes—level of education, occupation, income, etc. and these attributes are responsible for the status and role of women which varies from country to country.⁵ Thus, ‘status’ is the location or position of an individual in a system of social relationships, while ‘role’ is the behavior associated with the position. Therefore, each status position is expressed in terms of a role that is, a pattern of behavior expected of the occupant of that status. There
are various definitions which have been used to convey the meaning of the term ‘status’, for the present study, the term ‘status’ would refer to a person’s social status. That is, referring to her rights and privileges. It is the position of a person on some implicit or explicit scale of what is socially valued, which represents her ability to influence or control the social and physical environment.

Applying the term status in the Indian context, women, especially from the lower strata of society, despite of the deprivations of social privileges, took part in home economy, right from the beginning. Though earning for the family was a joint venture both for men and women as hard economic necessity compelled those women to work for wages in factories, construction site, agricultural fields and as domestic helps, yet participation of women in such manual labour was not socially recognized as a sign of economic independence. Rather, it was a low status in the lower strata of society. Meanwhile, women from the higher strata were confined within their own homes. Gradually, the process of exclusion of women from manual work has itself become a symbol of higher social status.

Among the tribals, some contrast the situation of Indian women in general with that of tribal women and state that they are equal to men. This extreme position does not reflect the reality. Most tribal societies are patriarchal and patrilineal. The woman is not regarded as an equal to men among them but enjoys a higher economic and social status than what her some counterparts do in caste societies. Among the tribals, when we apply the term ‘status’ in the context of relative superiority and inferiority of women is very vague. It is apparent that the status of women is not uniform among all different
communities and varies from tribe to tribe. For instance, the Mizo society—males distinctly dominate as it has a distinct patrilineal bias or preference. Till recently, there was a system of concubinage and the children born out of a concubine were considered to be of lower status. Zehol says that like all other Naga groups, the Tangkhuls are patrilineal and hence the male holds for all practical purposes a more decisive position in the society. Even then, in the context of the family, like the father, the mother plays an equally important role. Horam maintains a balanced view if this issue thus:

The mother plays the main role in running the households. Indeed the position of women in the Naga society is far from being inferior. The majority of the domestic affairs are in her hands... All her life a woman enjoys considerable freedom. She participates freely on singing and dancing during festivals and entertains the guests. She is never made to feel that she belongs to the weaker sex. Most marriages are love marriages. The young chose their partners and then marriages are conducted through an elderly lady. A girl is free to choose her life partner and rarely is any pressure brought upon her in this matter. The wife is consulted by her husband in all domestic and family affairs. She helps in making decisions, performs domestic duties and shares household responsibilities with him.

The rapid industrialization created general employment opportunities from which women have benefited. Though women are mostly employed at the lower levels in unskilled occupation, it has helped them to become economically independent. The process of urbanization enabled girls to get exposed to education, information, health care, drudgery reduction and employment opportunities.
All tribal communities are passing through a period of transition or change from tradition to modernity. The rural people have started to take the urban version of their culture as their model. Urbanism has caused a change in the ethos of the tribal cultures—this finally leads to changes in the female roles. In modern times, women are co-workers, i.e. working side by side with men in all kinds of jobs. But in rural areas the age long division of labour between the sexes still persists.

In India, including the tribal communities, the emerging role of women sharing in the income earning activity has given rise to conflicting viewpoints. On the one hand, she has earned more respect and equality in her marital relationships. On the other hand, she still retains her inferior position in the still traditional patriarchal set up, despite of her economic independence. These standpoints can be analyzed through the use of the term ‘power’.

Power is a universal phenomenon in human societies and we see its effects and manifestations but not the phenomenon itself. Power is not authority but it is intimately related to both. Power is thus neither force nor authority, but it makes both force and authority possible. Talcott Parsons defined power from a functionalist perspective and said that power is employed in the furtherance of sectional interest. From the Marxian perspective, the source of power lies in the economic infrastructure. Max Weber’s construction of the concept of power seems to be most suited for the present study. He has defined power as “the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action.” For him, Power is, therefore, power over others. The Thesis intends to study
the effect of women's education and employment on the power relations within the family.

