1. INTRODUCTION:

Manipur came under the British rules as a princely state after the defeat in the Anglo Manipuri war of 1891. After independence of India in 1947, the princely state of Manipur was merged in the Indian Union on October 15, 1949 and became a full fledged state of India on the 21st January 1972.

Manipur is a land locked state in the northeastern corner of India. Manipur has an area of 22,327 sq. kms. Out of the total area, nine-tenth (9/10) of its area is covered by hilly regions and only one-tenth (1/10) of its parts consists of beautiful oval-shaped valley. The state of Manipur is situated between 23.80° North to 25.68° North latitude and 90.03° East to 94.78° East longitudes. The state is bounded on the north by Nagaland, on the south by Mizoram and Burma, on the west by Assam.

For the administrative convenience the state has been divided into nine (9) districts namely: I) Imphal West ii) Imphal East iii) Thoubal iv) Bishnupur v) Senapati vi) Ukhrul vii) Tamenglong viii) Churachandpur and ix) Chandel. Out of the nine (9) districts, five (5) districts are in the hills and four (4) are in the valley. The districts are further divided into sub-divisions.

The total population of Manipur according to 2001 census is 23,88,634 and the density of population is 107 persons per sq. km.

The literacy rate of Manipur according to 2001 census is 68.87 percent. Of these the literacy percentage of male is 77.87 % and that of female is 59.70 %. There is still a great disparity in literacy percentage between male and female in every district of Manipur. A determined effort is, therefore, necessary to face the difficulties and to remove the existing gap between the education of men and that of women in the state.

2. NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

Education is regarded as one of the most significant instruments for changing women subjugated position in the society. It not only develops their personality and rationality but also qualifies them to fulfill certain economic, political and cultural functions thereby improving their socio-economic status.
Women's education needs special attention simply because of the fact that the modern civilized society is committed to the nation of 'equality'. Besides, it is impossible to build a healthy society without providing proper education to women. Women, as mothers, play the most important role in shaping the family and the society. An enlightened educated mother can provide better education to her children. The real progress of a community is possible only when its members, especially women, whose education is ignored in certain sections of the society, are brought under the umbrella of universal education.

Laying stress on the needs and importance of women's education, National Policy on Education observed: "The education of women should receive emphasis not only on grounds of social justice but also because it accelerates social-transformation".

The need and importance of women's education, therefore, cannot be overrated because it affects vitally the range and efficiency of all education. The education of a girl is the education of a mother and through her, the education of her children.

The present study deals with the education of women students in Manipur. It is worthwhile to be noted that women form the backbone of family economy in Manipur. They run all the cottage industries and control the sale of their production in the state. The education of women in the state is therefore needed to increase the vocational efficiency of the working women to enable them to start new and non-traditional professions, to help them in acquiring new technology to run their traditional chores in a better and effective manner. Besides, education of women is also necessary to implement the social reforms like evolution of polygamy, early marriage, and exploitation of women by unscrupulous men, drive against alcoholism, drug abuses and other such social evils prevalent in the state.

The significance of the present study lies on the fact that, in Manipur no study on women's education has been attempted so far. The present investigator, therefore, felt the need for such a study. Such a study can throw light on how the educational authorities in the state can make effective planning for the education of women in the state so that women too like men
will strengthen their role in the society and contribute their share in augmenting the wealth and well-being of the society as well as the state and the nation.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:
The problem of the study is stated as follows:
"Education of women students in Manipur: An appraisal".

4. DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY:
   i). In the present study, the term women’s education may be defined as the education of women that imparted knowledge through formal systems of education. It includes both the education of girls at secondary level as well as the education of women at college level.
   ii). In the present study, the term ‘girls’, ‘women’ and ‘female’ are used synonymously and so are the terms ‘boys’, ‘men’ and ‘male’.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:
The objectives of the study were as follows:
i). To trace the development of women’s education in Manipur.
ii). To compare the education of women with that of men in terms of enrolment and examination results.
iii). To study the staffing pattern in different secondary schools and colleges.
iv). To study the problems associated with education of women students at secondary and college levels.
v). To offer suggestions for improving the status of women education in the state.

6. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY:
i). The scope of the present study was delimited to formal education of women students at secondary and collegiate levels.
ii). The scope of the present study did not include professional and technical education of women students of the state and it was thus restricted to general education only.

7. METHODOLOGY:

The investigator followed historical-cum-descriptive method. This method describes and interprets what exist at present. It is concerned with conditions and relationships that exist, practices that prevail, points of view or attitudes that are held and processes that are going on.

The data needed for the present study were collected from various documents and records maintained by different government offices, libraries and from different secondary schools and colleges through questionnaires and interview schedules.

8. POPULATION:

The population of the present study consisted of all the secondary high schools and colleges in the state of Manipur. Such schools and colleges in the state fall under the following categories according to management.

i) Government Secondary High Schools and Colleges
ii) Aided Secondary High Schools and Colleges
iii) Unaided/ Private Secondary High Schools and Colleges.

The information regarding the total number of secondary schools was obtained by the investigator after consulting the records of Directorate of School Education, Statistical Cell and the total number of colleges was obtained from the records of Directorate of Higher Education, Statistical Cell, Government of Manipur.

According to the records maintained, it was learned that there were 510 secondary High schools (178 governments, 98 aided and 234 private) and there were also 56 general colleges (23 governments, 6 aided and 27 private) at the time of inception of the study.
9. SAMPLE:

Stratified random sampling method was used for selecting the sample of women students and teachers from government, aided and private schools and colleges spread over urban, semi-urban and rural areas of the state.

The investigator selected 100 secondary high schools out of 510 (19.60%) and 25 general colleges out of 56 (44.63%). The investigator decided to draw samples of women students from the selected secondary schools and colleges. However, the selection of samples of students was restricted to class-IX of selected secondary schools and 2nd year degree class of the selected colleges under study. Accordingly, 300 secondary school girl students and 250 college girl students were drawn. Besides, a sample of women teachers numbering 125 which included 100 secondary school teachers and 25 college teachers were also drawn according to the aforesaid procedure. However, responses were received from 285 secondary school students, 232 college students, 92 school teachers and 24 college teachers only.

The break-up of schools and colleges were as follows: Government schools - 35 out of 178 (19.66%), Government colleges -15 out of 23 (65.21%). Aided schools -25 out of 98 (25.30%), Aided colleges- 2 out of 6 (33.33%). Private schools- 50 out of 234 (21.36%), Private colleges- 8 out of 27 (29.62%).

Thus, the sample finally consisted of 285 secondary school girl students, 232 college girl students, 92 secondary school women teachers and 24 college teachers.

10. TOOLS:

The data were collected with the help of the following tools for achieving the different objectives of the study-

i). Questionnaire

As there was no ready-made questionnaire available for the present study, the investigator developed two questionnaires, one for the teachers and the other for the women students of secondary schools and colleges in
order to collect information regarding the problems associated with the education of women students at secondary and college levels of the state. Items under each of the two questionnaires were identified by the investigator. Though some of the items were common in the two questionnaires, many others were different. Both the copies of the draft questionnaires for the present study were then submitted to six experts to ascertain their content validity. The experts gave useful suggestions for improving the questionnaires and accordingly forms and contents of the questionnaires were modified. Some questions were deleted while some new questions were added. In this way, both the questionnaires were finally constructed and cyclostyled copies were made.

ii). Interview Schedule:

The investigator developed an interview schedule for collecting information from the Heads of secondary schools and colleges and from the Education Officers of the offices of State Secondary Schools and Higher Education Department.

iii). Government Records:

Relevant records, files, reports, notification etc. maintained by the Directorate of School Education, Directorate of Higher Education, Statistical Cell, Statistics maintained by Directorate of Public Instruction, Statistical Handbook of Manipur published by Directorate of Economics and Statistics Department were consulted.

Manipur Board of Secondary Education, Council of Higher Secondary School, Manipur and Manipur University, Canchipur were also contacted for getting the examination results of H.S.L.C., H.S.S.L.C. and Degree Final.

