

URBAN POVERTY AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN SHILLONG :

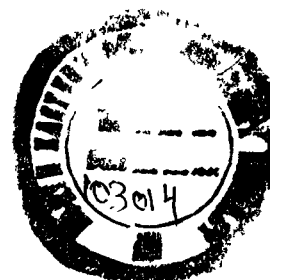
A study in geographical perspective

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**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
degree of Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) in geography**



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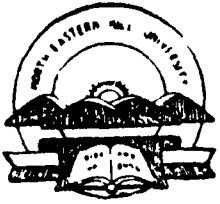
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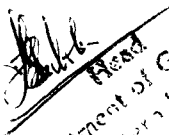
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled *Urban Poverty and the Status of women in Shillong : A study in geographical perspective* prepared by Shrimati Geeta Sarin towards partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) is a genuine study to the best of my knowledge and belief. Shrimati Sarin has duly acknowledged studies by other scholars at appropriate places. Maps and diagrams have been prepared by her only. It is also to certify that the above study has not been submitted to any other University or for that matter for any other degree so far. She has also fulfilled other academic requirements for the purpose of the degree.

I, therefore, recommend that the dissertation may be placed before examiners for due evaluation.


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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

... Woman is the earth, air, ether, sound; woman is the Microcosm of the mind, the articulation of space, the knowledge; the woman is free, movement, clear and rapid as the mountain stream; the woman is that seeks against what is sought. To Mitra she is Varuna, to Indra she is Agni, to Rama is Sita, to Krishna she is Radha. Woman is the meaning of the world, the breath, touch, act, woman is that which reminds man of that which he is and reminds herself through him of that which she is. Woman is kingdom, solitude, time; woman is growth; the God's inherent; the woman is death for it is through woman that one is born, the woman rules; for it is she, the universe."

(Raja Rao, The Serpent and the Rope)

1.1. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT :

The status of women in a society is the true index of its cultural, social and economic level of development. Therefore, it is one of the most important indicators of estimating with precision the degree of achievement and the stage of evolution to which a civilization has reached.

Status of woman is an illusive phenomenon as it incorporates social, political and economic status. On the social front, there will be no equality between men and women unless they are both equal before the law, unless both have certain educational attainment including opportunities for some vocation; unless both have equal rights in the family and most important of all, that both have equal economic rights and opportunities including equal pay for work of equal value and that both have equal participation in the policy formulation and decision making at various levels.

In light of these attributes, the status of women varies from country to country, from region to region and between rural and urban areas. Throughout history women did assert their rights and played an important role in bettering the society. Yet, the fact remains that even today women's basic rights are overlooked throughout the world. In the developed nations cases of discrimination in wages for equal work, bias against appointment of women in senior positions in government and so on, are evident. In the developing countries, the rise of fundamentalism is not without its adverse effects on the status

of women. There is the danger of allowing the shackles of traditional ways to be imposed again on women. Women in the Third World are at serious disadvantages. Women's place in some industrially developed countries further adds to the increasing burden on women in the Third World especially in a poor country like, India resulting in reduced opportunity, lower wages and increased poverty.¹

The Charter of the United Nations Organisation expresses in its preamble a faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the humanbeings, in equal rights of men and women and to promote social progress and better standards of life and larger freedom. Article 1 of the Charter emphatically declares that one of the objectives of the United Nations is 'of promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedom for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion'. It declares that the discrimination of individuals or groups of individuals cannot exist in a civilised society.²

The Commission of United Nations Organisation on the status of women, constituted in 1946, expressed concern over the status between the declaration of the charter and the prevalent practice of discriminatory behaviour against women in many countries. To uplift the status of women and to abolish the

1. Vina Mazumdar, "Towards Equality : Status of Women in India" in Women of the world, Illusion and Reality, Urmila Phadnis and India Malani (ed), Vikas Publishing House, 1978.

2. The Charter of the United Nations Organisation, June 24, 1945, Preamble, Para 3, quoted in Asahi International Symposium, Proc. on woman in changing world', October 23-25, Asahi Evening News, Tokyo, 1985, p.10.

discriminatory treatment against women, the United Nations declared 1975 to 1985 to be "The Decade of Women". During the decade women's struggles proliferated and acquired a new focus aimed at ameliorating the women's lot. But despite these efforts, they have not attained equal and dignified place in the society. Therefore, the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women in its Twentynineth Session (1982) observed that "the discriminatory behaviour would take a long time to be eliminated and the deep rooted influence of traditional social nuances and practices still persist in many countries perpetuating stereotyped attitude about discriminating behaviour towards women".³

The low status of women in large segments of the Indian Society can be attributed to patriarchal norms. The Constitution recognized the unequal social position of women and a special clause empowers the State to make special provisions for women and children.⁴ Rate of growth of women's education according to Census 1981 is 24.88 percent. Equal education for women is hampered by a whole set of mutually dependent socio-cultural norms and traditions. The situation in regard to women's role in economic development is disconcerting because, out of the total 321 million female population, only about 63.5 million were reported to be 'working'. This is because the traditional Indian social structure is heavily tilted in favour of man, giving them

3. Quoted by Lolita Sarkar, Status of Women and Law as an Instrument of social change, 25 J.l.L.I (1983)p262.

4. Article 15 (3), Constitution of India, quoted in T. Minnattur, Women and the Law : Constitutional Right and containing Inequalities, Social Action, National Publishing House, Delhi, 1975, pp.292-301.

all authority and prestige and reducing women to the lowest
5
status confining them to the house. Promila Kapur in her study
pointed out that traditional concept about women's weak physique
and the tendency of husbands to act on the belief that households
jobs and child care are the wife's duty, is one of the
6
'most significant factors' in marital discord.