With the advent of Christianity, the American Baptist Mission in 1896, then the Catholic Church in 1952, education was not only initiated but was seriously taken up as an essential means of evangelization in the Tangkhul Naga region. William Pettigrew came to Manipur on February 6, 1892. Pettigrew's knowledge of the Bengali and Meitei languages enabled him to begin preaching immediately. He started schools to give tuition to the children of some government employees. He could not carry on missionary work in the valley as there was opposition from the elites and Manipur State Darbar. The king, as the ruling authority, refused to give permission to preach. His friend Major Maxwell, the Political Agent, advised him to go to the areas inhabited by the Tangkhul Nagas.

When Pettigrew arrived in Manipur, hardly anything in the field of education had been attempted. The few boys who were studying at the only school in the state (the present Johnstone Higher Secondary School) were being taught Bengali and English languages which were foreign to them. No textbook in the Manipuri language had been prepared. Hence Pettigrew wrote books in Manipuri and taught this language in his school. In recognition of his outstanding work the State made him as honorary Inspector of Schools for two years.

The Government finally decided in 1895 that Pettigrew could remain in Manipur only if he confined his mission work to the Tangkhul area, north-east of Imphal, at his own risk. At the same time negotiations with the American Baptist Missionary Union led
to their taking over the work which Mr. Arthington had hitherto supported (Pettigew worked under the Arthington's Aborigines Mission of Church of England through the end of 1895 and later on under American Baptist Mission). The mission to the Tangkhul Nagas has since been carried on by the American Baptists.\textsuperscript{16}

After three day's journey on foot from Imphal, William Pettigrew reached Ukhrul village, north-east of the capital, in January 1896. Pettigrew's search for a suitable place for the Gospel ministry took him to villages, first to Ukhrul, then to Paoyi, Shiroi, Khangkhui, and back to Ukhrul which was eventually considered the most ideal place for the dissemination of the Gospel.\textsuperscript{17}

When Pettigrew first arrived in Ukhrul, the Tangkhuls had no written language, not even the rudiments of an alphabet. Besides, there was no common language for the tribe as a whole; every village had and still has its own dialect. Villages within the radius of five to ten miles may understand a great deal of each other's dialect, but not beyond. It was Pettigrew's task to learn the Ukhrul village dialect in order to prepare a primer and a grammar so the Tangkhul boys and girls could learn to read and write in one common tribal language. His knowledge of the Meitei (Manipuri) language enabled him to learn the Ukhrul dialect easier because people like Mr. Raihao, Chief of Ukhrul, already knew Manipuri. Still it took three arduous years for him to complete a vocabulary and grammar.\textsuperscript{18}

A Middle English school was established in February 1897 with help from the state. Ukhrul villagers were urged to attend the school. It was a tough start; hardly anyone was interested in the beginning. Major Maxwell, the State Superintendent, had to warn
the village elders that unless they came up with enough students they would be penalized. With great difficulty Mr. Raihao, Chief of Ukhrul village, managed to send 21 students to school, Raihao being one of them. Mr. Zingthan, Chief of Hundung (now Hungpung) village, sent fifteen boys to the same school. Thus with the active support of the chiefs of the two largest Tangkhul villages, the school had an enrolment of 31 students, which began to influence other boys and girls.\textsuperscript{19}

Luikham has described the growth of the Mission School and the impact of education as: “In 1903 other students were added and the school raised to Upper Primary standing. At the same time a Lower Primary school with fifteen students was established at Hundung. Between 1896 and 1905 the progress was conspicuous. Thirty-eight boys schools were opened—Tolloi, Huining, Paoyi, Chingjaroi, Phadang and Somdal as a joint school, Khangkhui and Nampashi. Although these ten schools were aided by the State, the supervision was entrusted to Mr. Pettigrew. He made it a point that two students should be sent to Ukhrul from each of the surrounding villages. After the work in school was finished some of these were appointed as Lambus (Government-appointed village leaders) and some were given church work.\textsuperscript{20}

Pettigrew’s experience in educating the boys was awful and it was even worse getting the girls to attend classes. He said, “Girls were meant for a life of drudgery in the home and in the rice fields. It took Mr. Pettigrew fourteen years to make any appreciable impression upon that attitude of mind, even when the parents had become Christians”.\textsuperscript{21}