11. DATA COLLECTION:

The investigator went personally to distribute the questionnaires to most of the students and teachers of selected schools and colleges. The respondents were made to understand that their answers to the items in the questionnaire were intended to use only for research purpose and that their responses would be treated as confidential.
While distributing the questionnaires to the selected students and teachers, the investigator requested them to return the questionnaire promptly. After that the investigator continued to contact the respondents for returning the questionnaires. But in spite of repeated requests, data could not be collected from 15 secondary schools girl students, 18 college girl students and 8 school women teachers and 1 college women teacher. But because of time limit for the completion of the present study and because of the fact that non-receipt of the data from 15 school girls, 18 college girls and 9 women teachers would not effect the representativeness of the samples, the investigator decided not to pursue them. Accordingly, the questionnaires returned by 285 secondary school girl students, 232 college women students, 92 secondary schools women teachers, 24 college women teachers as well as the interview schedules administered to 20 secondary school Heads, 20 college Heads and 5 Education Officers were arranged for analysis.

12. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The data regarding the problems associated with the education of women students at secondary and college levels collected from women students and teachers through questionnaires were analysed and tabulated. The data were analysed in terms of percentages.

13. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

The major findings of the study are given below:

1. DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN MANIPUR BEFORE INDEPENDENCE:
   i) Women’s education, prior to 1947, was confined mainly to the domestic or school education of the girls of the royal and well-to-do families.
   ii) In 1898 the first L.P. school for girls was established at Moirangkhom. On the opening day of the school 12 girls were
admitted and the total enrolment of girls reached 53 by March 1900.

iii) In 1932-33, two more L.P. schools for girls were established and the fourth girl school was established in 1935-36 at Sagolband.

iv) In 1935, the first girls’ high school was set up at Imphal by Sir Churachand Singh after the name of his eldest daughter Maharaj Kumari Tamphasana. And this school was taken over by the government on June 1, 1946.

v) In 1937-38, the number of girls attending primary and middle schools increased to 929 which was the highest in the pre-independence period. The first Manipuri girl passed matriculation examination only in the year 1938.

vi) In Manipur, before independence (1940-41), there were only 4 girls’ primary schools and only 1 high school. And the number of women students was 1,594 which formed only 0.61 per cent of the total of 2,62,886 women population. The position clearly indicates women’s education in the state had a very slow growth before independence.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN MANIPUR AFTER INDEPENDENCE:

There has been a considerable progress in the field of women’s education in Manipur after independence as indicated by –

- increase in female literacy percentage
- increase in girls/women institutions
- increase in the enrolment of women students
- increase in the percentage of pass in different examinations
- increase in the number of women teachers.

i). Literacy:

There has been a progressive development of women literacy in the State since 1951. In 1951 the total percentage of literacy in the State was 11.4% and the total female literacy was only 2.36%. But by 2001, the female
literacy rate increased to 59.70% out of the total population of 23, 88,634 and as against the total literacy percentage of 68.87%.

ii). No. of Institutions:

The number of girls' institutions in the state has recorded continuous increase except for a few years. In 1950-51, the total number of primary schools for girls was only 28 out of the total 526 primary schools. But by 2001-2002, the total girls' primary schools reached 163 accounting for 6.34% of the total 2,573 primary schools in the State.

There was only 1 girls' secondary school during 1950-51 out of the total 11 secondary schools. But in the year 2001-2002, the total secondary schools for girls increased to 56 accounting for about 8.49% of the total 659 secondary schools in the state.

Prior to 1965-66, there was no women's college in the state, till 1970-71, there was only 1 women's college but by the year 1999-2000, the state got 6 women's colleges forming 10.34% of the total 58 colleges in the State.

iii). Enrolment:

The number of girl students enrolled at secondary level has always been far behind the number of boys enrolled. In 1990-91, for example, out of the total number of students enrolled, the number of girls enrolment was 57,811 (44.72%) while that of boys was 71,451 (55.27%). And by 2001-2002, the girls enrolment reached 1,16,309 (46.34%) and that of boys was 1,33,575 (53.45%).