Even in the developed nations, the same scenario
prevails. Take the example of USA and Japan, we find that here
also women occupy only a token number of elected positions. In
the United States today, women constitute 14 per cent of the
elected state legislators, 2 per cent of the Federal senators,
less than five per cent of federal judges, 4 per cent of state
Governors and Presidential Cabinet. The percentages of women
elected officials in Japan are 7 per cent in the House of
Councillors, 1.2 per cent in the prefectural members, and 2.9 per
7
cent in the municipal assemblies.

More appalling than the members of elected officials is
the kind of decisions rendered by them in almost all male
decision making bodies. At the state level in United States, the
marriage and divorce laws are biased towards men. After divorcing
in the United States the average women's buying power decreases
by over 70 per cent and the average men's buying power increases

5. V.M.Sirsikar, "Politicization of Women in India" in Symbols of Power, (ed) Vina Mazumder (Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd Bombay, 1979) p.81.

6. Promilla Kapur, The Changing Status of the Working Women in India, Vikas Publishing House, 1970, p. 27.

7. Eleanor Smeal, Keynote speech in Asahi. Symposium, Proc. on Woman in a changing world; Oct 23-25, Asahi Evening News, Tokyo, 1985, P.38.

by 40 per cent. The insurance laws allow the industry to charge higher prices for cover for women than for men. The Federal social security for the elderly pay women 60 per cent less than it pays men on the average in United States. The wage gaps in U.S.A. have remained relatively constant for years. Today full time employees or workers are 64 per cent of what full time employed men are paid. The comparative figure for Japan is 53 per cent.⁸

For years in both the countries as well as elsewhere there were men's jobs and women's jobs. Now the law forbids sex segregation on the job in both USA and Japan. In India, still this segregation continues.

Thus, the general assumption that economic and educational development coupled with the removal of legal barriers results in improving women's economic activity and thereby their status in society has not been confirmed by various developments.⁹

It has been seen that women have been denied equal opportunities all over the world for personal growth and social development. In India the situation has been worse because of poverty and the traditional value system.¹⁰ Constitutional provisions have proved of limited help. These rights created by constitutional and legal provisions have been treated as an end

8. Promila Kapur, Op. cit., p.39.

9. "Towards Equality", Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, Government of India, New Delhi, 1975, p.301-302.

10. Alfred De Souza, Women in Contemporary India, Manohar Prakashan, Delhi, 1975, p.1.

in themselves. They have created an illusion of equality and power which is frequently used as an argument to resist special protective and acceleratory measures to enable women to achieve equal status.¹¹

1.2. IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AND FEMINISM :

The effort to know something arises usually out of a need. Women studies, therefore begins with the understanding and conviction that women's lot in today's society is not what it should be. The assumption and belief is that there is discrimination and oppression of women. Therefore women studies cannot be neutral, apolitical, its explicit purpose is to promote the interests of women, who are the oppressed.¹²

The driving force behind women's studies is "feminism". It is a movement to assert the interests of women as a group. This does not mean that these interests are over and above those of men. There are some interpretations put upon feminism when people seriously talk of it as women wanting to dominate, women wanting to be men, etc. Feminism in its broadest sweep is a 'humanistic concern'. It is a demand to restore to half of humanity its rightful place in the society, to restore to women their humanity. It is a plea for recognition of the shared destiny of the two components of human role, no matter what a few groups may conceive as the feminist route appropriate to the goal of liberation. It is this gross misunderstanding that leads many

11. Towards Equality, Report, GOI, Op.cit.

12. Maithreyi Krishna Raj, Women's Studies in India, Some perspectives, (Ed) Popular Prakashan Private Limited, Bombay, 1986, p.8.

women to declare themselves as not being 'feminist' but liberated. Feminism is about liberation; what is the content of that liberation? How would one achieve it are matters that fall within the boundaries of women studies!¹³ A feminist perspective is most aptly described then as "to become aware of the situation of women, of the relation of women to the world, of the oppression and discrimination to which women have been subjected and to use this as a power to change the situation".¹⁴

Defining the position of women involves conceptualisation of the problem. Feminist theory has grappled with these problems by evolving concepts like 'gender', 'patriarchy' 'sexual division of labour', 'housework', to explain women's experience than the traditional theories in social sciences.

Male attitudes need to be changed all over the world in order that more men might become feminists because feminism is an ideological struggle for social alternatives involving men as well as women. When laws are changed that directly benefit women's efforts for equality, there is often a corresponding hardening of attitudes in reaction to those enlightened laws, in reaction against them. This backlash represents an ideological exclusion of women that may prove harder to change than laws.¹⁵ There is a need to overcome these discriminatory attitudes.

13. M.K.Raj, Op.Cit.

14. Women's Studies and Social Sciences in Asia, UNESCO, report of the meeting of experts, New Delhi, 1983.

15. Neera Desai, "Review of Studies on Middle class Women in India, 1983" (mimeographed), Research Centre on Women's Studies, SNDT University, Bombay.

The struggle for womens' rights is a struggle within the struggle for individual rights. When we speak of the rights of the poor, we are seeking to represent an individual and a group without the opportunity to represent itself. Yet poverty is a universal language. Why aren't the rights of women more universally accepted or even seen? A man expressing an individual opinion that is contrary to the will of his own government is at least considered an individual. A woman expressing such an opinion is almost always called a feminist and it is still a derogatory word to be called a feminist by a man. Feminism has to be seen in the right perspective. Feminists can be both women and men, people who will not take these abuses to women any longer and decide that they are going to end them. Feminism has been there for centuries in Asia and is not a recent influence from the west. But after the International Women's Year in 1975, it gained momentum and a new strength. Feminism was very much a living force in the national independence struggle in India and in Sri Lanka and many other countries in the region. As American feminist Rolben Morgan points out, "Women constitute not an oppressed minority but an oppressed majority of almost all national population and of the entire human species".¹⁶

1.3. PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

Before going into the diverse aspects of the status of women in Shillong, it is essential to offer an operational definition to the term and consider also its allied categories.