Mrs. Pettigrew made a hard bargain for the education of the girls. The education for the girls began through night school which, in course of time, the girls and older
women attending after the days work was done. By 1908 Mrs. Pettigrew was able to persuade and enroll eleven girls to come from the villages to Ukhrul but two of the girls failed to turn up leaving the number of girls to nine. These nine girls were R. Sanamla, R. Lanotla, AR. Mahongai, AR. Lasengla, Z. Harngaila (from Ukhrul), A.S. Charoni, A.S. Ngalew and A.S. Kasuni (from Chingjaroi) and Shurila from Paoyi. These nine girls lived in a small hostel. In addition to reading and writing, they learned how to keep a home clean, to sew and to knit. They did gardening, cultivating, weeding and harvesting in the rice fields- “in short, all the things that they would have to do when they returned to their own homes”. All the nine girls became Christians and later became active leaders in their respective Churches, working toward the upliftment of their sisters.

Thus, it is evident that the Tangkhul Nagas (both boys and girls) had an access to western education. Though education was open to all the traditional preference for men over women was followed by the parents. Whatever may be the case, the advent of Christianity and the introduction of education had brought about a tremendous advancement among the Tangkhul women in particular.

**Survey of Literature:**

The term feminist theory generally suggests a body of knowledge, which offers critical explanation of a woman’s subordination. It offers a different kind of analysis and explanation of how and why women have less power and how this imbalance could be changed and transformed. Early feminist works emphasized the ways in which women in all cultures have less power than men and were subjected to patriarchal
control. The systematic study to delineate the causes of women’s subordination emerged with Simone De Beauvoir’s book *The Second Sex* (1981). De Beauvoir argues that women become objects while providing services to men. She develops her thesis on Sartre’s existentialist argument that a human can be seen as ‘being for itself’ (that is moving, conscious existence of human being) and ‘being itself’ (material existence of human beings which they share with plants and animals etc.). Sartre added a third category ‘being for others’. He argues that each individual i.e. being for itself establishes oneself as a subject and defines other beings as an object, as the ‘other’. De Beauvoir maintains that man has declared himself as ‘self’ and women as ‘others’. According to her if man wishes to remain free, he must subordinate the ‘other’. Though women is not the only other who is oppressed; yet the oppression of women is unique. She also argues that the role of a wife and mother limits a woman’s self-development. In these roles a woman is turned into an object, into a machine for cooking, cleaning, caring, giving and sacrificing. To escape from these she suggests three strategies: a) women must go out to work; b) women should become intellectuals; and c) women should work towards social transformation.

Scholarly interest in women as a distinct category emerged at the beginning of the 20th Century and gradually gained momentum. Studies on women began to multiply rapidly after the International Women’s Year in 1975 and the International Women’s Decade from 1975 to 1985 in order to make their participation in the entire process of development more effective. Many Indian sociologists and feminists have written a lot about women. Some of the important works are being noted down here. Pratima
Asthana’s book *Women Movement in India* (1974)\(^{27}\) provides a well-documented story of the women’s movement in India, manifesting the various forces, which have influenced their progress from the earliest times to the present day. It opens with a brief but illuminating introduction to the subject and then studies lucidly the impact of west, which, as the author says, restored the long-lost self-confidence of Indian women. It gives a comprehensive account of the contributions of the leading reformers to the cause of women, highlighting the efforts made by the women leaders, which created an awakening among Indian women. It also critically examines the work done by the various women’s organizations, whose establishment marked the maturity of the feminist movement in India, for the uplift and progress of women. Analysing the cases of the backwardness of women it makes a sharp appraisal of the progress of female education in India. The author concludes by saying that the women’s movement has always been a class struggle and after independence it met the same fate as the national movement, it has become a “spent force”.