Though the number of girls enrolled in colleges of the state has been increasing every year, it is still far behind in comparison to the number of boys enrolled. In 1990-91, out of the total number of students enrolled in colleges, the number of female enrolment was only 16,697 (42.67%) while that of male enrolment was 22,427 (57.32%). And during 1999-2000, the female enrolment was increased to 51.29% out of the total number of students enrolled and the male enrolment was suddenly reduced to 48.70%.

iv). Pass Percentage:

Comparing the pass percentages of male and female students in H.S.L.C. examinations, It has been found that the pass percentage of female students were lower than that of their male counterparts in every year.
In the year 1990-91, the pass percentage of girls in H.S.L.C. examination was 35.69% out of total number of 7,932, girls appeared. In the same year, the percentage of pass for boys was 39.98% out of the total number of 25,527 boys appeared. The percentage of pass for girls was increased to 44.89% in 1997-98. But in 2001-02, out of the total 15,502 girls appeared, the pass percentage was reduced to only 18.05% while the pass percentage of boys for the same year was 39.98% out of the total 15,856 boys appeared.

In H.S.S.L.C. examinations, comparing the pass percentages of male and female students, it has been observed that, there was no much variation between the two. The pass percentages of girls in H.S.S.L.C. Arts, Science and Commerce examinations has been found to be higher than those of boys in some of the years.

In the year 1995-96, the pass percentages of boys and girls in H.S.S.L.C. (Arts) examination were 35.51%(boys) and 32.36%(girls), in H.S.S.L.C. (Science) examination 64.91%(boys) and 64.88%(girls) and in H.S.S.L.C. Commerce examination 58.73%(boys) and 76.26%(girls) respectively. And by 2000-01, the pass percentages of boys and girls in H.S.S.L.C. Arts examination were 53.11%(boys) and 51.52%(girls), in H.S.S.L.C. Science 77.66%(boys) and 79.18%(girls) while in H.S.S.L.C. Commerce the pass percentage of boys was 64.44% and that of girls was 72.51%.

Comparing the pass percentages of male and female students in different Degree Final Examinations, it has been found that, the pass percentages of female students in B. A. and B. Sc. final examinations were much better and higher in most of the years whereas in B. Com. final examination, the pass percentage of male students was much higher than those of female students in most of the years.

In Degree final examinations, the pass percentages of women students during the year 1994-95 for Arts, Science and Commerce were 74.32%(Arts), 54.45%(Science) and 62.50%(Commerce) respectively while that of male students were 31.05%(Arts), 82.94%(Science) and 81.73%(Commerce). By 2000-01, the pass percentage of female in B.A. was
reduced to only 31.72% and that of male was reduced to only 28.83%. In B.Sc. the pass percentage of female was increased to 67.05% and that of male was reduced to only 38.17%. In B. Com., the pass percentage of female for the same year was increased to 59.52% while that of male was reduced to 80.00%.

v). No. of Teachers:

As regards staffing pattern (no. of teachers) in different secondary schools and colleges of the State, it has been found that the number of female staff were far below the number of male staff.

Till 1950-51, there was not a single women teacher in secondary schools. By 1960-61, there were 49 women teachers and by 1990-91 the number of women teachers reached 2540 forming 32.69% of the total secondary school teachers in the state while the number of male teachers was 5230 accounting about 67.31%. And again in 2001-2002, the number of women teachers increased to 4,570 (37.89%) while the number of male teachers increased to 7,490 forming 62.11% of the total secondary school teachers.

Till 1950-51, there was no woman teacher in Colleges. But by 1960-61, the state got 4 women lecturers in colleges. Again in 1990-91, the number of female teachers was increased to 260 (25.37%) and the number of male teachers was 765 (74.95%). And by 1999-2000, the State got 1078 women lecturers out of the total 2,841 lecturers, forming about 39.62% of the total college teachers while the number of male teachers was 1,763 forming 62.06% of the total number of college teachers.

14. Problems associated with the education of women students at secondary and college levels:

The problems were identified from the responses given by the women students and the women teachers.

A. Classroom Problems:

1. It has been found that although a large majority of Secondary Schools and Colleges located in the urban areas had adequate
arrangement of lighting and ventilation as well as other basic classroom facilities (furniture, blackboard etc.), such arrangement were very poor in the Institutions located in rural areas.

2. Majority of the College girls(51.72%) found their classes generally dull and boring while in the case of the majority of school students(66.26%) classes were not dull and boring.

3. Majority of the School girls(57.75%) and the College girls(81.03%) in the co-education institutions where separate seating arrangements for girls did not exist, favoured separate seating arrangement inside the classroom.