16. Hema Goonatilake, Keynote speech, Asashi symposium on "Woman in a changing world", (Proc.) Tokyo, 1985, p.15.

When we declare we are studying the 'status' or situation of women we encounter certain problems. There is, firstly the need to conceptualise the problem itself. What exactly is meant by the 'situation of women' ? Do we say it is bad, good, undesirable, etc ? What is the standard used ? How do we perceive it in the first place before we recognise it as what we think is significant.

In order to attempt to grapple with this problem, the interrelationship of the concepts "Status", "Power" and "Autonomy" has to be stressed.

What do we mean by 'status' ? 'Status' is a very ambiguous word. It has both subjective and objective components. One might merely mean by status, "esteem" or the subjective feeling of being respected. It may include other symbolic contents.

Status refers to a position in a social system or subsystem which is distinguishable from and at the same time related to other positions through its designated rights and obligations¹⁷ both the true historico-sociological sense, status does not imply rank or heirarchy. But as each status position in a particular struture can be viewed in terms of superiority and inferiority (i.e. in terms of power, privileges, advantages and disdvantages), the notion of status involves comparison and grading.¹⁸ In assessing the status of women the comparative

17. Maithneyi Krishna Raj, Op.Cit., p.35.

18. Towards Equality : Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, New Delhi, 1975, p.6.

approach has to be followed. According to Salmond, 'status is commonly used to denote a man's legal condition. So far as his personal rights and burdens are concerned to the exclusion of his pro-prietary relations.

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Each status position is expressed in terms of the sum total of the various culturally ascribed roles 'one has to play. Status is realized through roles which denotes a set of expectations and obligations associated with a particular status position within a group or social situation. Hence, the best way to assess the position or status of women of any group or category is to analyse the roles women are being called upon to play and the manner of their performance. This also brings in the 'structure' of rights and opportunities provided to them by the State and by social and cultural institutions which do not necessarily or always reinforce each other. There is also the 'Achieved Status' which results from one's efforts and personal achievements.

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It is also useful to make a distinction between 'ideal role behaviour', 'expected role behaviour' and 'actual role behaviour' as each individual occupies a number of distinct statuses within the society and therefore, he/she performs a variety of roles. Further, around each particular status position centres a role set. This process is characterised by

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19. Salmond on Jurispeudeace (ed.), Colombia University Press, 1982, p.211.

20. Madhu Shastri, Status of the Hindu Women, Any Printers, Jaipur, 1990, p.2.

21. Roopa Vohra, Status, Education and Problems of Indian Women, Akshat Publications, Delhi, 1986, p.3.

unreasonable expectations of others and by the incompatibility between the various roles that an individual has to perform in a given situation. This is particularly relevant for women in India.²²

Thus the status of woman in society is not determined by any one particular status position held by her, but by her composite status which results from merging of various statuses. To this should be added her consciousness of her own status.

There are multifarious principles of status differentiation operating simultaneously - place in ritual hierarchy, financial position, independent job, education, political participation, and so on. A woman in the labour class enjoys a certain degree of autonomy in the house, but she has a low status in the wider setting. Similarly a housewife in a well-to-do home may be enjoying an overall high status, but she may be a distinctly inferior partner in the house. Therefore, in investigating the position of women, various institutional settings have to be taken into account.²³

A great deal of the content of the 'status' is evaluated in terms of development indicators - income, property, level of education, opportunities and use of training in skills that open up chances of employment, health levels etc which help to order individuals. These are what have come to be known as 'quality of life indicators.'

There are in most countries status reports that document how women have lower incomes, lower employment, lower

22. Towards Equality: Op.cit., p.7.

23. Ibid.

education, lower health and so on. Status may also include customs and practices that are restrictive, oppressive and damaging to the physical and psychological well being of women - practices that control and restrict movement, that restrict free choice in matters of every day life, that mutilate their bodies or even destroy their lives.²⁴

1.4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While poverty studies are innumerable and women studies are also on the increase, unfortunately very few of them throw light on poverty among women. This issue assumes special significance in view of the fact that incidence of women headed households is on the increase in the poor areas. The 1980 U.N. report reveals the deplorable conditions of women, which said "Women are half of the world's population, they do two-thirds of the work, receive one tenth of the income, and own less than one hundredth of the property."²⁵ They also are responsible for two thirds of all working hours. It is estimated that by AD 2000, the total number of women in the world will be more than 3 billion and they will outnumber men by nearly 175 million. At the United Nations' conference in Nairobi in 1985, it was noted that women comprise 35 percent of the world's labour force in the sphere of employment and occupied mostly lower positions. Also two out of three of the world's illiterates are women, while general

24. Vina Mazumdar, Op.Cit., p.36.

25. Kurt Waldheim, Report to U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, California Press, 1980, p.2.

illiteracy rate is falling, the female illiteracy rate is increasing. Further it is observed that over sixty per cent of the World's illiterates are women mostly in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.²⁶

A somewhat complex source of concern has sprung from the evidence that women in many countries despite being the largest component of poverty are bypassed by the poverty alleviation policies. Women are subjects of development in their own right as the principal providers of care and support for infants and children. Therefore, role of women in the economy and status in society becomes crucial for children and for their development.

The problem of the status of women involves equality between men and women. The women throughout the world have been considered the 'second sex' - the inferior sex. Equality and status are closely associated with 'power'. Changing status involves the sharing of power on equal footing with men in decision making and its implementation at informal and formal sectors. The framework plays an important role in determining the changing status of power equations, and hence, the status of women involves the distribution and redistribution of power.

Social sciences are in the process of a creative rethink. We are rethinking about development and we are rethinking about equality. The process of development in the third world countries and internationalisation of the women's

26. Chandravaskar, G.L., Maharchi Kaur, Bombay Book Depot, 1958, p.10.

movements compels one to do an objective analysis of the changing reality throughout the world and understand women's position in the changing scenario. This is the one of objectives of the study undertaken in the city of Shillong.