Mary Evans in her study of *The Women Question* (1994)\(^{28}\) brings together the most influential analyses of women’s position in society, which have emerged in the past decade. This wide-ranging new set of reading reflects the challenges and complexities of feminism in the 1990’s. The discussion encompasses both theoretical issues of identity and the economic and political status of women. It demonstrates the impact of gender not only on how the social world is organized but also on how we understand and interpret that world. Recognizing the diversity of women’s experiences, it pays particular attention to the interactions of race, class, gender and sexuality.
Jain Pratibha and Rajan’s book *Women Images* (1996) provides revealing analysis and an insight about a variety of issues that are crucial to an understanding of the multiplicity of women images in Indian society. The commonly perceived image of women in India is that of the self-sacrificing individual. *Pativrata*, the cultural ethos reflects an essential plurality of visions and emphasizes upon “the complementarity of men and women”. The essays in this anthology illuminate a variety of images of women from ancient to modern times as reflected through art, literature, classical and folk traditions and politico-nationalist polemics. It emerges from the essays that women images do exert a powerful influence on the social order and situation of Indian women in many ways. It is emphasized that though images are usually seen as “historical indices of social conditions”, their real significance resides not merely in being “historical scraps” but in providing perennial pointers of ideal possibilities. This anthology is intended to contribute to an objective understanding of the perceptions, visions and ideas about Indian women with a view to providing them an identity for their role in society.

Hate in her report on *The Socio-economic Conditions of Educated Women in Bombay City* (1930) said that a deep and vital change was taking place in the economic condition and persona; status of women. Her findings indicate that the change in their attitude towards various issues of life had, in turn affected their behaviour patterns in various spheres of life.
Status of Women (1988) the edited volume by Sushila Agarwal examines the status of women by different scholars from constitutional, legal, social and religious aspects in India and also on the status of women in Canada. This constitutional provision in India has been analysed in the context of social reality and traditional value framework. Special provisions of Indian Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes for the protection of women who could be victims of offences in public and private life because of gender have also been examined. Property rights of women under Hindu Law from Manu to present day bring out correlation between property rights and status of women. Dealing with the social dynamics and status of women in Islam an eminent scholar writes that a distinction is established between the social tradition and religious scripts in Islam. It has been argued how purely a feudal attitude with corresponding interpretation of the Quran during the medieval ages came to be thought of to have religious sanction, ‘women in Muslim Community can be the catalyst of change’. An improvement in their status would be crucial step in the modernization of the community. Another phenomenon is that greater emphasis on political and economic modernization has created serious strains on the social and cultural life of rural people specially women. The book also deals with the role of educators in raising consciousness and in providing girls and boys, skills to effect change in perception of the role of the men and women. The book also deals with various aspects of the status of women in Canada and examines various measures undertaken by the government machinery and women organizations, leading to an improved status of women yet observing at the same time that discrimination against women is unlikely to end within
a generation. This provides comparative knowledge and understanding about the status and rights of women in India and Canada.

Rehana Ghadially’s edited book entitled *Women in Indian Society* (1988) examines and challenges the various roles ascribed to women in the context of rapidly changing society. There are two concerns that binds the essays together—first, that the reality of women’s subordination can best be understood by tradition and mythical portrayals of women; and second, that this understanding must be balanced by a sensitivity to the immediate context. The book is divided into five sections which cover (a) contextual, analytical and theoretical views of women; (b) empirical research organized around existing stereotypes about men and women; (c) an exploration of common forms of violence against women; (d) the way women are portrayed in diverse media; and (e) a description of the growing efforts to sensitize people to the inequalities between the sexes.

*Status of Women in Islam* (1987) which is an edited volume by Asghar Ali Engineer is an ardent attempt by noted scholars to throw light on the status of women from theological, political and sociological points of view. The first two articles examine in detail the position of women within the framework of Islam. Both the articles make out a plausible case for equal status for women and deal with the dynamics of change. The book examines the case of Muslim Personal Law as it operates in India and discusses the sensitivities involved in bringing about any change through state intervention. The problems of change have been very competently dealt
with in the book. The book also examines the case of Muslim Personal Law in India and argues in favour of change. To put the problem in perspective the author relates it to the social structure which is basically an iniquitous as it is capitalistic. In a society which ensures modernization for the elite and backwardness for the masses, it is difficult to impart equal status to both the sexes. He also examines the problem from the historical point of view.