B. Infrastructural Problems:

1. Only 39.29% secondary schools had school libraries and majority of the schools with libraries did not have sufficient books and separate reading room facilities in the libraries. Majority of the schools did not have full-time Librarians.

2. Large majority of colleges (90.51%) except a few private colleges, had college libraries and majority of the colleges with libraries did not have sufficient textbooks and separate reading room facilities.

3. Though majority of the schools (58.59%) and colleges (82.75%) had science laboratories, most of the schools and colleges with laboratories did not have sufficient laboratory equipments and sufficient space inside the laboratories.

4. 55.48% secondary schools and only 39.65% colleges provided drinking water to students which was mainly ordinary water.

5. Only 16.49% secondary schools provided students common room. No school provided separate common room for girls, while majority of the colleges(63.79%) provided common room facilities for girls.

6. Majority of the colleges (66.46%) and schools (65.26%) did not provide proper sanitation facilities for girl students.

7. Very few schools (32.98%) and colleges (12.93%) provided medical facilities to students only when necessary.
8. Large majority of secondary schools (71.92%) and colleges (79.31%) did not provide hostel facilities for girls. Lack of this facility poses a problem for the students from the rural and hill areas since they have to travel a long distance daily for attending their schools/colleges.

C. Curricular Problems:

1. It was observed from the responses that majority of the college girl students and teachers were not satisfied with the existing curriculum. The reasons given by majority of them include i). overcrowdedness of curriculum and ii) neglect of specific needs of women students.

2. The study revealed that only 29.82% school girls and 34.91% college girls found difficult to study the same curriculum with boys.

3. Majority of girl students and teachers stated that the prescribed textbooks were not readily available for students' use. The reasons as stated by them were: i) Non availability of the prescribed textbooks in the local market and ii). Non availability of the textbooks in the school/college libraries. This problem was found more acute in the rural areas.

4. Majority of the school girls favoured separate curriculum for girls, while majority of the college girls and teachers were against it.

5. Large majority of school girls(82.45%) and college girls(63.36%) found science and mathematics as most difficult subjects.

6. The study revealed that a large majority of girl students and teachers favoured Home science as a subject at secondary and college levels.

7. Although 10+2+3 pattern has been in use in the state, it appears from the responses given by the teachers that vocational courses were yet to be introduced at the school level.

D. Financial Problems:

1. The study revealed that majority of the school girls had financial problems with regard to paying tuition fees, buying textbooks and
uniforms, while majority of the college girls had problem for buying textbooks. This is particularly true in the case of students hailing from rural areas with poor socio-economic background.

2. Only 15.08% secondary schools and 15.94% colleges which were private institutions provided merit scholarships to the deserving girl students while other categories of institutions did not provide merit scholarships.

E. Problems Related to Teaching:

1. Majority of the girl students preferred female teachers to male teachers and 28.77% school girls and 28.01% college girls revealed that they found difficult to adjust with male teachers due to personal reasons.

2. Majority of the college girls (64.22%) opined that their teachers were not punctual and regular in taking classes sometimes, while a large majority of a school girls did not support this opinion.

3. Majority of school girls (70.88%) and college girls (65.52%) pointed out that their teachers were friendly.

4. The study revealed that all the teachers (100%) in secondary schools and colleges followed their own methods of teaching and the methods of teaching usually followed in the classes were lecturing and notes-giving.

5. 43.50% School girls revealed that the number of female teachers in their institution was not sufficient. As regards opinion of college girls, 50.00% of them found the number of female teachers sufficient in their colleges.

F. Co-curricular Problems:

1. It was found that though majority of the schools (61.05%) and colleges (60.34%) provided co-curricular activities, very few schools and colleges, activities like Girls’ Guide, N.C.C. and N.S.S.

2. Majority of the secondary schools (72.28%) and colleges (59.05%) had playgrounds of their own and organised different kinds of
games and sports but majority of the schools (62.80%) and colleges (59.48%) did not organise indoor-games for women students owing to the lack of infrastructural facilities.

**G. Problems Relating to Parents/ Family:**

1. The study revealed that large majority of the girls' parents favoured women's education only till college level and very few were found to be in favour of women's education till post-graduate research level. This may be due to socio-economic reason.