The womens' question today is no longer an issue confined to the position of women within the family or their rights to equality with men in different aspects of social life. It is part of the total, far broader questions regarding the direction of change of that process. So for this reason, the present study attempts to evaluate the economic status of women because the improvement in the status of women depends on the changing perceptions of the roles of women in the society.

In a poor country like India, women can play a greater role in accelerating the development process if they are accorded their due role. Pandit Nehru's view on the status of women was that of equality. He could envisage women's contribution in nation building task. He said, "we should like to displace the picture so deeply impressed upon the social imagination of man standing forward to conquer new worlds, woman following wearily behind with a baby in her arms. The picture which we now envisage is that of man and woman comrades of the road, going forward together, the child joyously shared by both. Such a reality we feel cannot but raise the manhood and womanhood of any nation".²⁷ It explains sharing of power and responsibility equally by men

27. Agarwal, Sushila, Status of Women, Printwell Publisher, Jaipur, 1988, p. X-XIII.

and women.

In the present study, the changing status of women has been evaluated from various aspects in order to assess the present situation of women in the city of Shillong. It deals with primarily the aspects of health, education and employment of women in poverty areas (slums) of the city of Shillong to contribute in understanding their status in the society. In the present study it has been attempted to compare the status of tribal women vis-a-vis non-tribal women.

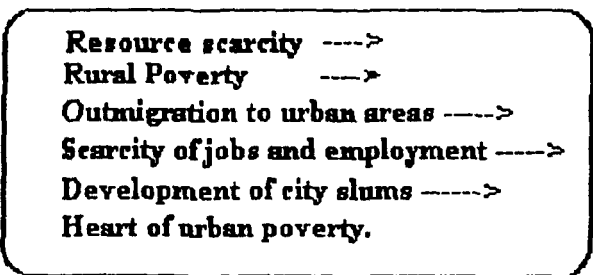
Now the question arises, why only women of the poor urban areas have been isolated for research? Poverty has emerged in recent times as one of the most formidable challenges that humankind has ever had to confront. No other crisis has presented planners, scientists, administrators and political leadership with as great a challenge as that of poverty which over the years have grown in size as well as in complexity. The poor are always with us i.e. poverty is universal. Till about modern times it was socially accepted as 'God ordained'. But, in the fag end, of the twentieth century with the 'welfare state' emerging as a major international force, the divine prejudice could hardly be accepted and therefore, the impetus on state intervention and alleviation of poverty which has assumed greater significance.

According to the area of incidence of poverty a two way classification exists : urban poverty and rural poverty. We are concerned with urban poverty as urbanisation is a great force in changing and transforming societies and causing extreme economic inequalities. The urban poor lie at the bottom of the social



ladder and suffer from cumulative inequalities. The social origins of the urban poor could be in the rural areas, through the migration of the poor from rural areas but this does not mean that urban poverty is merely a spill over of rural poverty.

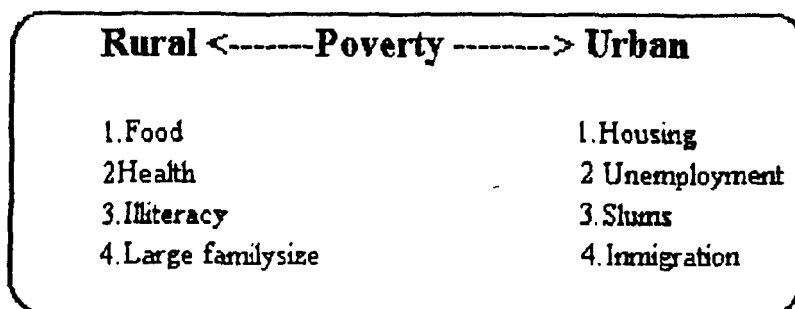
Fig. 1
Transfer of rural to urban poverty



Urban poverty is often treated as an autonomous, independent phenomenon, a complex and multisectoral problem far more baffling than rural poverty. Urban poverty is on the increase. Moreover, it is in the typically poor countries of what is now called the third world that one encounters extreme disparity in levels of living among social classes and across regions especially in the urban areas.

Fig.2.

COMPARISON



Widespread and acute poverty is the greatest social evil in India. Today one finds nearly a quarter of the world's poorest live here.

28.NIUA: Profile of the Urban Poor, an investigation into their Demographic, Economic and Shelter characteristics, Research Studies No.40, New Delhi, June 1989, p.1.

The concern for urban poverty in India, like everywhere else in the world is comparatively new appearing initially in the Sixth Five Year Plan which aimed at moving 6.1 million persons above the poverty line. Rapid urbanisation and the growing inequalities in income in the urban areas have brought about this change. The problem of urban poverty if left unattended to is likely to pose a serious threat to the urban future of the country as the urban population is likely to reach 326 million by the year 2000 A.D.²⁹

The few programmes that have been initiated in the country to uplift fifty-five million people estimated to be living below the 'official poverty line' have proved to be inadequate. In 1984-85 approximately 27.7 per cent of the urban population fell below the poverty line i.e more than one out of four urban citizens living below subsistence level.