Pandey and Upadhayay seek to present the status of women in India of yesterday and today for three distinct, yet intimately interlinked, angles-praxis, theory and research in their book Women in India: Past and Present (1990). The analysis is premised on the assumptions that all thoughts and theory are interlinked with history and tied to human interests and social life processes; that the process of knowing cannot be severed from historical being; and that research established the kind of interconnections that exist in definite social groups in definite periods of time and indefinite countries. The analysis reveals that the status of women in India has steadily deteriorated all round; ideologically, women have come to be considered a completely inferior species, inferior to the male; individually, denied individuality and personality; morally, accused of lacking ethical fibre; economically, treated unearthly of having rights to property; politically, excluded from power positions; and socially, assigned the private sphere of life and kept in subjection. Underneath these prevailing practices underlie ideologies justifying the existing status of women and the accompanying research methodology of the dominant social science theory that leads to distort facts on women’s status.
Women in India (1992)\textsuperscript{35} by Tripta Desai, gives the reader an overview of the Indian Women from ancient times to the present day. The book is divided into three parts of which the first part deals with the historical status of women to the middle of the nineteenth century when India became a colony of the British crown. The second part deals with the native Indian organizations which emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century to meet the challenge of the British missionaries. Then the focus is shifted to the Five-Year Plans in the Post-Independence period with special reference to programmes for women. The third part of the book deals with a history of women organizations in India from the early nineteenth century to the present day with a special coverage of All India Women Conference or AIWC. The conclusion brings out the personal observations of the author.

G. S. Bhadouria in Women in Indian Art (1995)\textsuperscript{36} introduces us to the book dealing with the specifics—sources, media etc. He takes us through the Maurya-Sunga art representations; traverse through the art of the Satavahanas and the Ikshvakus in the second and the third chapters respectively. The fourth and fifth consider the art delineations of the Kusans and the Gupta Vakatakas. In chapter six the author epitomizes his findings and says that one should consider female figurines as representatives of the fair sex, as dampati, a lover and the beloved and not merely as mother goddesses or fertility symbol.

One of the finest chronicle of Indian women and their glorious achievements in recent years in all walks of Indian life was presented by Yashoda Bhat and C.N.
Mangala in their edited book *Beyond the Threshold: Indian Women on the Move* (1995). The book highlights the entry and advancement of Indian women in all walks of life hitherto considered essentially as a man’s domain, such as civil services, mountaineering, science, engineering, medicine, entrepreneurship and so on. The book proclaims loudly with facts and figures that the Indian women have at long last arrived—armed with legal rights and with proper empowerment. The vibrant brave new world of Indian women beyond the thresholds of their homes emerges out of the pages of this book, bringing into view the various summits conquered by them.

Rana Mehta’s, *The Western Educated Hindu Women* (1970) a study of the traditional life of the Hindus presents the educated Hindu Woman against the background of traditional caste, joint family, parental authority, rituals, customs and family patterns, and examines the influence of western education on her, in what has gone deeper and changed the traditional value system.

E. Sullerot in his study about *Women, Society and Change* (1971) has argued that women have become increasingly aware that the surest way of raising their social status and their position in the families is to become earners. The technological advancement and the economic development, which create more job opportunities for women, have given a new sense of power.

In his book “*The Sociology of Education*” (1975), Stub Holger R. says that formal education has a role to play in accordance to the social status of women. Education is a major avenue of upward social mobility. Today, education has become a
necessity for everyone. Attempts are made to wipe out the ignorance and illiteracy from the society. Only a hundred years ago, education for women took its birth. In the beginning women were not allowed to study, and schools or colleges did not provide admission to them. Women fought for injustice and finally got the right to study and all these barriers are removed.

A deep understanding of the role played by education and employment in raising the status of women was presented by Sood R. in her study on Changing Status and Adjustment of Women” (1991). Education and employment have emancipated women from traditional socio-cultural rigidities to a considerable extent. Today, they enjoy a certain degree of autonomy, identity and self-esteem. A sense of equality among women has reduced men’s superiority over them. She also emphasized that working women not only participate in decision-making, but they make their presence felt almost in all spheres of family life.

A noteworthy study on women in the North- East is that of Chaki- Sircar, Manjusri’s work titled “Feminism in Traditional Society: Women of the Manipur Valley (1984). It deals with the basic foundation of feminism, i.e. women’s individual self-reliance, and sisterhood or collective solidarity, in a society under strong Brahmanic influence. Meitei women of Manipur, though their society is patriarchal, exercise considerable power and influence because of the unique role they play in the economy of the society and because of their organization in different spheres.
Status of Women in Assam (1992) edited by Baruah S.L. deals with the status of non-tribal Assamese women from early times till date in different fields like Family, Society, Economy, Law, Politics and Administration etc. It discusses how the socio-religious mores prevalent in their patriarchal society are working as impediments towards women’s progress and how women are exploited in the family and the society. The book also suggests ways and means for improving the present situation and making women aware of their rights and potentialities with a view to removing disparities between men and women in enjoying human rights and opportunities.