2. Majority of the college girls (53.01%) indicated that they did not have enough time to study at home due to heavy pressure of domestic work, while only 34.73% of the school girls, however, had the same experience.

3. Majority of the school girls (57.00%) and college girls (51.81%) revealed that they did not have separate room to study at home.

4. Majority of school girls (54.33%) and college girls (53.27%) stated that their studies had been affected by family problems like poor economic condition of parents.

**H. Personal Problems:**

1. Majority of school girls (56.14%) and college girls (55.17%) found it difficult to select subjects for their educational and vocational future. This may be due to the absence of guidance and counselling services in schools and colleges.

2. Majority of school girls (60.70%) and college girls (61.20%) revealed that they were confident about their ability. Whereas only 39.29% school girls and 38.79 college girls pointed out that they were not confident because of their being slow learners.

3. Majority of school girls (50.52%) and college girls (53.44%) had fear of examination.

4. Regarding health problems, 37.89% school girls and 38.79% college girls revealed that their studies had been affected by their personal sickness.
15. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING WOMEN'S EDUCATION

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following suggestions can be made to improve the status of women's education in the state.

1. As there is a disparity of women's literacy between urban and rural areas of the state, the education of women in rural areas has to be tackled by the government by providing more infrastructural facilities, by establishing more institutions especially colleges, as there is a dearth of colleges in these areas.

2. Since secondary school girls usually prefer separate girls' schools to co-educational institutions, more girls' secondary schools should be set up in the state, so as to enable more girls to have schooling.

3. Reservation of seats for women should be made in secondary schools and colleges in order to increase the enrolment of women at secondary and college levels.

4. Free textbooks and uniforms should be provided by the school authorities to the meritorious girl students to encourage women students to pursue education.

5. Merit scholarships should also be provided to meritorious women students by the government so as to enable them to continue their studies.

6. The state may make endeavour to include vocational courses at secondary level while some of the courses like dress-making, home-economics, interior decoration etc. may be included in the curriculum at the lower secondary stage.

7. Since a large majority of the school students found Science and Mathematics as difficult subjects, efforts may be made to investigate into the teaching of these subjects and the teaching of these subjects may be improve by employing qualified teachers wherever necessary.

8. Home-science should also be included as a subject in secondary schools and colleges.
9. Since the students, particularly in the rural areas, were facing problem in getting textbooks, which were not available either in the local market or in the school libraries, schools may make arrangements for providing the books for the students.

10. School/college libraries should be strengthened by equipping them with textbooks and reference materials with adequate number of copies. The habit of library reading must be cultivated among the students right from the school stage. At the college level library work may form an integral part of the timetable.

11. Since school/college laboratory facilities by and large were found to have been inadequate, liberal grants should be extended to the institutions to procure more and more laboratory equipments, and also for providing more spaces in the laboratories.

12. Since facilities for co-curricular activities like N.C.C., Girls’ Guides and N.S.S. were not available in most of the schools and colleges as revealed from the responses given by the respondents, feasibility of introducing such activities for women students may be considered by the authorities.

13. The state government may give liberal grants to all the secondary schools and colleges of the state for strengthening games and sports facilities for girl students.

14. It was found that colleges were not providing hostel facilities for women students. Since lack of these facilities poses serious problems for the students coming from long distance (rural areas), the government may consider setting up hostel facilities at least in government colleges wherever necessary. Feasibility of arranging transport facilities for students traveling from long distance may also be looked into.

15. Since majority of the schools and colleges did not provide proper sanitation facilities to the women students, efforts should be made on priority basis to remove this problem.
16. Feasibility of introducing correspondence-courses for women who could not attend colleges may be considered by the authority.

17. Since it has been found that the number of female teachers in many secondary schools and colleges were inadequate, school / college authorities and the state government may take steps to recruit more women teachers in secondary schools and colleges wherever necessary.

18. Services of well trained guidance personnel should be made available for girl students in schools and colleges to help them in making choice of their educational/vocational future.

19. Women's club with library facilities for women students may be set up with government support.

20. Separate education centres for women such as Adult Education, Condensed courses, Continuing Classes may be opened at suitable places.

21. There should be a separate Committee at the state level to look after the promotion of women's education in the State.