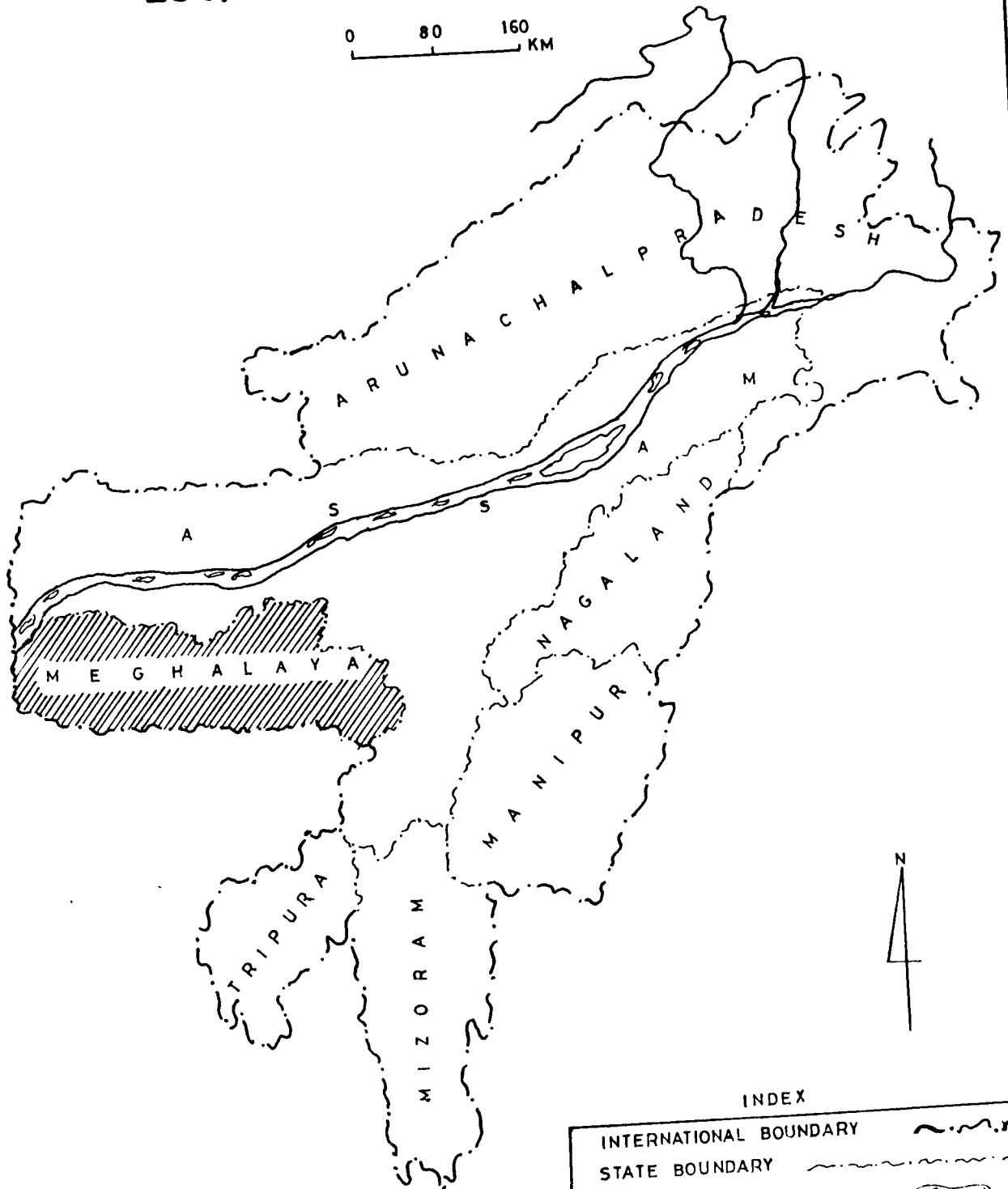
Slums are the most visible manifestation of poverty in the urban areas. In 1981, slum dwellers accounted for 17.4 per cent of the total urban population. Moreover, they accounted for over thirty per cent of the population of India's plus-million cities who live in squalid conditions, affected by malnutrition, devoid of even the most rudimentary sanitary facilities, lacking productive employment and possessing at best environmentally unacceptable shelter conditions.³⁰ Thus, poverty in the urban areas is far more complex and to make a dent on the problem of

29. NIUA: Poverty and Gender Issues in India's Urban Areas, New Delhi, September 1990, p.1.

30. NIUA: Urban Poverty, Magnitude, Demensions, Theory and Perceptions, New Delhi, 1988, p.22.

NORTH EAST INDIA LOCATION OF MEGHALAYA

0 80 160
KM



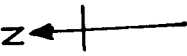
Map 11

urban poverty a multisectoral approach is required.

In Meghalaya - 24 per cent were living below the poverty line in urban areas in 1983-84 out of the total 28 per cent below the poverty line. Factors associated with tribal poverty are subsistence agricultural practise, low level of literacy, and low level of per capita income, migration etc. In 1981 - total urban population was 2.4 million, males 1.2 ml and females 1.1. It is estimated that by 1996 total urban population will be around 5.3 million, males 2.7 million and females 2.6 million.³¹

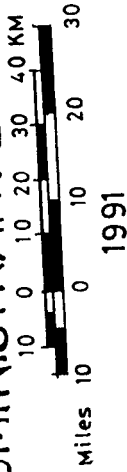
The urbanisation process is very rapid in Shillong as it provides certain unique characteristics due to its typical socio-cultural and environmental settings. Shillong being the capital of Meghalaya, the process of urbanisation has accelerated due to Rural - Urban migration as well as migration from outside the state. Shillong is a typical case of urbanisation mushrooming even with the low level of development, harsh life of the surrounding rural areas and the vicious cycle of abject poverty and underdevelopment. The inevitable consequence of this pseudo - urbanisation is emergence of slum areas in the city having squalid living conditions as the city was originally planned for a population of about 20,000 people. Over the years the economic character of the town has undergone a change from a hill resort to an administrative-cum-commercial centre. The rapid influx of migrants both from rural areas of the state as well as from other