Das, the author of the book Status of Tribal Women in Tripura (1993) has studied the status of tribal women on the basis of case studies of several Riang women. Das points out how there has been a decline in economic position of women due to changes in agricultural practices from jhuming to settled cultivation which has reduced them from being cultivators to agricultural labourers. However, the Riang women continue to enjoy traditional prestige and esteem.

Modernisation and Women’s Status in North Eastern India (2002) is a study conducted by Walter Fernandes and Sanjay Barbora which indicates that the status of women in most tribes, particularly those in the hilly regions is fairly high. The report also indicates that their status can deteriorate with uncontrolled modernisation and commercialisation. Based on a comparative study of six tribes in four States of the Northeast, it looks at the continuum from the relatively isolated Aka of Arunachal Pradesh to the Angami of Nagaland who have been exposed to many modern inputs and
to political mobilization. The authors analyse the demographic, educational, economic and social data of these communities. The focus is on the changing women’s status.

Tiplut Nongbri focuses on the economic activities of khasi women, a matrilineal tribe in North- East India in her work *Gender, Matriliny, and Entrepreneurship* (2008). As an informal group of the market economy, Khasi women are engaged in diverse forms of income- generating activities, ranging from agriculture and commerce to contractual services in the tertiary sector. However, women’s contribution to the economy remains a largely neglected area both in research as well as in policy, not only in North- east India but also nationally and internationally. What accounts for this indifference to the economic role of women is one of the issues addressed in the book. The central issue however revolves around the question as to why despite the substantial time and energy invested by Khasi women in their business, many still continue to stagnate, and why some, after acquiring some measure of success, slide into oblivion. The author adopts an integrated approach, and through her analysis reveals that women’s entrepreneurial growth is not only severely constrained by a biased gender ideology but also by the general apathy and inefficiency of the state machinery. An important point that emerged from the data is the close interplay between women’s work, gender ideology and the system of kinship and marriage (matriliny), with the state reinforcing the relationships between the three.

Much has been written about the Nagas in books and articles, some academic and some journalistic. Various writers have initiated discussions and studies about
different aspects of this people. Different authors have emphasized various aspects such as their culture; the impact of British rule in the Naga inhabited area and the advent, growth and impact of Christianity in Naga society. Some of the important books are noted here where mentions have been made about women in their book.

B.B. Ghosh’s and P.N. Chopra’s edited volume *History of Nagaland* (1982)\(^{47}\) is an exhaustive history of the state including the distinctive features of culture in this part of the country. Ghosh and Chopra also touch upon the social, cultural and economic processes at work among the Nagas. *Nagaland: A Contemporary ethnography* (1992)\(^{48}\) which is edited by S. Channa, makes an attempt to understand and delve into wide ranging facets of Naga Society such as structure of the villages, religion, ethno-medicine, material culture, women, the agrarian structure, political consciousness and social change.

Hodson, in his book *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (1996)\(^{49}\) describes the ethnology of the tribes inhabiting the hills of the State of Manipur. The Naga tribes in Manipur discussed in this work are the Tangkhuls who inhabit the hills immediately to the east and north east of the valley of Manipur; the Mao and Maram Nagas who inhabit the hills, North of the valley, the Kolya, Khoriao or mayang Khong group in the hills South of Mao and Maram; the Kabuis who inhabit the hills to the West and North-west of the valley, and Quoirengs, Chirus, marrings, smaller tribes, who are to be found in the hills bordering the valley. The study deals with habits, social customs, occupations,
culture and value system have been recorded along with a discussion on the various aspects of their socio-political institutions followed by a lucid analysis on the emergent changes and their reflection on the modern Tangkhul Socio-Political scenarios, particularly after its coming into contact with the Missionary and modern civilization.

Another illuminating work is the *Women in Naga Society* (1998), edited by Lucy Zehol. She examines from the traditional to the modern scenario which provides vital information on the Naga women from both the men and women’s perspective. The basically patriarchal Naga society is reflected by the notions such as the birth of a male child being auspicious, man as the bread winner and protector of the society and women being subordinate to their husbands. However, the author points out the progressive modernization brought about by the adoption of Christianity and spread of education has gradually altered the contemporary situation among the Naga women and they have started participating in diverse activities.

Though many studies have been made on the status of women yet, no author has focused on the status of the educated working Tangkhul women. Thus the present study is mainly focused on the status of educated working women among the Tangkhuls since the introduction of education by the missionaries.
Objectives of the Study:

The present study seeks to assess the position of the educated earning women in her family, and this is in comparison to the position of her husband. The objectives are as follows:

1. To study the effect of women’s education and employment on the power relations within the family;
2. To study the changes in the traditional social structure due to the effect of women’s education and employment.

Methodology

Sample:

I have taken a total of one hundred respondents which includes two sets, numbering 50 (fifty) in each set i.e. the graduated earning women and the husbands of these graduated earning women.

Area and Milieu of the Study:

Ukhrul is one of the nine districts of the state of Manipur. It is the land of the Tangkhul Nagas. The Tangkhul area is situated on the international border between Myanmar and India in the East, Nagaland borders the North and Manipur valley lies to the west. Ukhrul is the Headquarters of this District. The total area of this District is 4,544 sq. Km. with a total population of 1,40,946 of which 73,413 are males and 67,533 are females. The sex ratio is 920. The density of population is 31sq.km. The literate
persons are 83,284 out of which 47,625 are males and 35,659 are females. The percentage of literacy is 68.96% (Male= 75.40%, Female= 61.91%). The total police stations in this district are 9. There are five Sub- Divisions- Ukhrul, Chingai, Kamjong, Phungyar and Kasom Khullen. The district has 5 Blocks- Ukhrul, Chingai (Ukhrul North), Kasom Khullen (Ukhrul South), Kamjong Chasad and Phungyar Phaisat.

There are different types of Government educational institute in the district. The District has 137 primary Schools, 53 Middle schools, 35 High Schools, 1 Higher secondary school and 1 College.58

According to Census 2001, anyone aged seven years or above who can both read and write with understanding in any language, is treated as literate.59

In the national context Manipur has a high literacy rate. Literacy percentage according to the Census 2001 is 68.87% (M=77.87%, F= 59.70%). However, this literacy percentage differs widely from district to district of the nine districts in the state. Four districts namely Imphal East, Imphal West, Churachanpur and Bishnupur districts have literacy percentage above the average. In the community wise, literacy percentage of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe have literacy rate below the state average. Even among these communities there are wide differences in literacy rate. More over the state has still a low rate of female literacy as compared to the progress registered by manfolk.60
District-wise literacy rate of Manipur According to 2001 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>% of literate Persons</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Senapati</td>
<td>50.47</td>
<td>56.39</td>
<td>44.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tamenglong</td>
<td>58.46</td>
<td>67.04</td>
<td>49.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Churachandpur</td>
<td>74.67</td>
<td>84.98</td>
<td>64.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ukhrul</td>
<td>68.96</td>
<td>75.40</td>
<td>61.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chandel</td>
<td>57.38</td>
<td>66.12</td>
<td>48.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bishenpur</td>
<td>71.59</td>
<td>82.25</td>
<td>61.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Thoubal</td>
<td>67.90</td>
<td>80.50</td>
<td>55.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Imphal West</td>
<td>80.61</td>
<td>89.10</td>
<td>72.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Imphal East</td>
<td>76.38</td>
<td>86.44</td>
<td>66.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>All Manipur</td>
<td>68.87</td>
<td>77.87</td>
<td>59.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Census of India 2001, Directorate of Census Operations, Manipur.

The milieu of the study comprised of Tangkhuls of Ukhrul Township, as educated women are mainly concentrated here. It also covered the Tangkhul settlements in the Imphal, Manipur Valley viz; Dewlaland, Lamphel, Tangkhul Avenue, Nagaram,, Langthongching where a sizeable number of educated Tangkhuls have taken residence. Initially latter three areas were not included but while in the field I realized that the places selected in my research design could not accommodate my sample size and thus was extended in the field.

Sources of Data:

The study is based on both primary data collected through questionnaires and interviews. Secondary sources of data were taken into consideration. Various journals, reports, books and research studies have been examined.
Method of Data Collection:

In order to collect the data and information relevant to the study, primary and secondary sources of data are used. The study is conducted in the Ukhrul town and some pockets of Imphal city.