31. Census of India 1991, Series - 16, Provisional Population Totals, Meghalaya, Paper-1 of 1991, p.13.



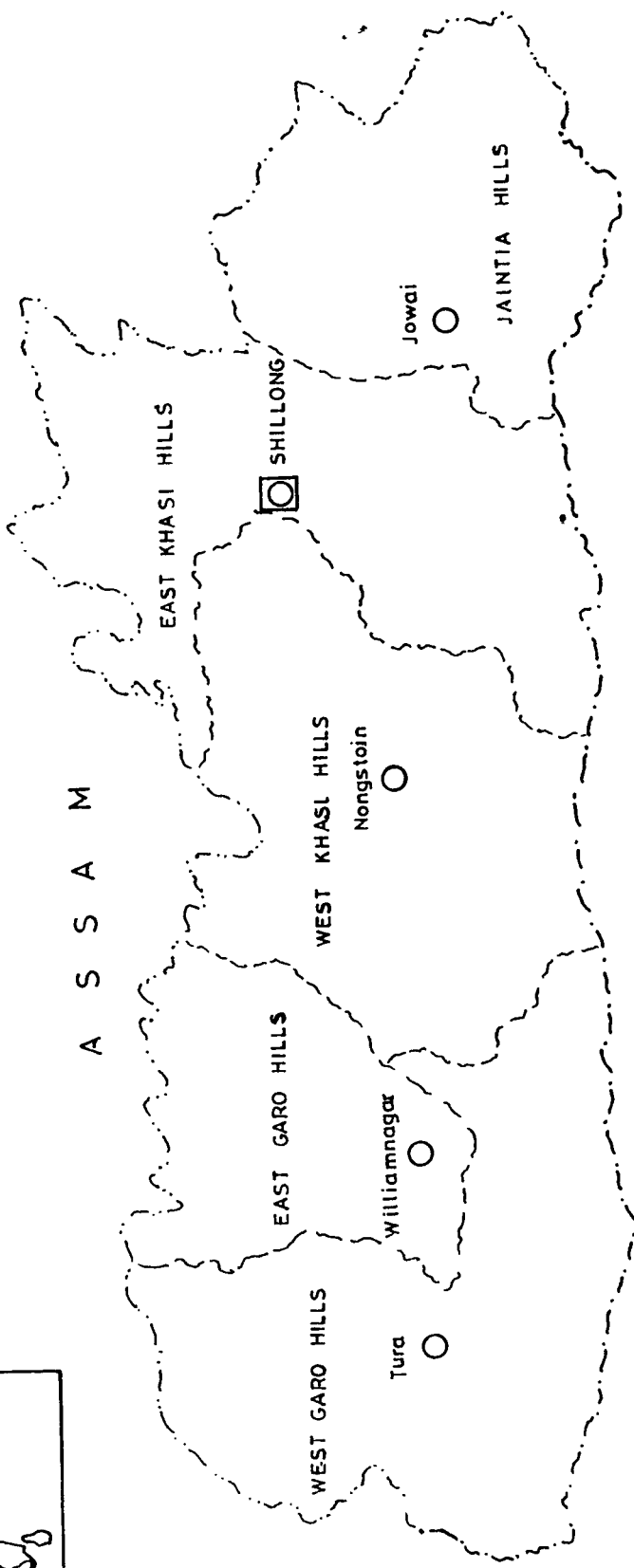
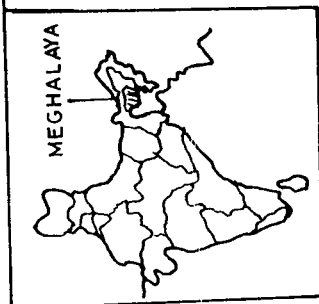
MEGHALAYA

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS



A S S A M

B A N G L A D E S H



states has resulted in straining the service facilities to the limit creating slum like conditions. If we examine the composition of the urban poor we find that 68 per cent of the urban poor i.e 30 million are women and children. So women and children are the worst affected by the poverty situation.

Women, both in the traditional and modern social structures, have always been victims of exploitation. But poor women face a double burden i.e. not only as a result of being women but also by virtue of being poor. Nearly 46 per cent of the total number of the urban poor are women who have limited access to basic needs (of food, health and education) both within the family and outside. They have limited access to employment, their incomes are low, and they suffer disproportionately from malnutrition. At the same time they contribute substantially to the incomes of their families. Therefore they bear the double burden of housework as well as work outside. Their status is extremely low. Therefore, this study is an attempt to evaluate the status of women in the urban poor pockets of Shillong.

Slums are said to contain rats, stray dogs, have a high incidence of hepatitis, malaria, scabies, venereal diseases etc. People do not have access to safe drinking water. Only 8 per cent of the cities in India have underground sewers and 27 per cent of urban population has access to sanitation in 1981. Moreover, 32 per cent of the slums are not connected by paved roads, 30 per cent of the slum dwellers used community latrines and another 30 percent use open spaces, 58 percent of them use public hydrants for water supplies and 19 per cent of slums use