Primary data was generated through the structured questionnaires and interviews with both husbands and wives. The main questions asked were about their job, marriage relations and their participation in the decision making both major and minor with regard to the family. Separate Questionnaires were given to women and men respondents. The study covers certain aspects which directly impinge upon the personal lives of the respondents. Thus, personal interviews also had to be conducted, as all necessary information could not be elicited through formal questionnaires.

Information relating to the study was also collected from secondary sources. The main sources of secondary data were publications of Directorate of Economics and Statistics and published materials in the form of books journals and research papers of historical and sociological nature. Women specific studies were also consulted to develop necessary insights.

Field work was conducted on three phases. The first phase was done in the month of January 2006. This phase consisted of collecting materials containing folklores and songs from the elders in the villages of Hungpung and Ukhrul and also from other knowledgeable persons.
The Second Phase of Field Work consisted of meeting church leaders and collecting church bulletins etc. This was carried out during January and February 2007.

The Third and the final phase of Field work began on the 14th July, 2007 and ended on the 18th of September 2007. For this phase Ukhrul town and some specific areas within Imphal city were selected, as educated working population wise these areas have a large concentration of Tangkhul families. Major government, semi-government organizations, offices and institutions were also approached for the collection of samples besides going from door to door. This had to be done since Educated working women, though a clearly definable category; do not constitute a community in spatial or any other sense of the term. Though the sample population lives in Ukhrul town and Imphal city they do not live in any specific area. Thus, those areas were selected which showed a substantial population of my category of respondents.

Personal contact, rapport and communication links were established with each of the respondents. The field work involved considerable movement to the different areas of the town and the city. The questionnaires were given out to the respondents and it was assured to them that their information would be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for research purpose without and identification of the informant being made public. Interviews were mostly conducted in the homes of the respondents and the time was fixed according to the convenience and desire of the informants.
**Definition:**

In my study, the term “Educated Women” means a woman who has completed her studies up to the graduate level irrespective of discipline of study. Besides, the term “Working Women” means a woman who works to earn, for monetary gain. It includes women who are white collar workers, i.e. salaried workers and women running their own business. It excludes the work which she does as a housewife or as a matter of duty and responsibility and for which she is not paid for.

**Chapterization:**

The body of the thesis is divided as follows:

- **Chapter I:** Introduction which includes the statement of the Problem, Survey of Literature, Objective of the study, Methodology and Chapterization and also the Field Experience of the Researcher.
- **Chapter II:** Traditional Tangkhul Social Structure and Status of Women
- **Chapter III:** The Status of Educated Working
- **Chapter IV:** Nature of Power Relation in the Family and the Changes in the Traditional Social Structure and Conclusion

**Field Experience:**

Most of the respondents were approachable and polite and after an initial explanation about the study that I was doing, many readily agreed to provide the answers. Some respondents exhibited an initial reluctance though. Some of the respondents were very prompt; they gave me back the filled questionnaires the very
next day after I gave them. However some respondents though I gave my respondents the questionnaires and requested them to fill them up within a week or ten days’ time, it was only after repeated visits of four or five times to their homes that I could get the filled up questionnaires. There were also some respondents who promised to give me back the filled questionnaires the same evening of the day I gave them or the very next morning and asked me to come and collect it soon lest they misplace it leading but they never were ready even after three four visits.

I also experienced that women whose husbands were not working exhibited a certain amount of reluctance and tended to ignore certain questions in my questionnaires. Dual earner couples seemed to be more open in their answers to my questions.

At first I distributed fifty sets of questionnaires and tried to collect them all but some even after two three visits said that they had lost the questionnaires which had to be replaced with new ones. Some never returned saying they were very busy. Some women respondents said that their husbands were too busy to fill the questionnaires and thus returned only theirs and said that I could take back the unfilled questionnaires. Because of such uncertainty I picked ten more respondents to complete the fifty sets.

But on the whole, my field work experience had been quite a pleasant and learning one and has helped me to meet many an educated Tangkhul couples who are very hospitable and friendly.
Notes and References:


8. Ibid. p 21


18. Ibid. pp 31-32.

19. Ibid. p 32.


60. Ibid. p 20.