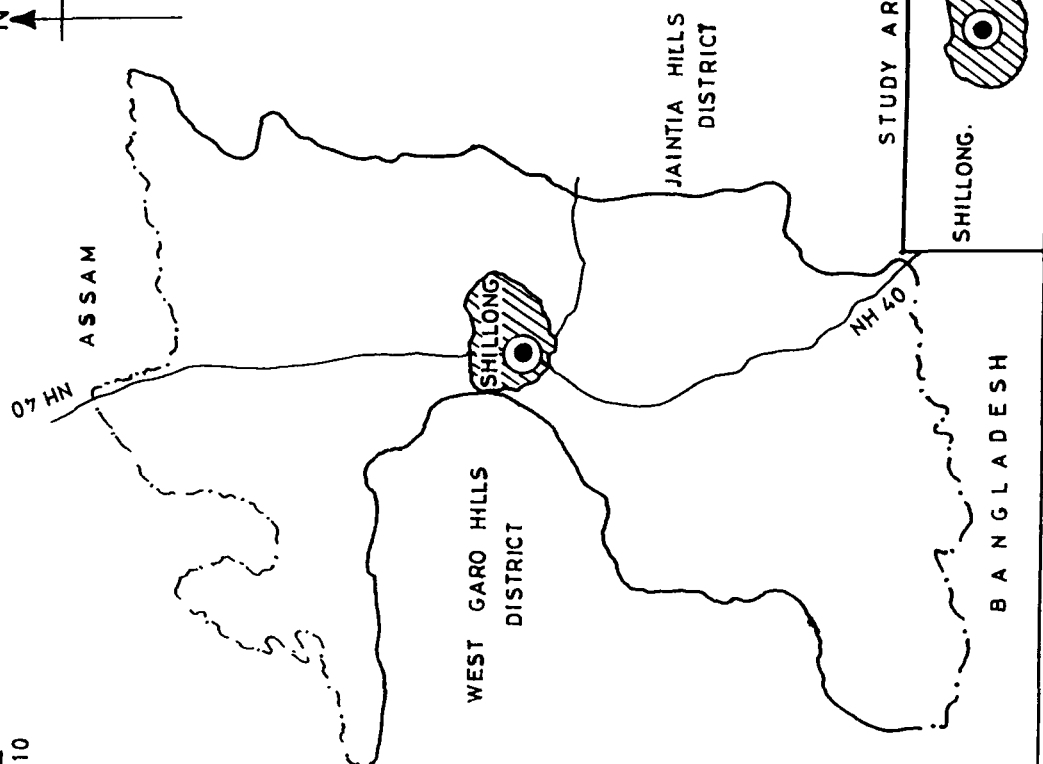
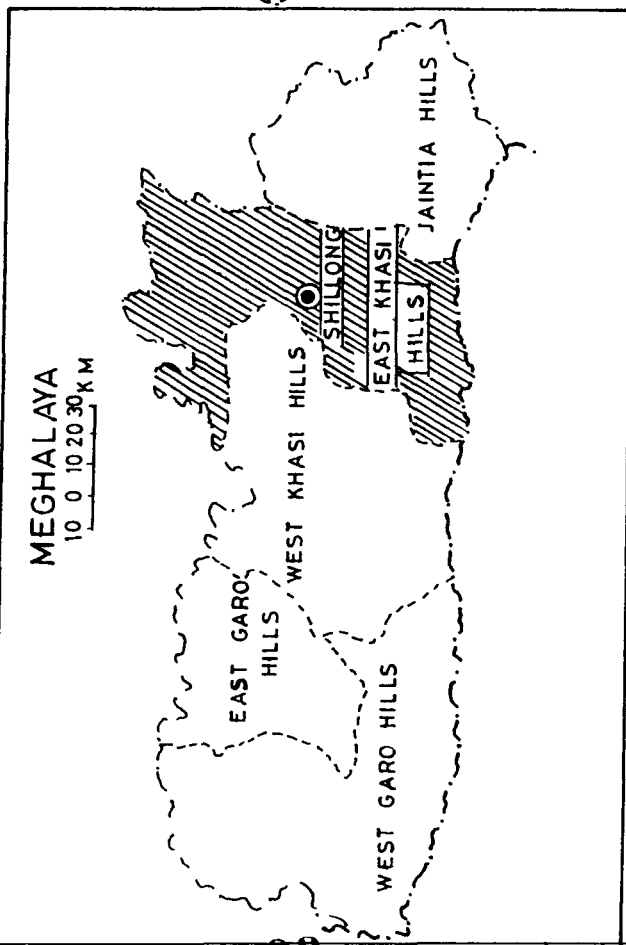
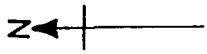
head load system for nightsoil disposal.

Women and children in the poor urban communities are to die from such adverse conditions. In 1981, sex ratio of Meghalaya was 954 per 1000 males and in 1991 it was 947/1000 males. In the East Khasi Hills in 1981 - sex ratio was 945/1000 males and 1991 - 926/1000 males. The decrease recorded in the sex ratio reveals or is the single most important evidence of the limited access of women to the urban world.

Changing socio-economic environment and changes in the life styles, social institution and support systems in Shillong has created a hiatus in meeting the needs of the destitute and underprivileged women. None have suffered more than the most vulnerable groups i.e. the women and children. The modern urban life is marked by individualism. Urbanization and modernization have also brought a change in the fields of occupation. In the past where men and women had well defined roles are at present competing in jobs etc.

Majority of women are becoming main bread earners and hence, the position of women and responsibilities are becoming important. Therefore, geographical mobility and urbanisation has resulted in the evolution of nuclear family. Industrilisation has produced different results leading to concept of individual ownership and thereby increasing the gap between the rich and the poor. In Shillong also this has changed the traditional tribal set up. Modern education and prolonged contacts with other groups have led to changes in the traditional ways of life having an impact on the status of tribal women. The matrilineal system

EAST KHASI HILLS LOCATION OF STUDY AREA



Map 1.3

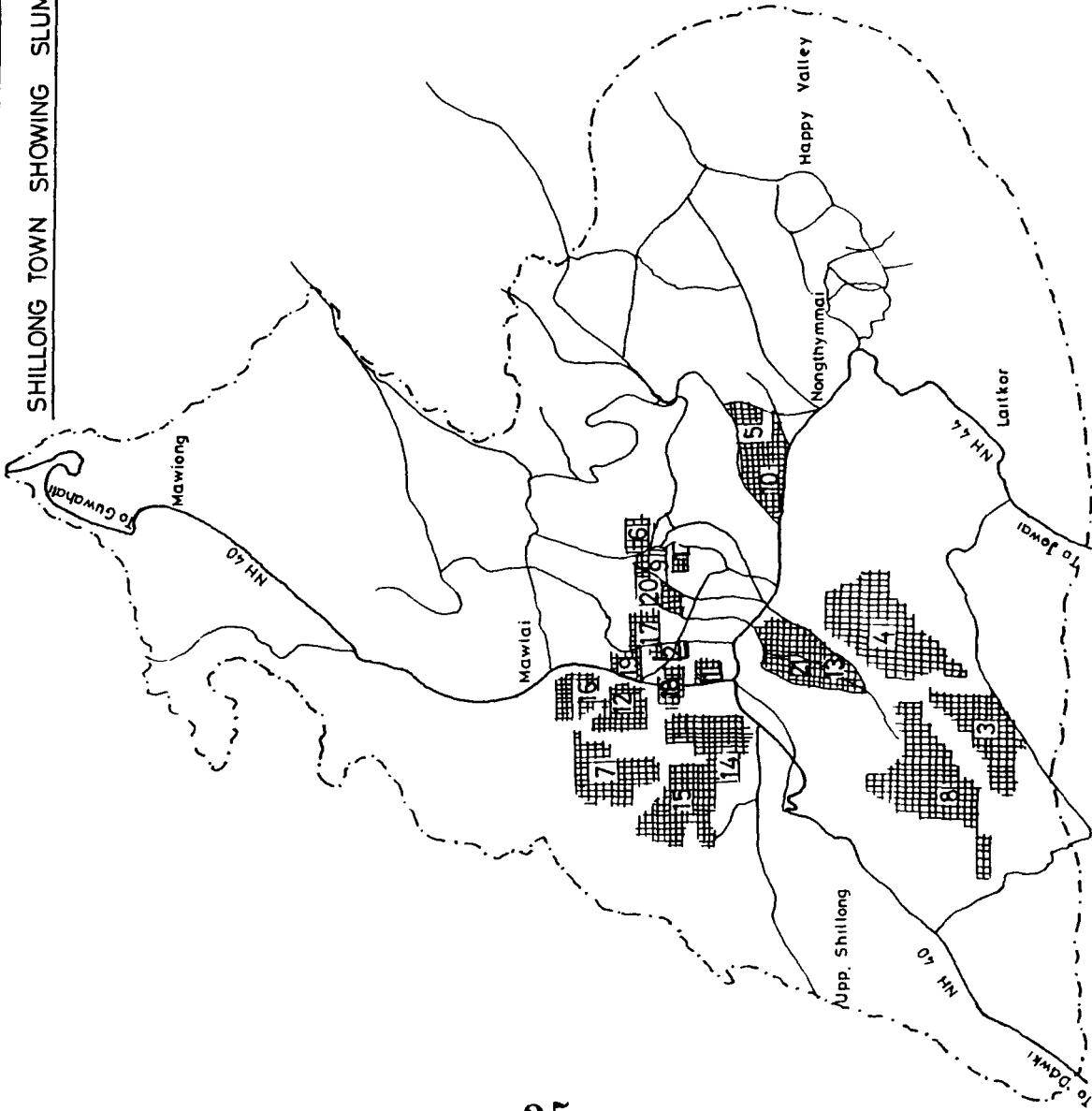
prevalent is undergoing a change. Roles traditionally assigned to different individuals have become vague. The society has undergone tremendous changes and there are cracks now in the matrilineal system. In this respect also the present study assumes significance as it brings to light the changes in the status due to contacts between tribal and non-tribal social systems.

The study has not been undertaken to identify the various aspects of status as to categorise person and groups in terms of status. The main endeavour is to examine the impact of economic factors on the status of a women; since most of the studies so far carried out are on the social status of women and none is on the economic status enjoyed by the poor women. The current study aims at evaluating status of women in terms of economic criteria as the position of any given segment of population in a society is ultimately connected with its economic position which depends on rights, roles and opportunities for participation in economic activities which in turn is dependent on health and nutritional status and education level of women.

1.5 THE STUDY AREA

The present study confines itself to the city of Shillong for an indepth study of the status of women in urban poor pockets and slum areas. It is the capital of the state of Meghalaya inhabited by 2,23,000 persons, according to the 1991 census of India. The town is one of the largest among the cities of North Eastern India. It occupies 21.27 sq. km of area at 25° 34' latitude and 91° 53'E longitude.

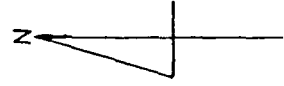
SHILLONG TOWN SHOWING SLUMS



REFERENCE

Recognised Slum

1. Naspatingiri
2. Quatapati
3. Lumparing
4. Maiki
5. Harijan colony
6. Polo bazar
7. Mawprem
8. Madan laban
9. Wahingdah
10. Laitumkhrach
11. Laban
12. Jail road
13. Mawlonghd
14. Jhatupara
15. Barapathor
16. Umsahsun
17. Palton bazar
18. Wahthapbru
19. Butchar lane
20. Anachatra compound
21. Raittsamthiah



With the establishment of Shillong Municipality in 1909, new areas such as Laitumkhrah, Hopkinson Estate, Malki, Mawprem, Laitkor forests were included under the municipal boundary. A new thrust of horizontal and vertical expansion was experienced by Shillong after Independence. In 1951, Shillong had two parts - municipality and the cantonment. By 1961, Nongthymmai and Mawlai townships had developed and formed two census towns. In 1981 Madanrting and Pynthormukrah were included under Shillong Urban Agglomeration.

Shillong was established mainly for administrative purposes. Population has increased at a rapid pace with population growth and immigration of people to the city leading to acquisition of new settlements under urban areas. Still the pressure has led to the emergence of 32 slum pockets within the urban areas of Greater Shillong (Table 1) under the provision of the Meghalaya Slum Areas Act, 1973. (Fig.1)

Table I.1

**Details of Slum Pockets and Population in
Different Urban Areas of Shillong**

Name of the Urban Area	No of Slum Pockets Identified	Estimated Slum Dwellers
Shillong Municipality	21*	42,000
Pynthormukrah	2	3,750
Cantonment	2	3,045
Nongthymmai	3	4,310
Mawlai	3	4,080
Madanrting	1	1,235
Total	32	58,420

* Name of the 21 identified slum pockets within Shillong are as the following: Within the Municipal Board are Naspatighari, Qualapatti, Laitmukhrah (Harijan colony), Polo Bazar, Part of

The specific characteristics of the city may be underlined as follows :

1. The city is located in a hilly terrain and enjoys temperate weather conditions.
2. It has grown in the midst of tribal areas which continues to remain under quasi- subsistent economic organisation.
3. Nearly 45 per cent of the urban population consists of Scheduled Tribes.
4. A sizeable proportion of the people are non tribal in origin.
5. The population composition represents a high degree of ethnic diversity and economic disparities among the varied ethnic segments. This is reflected in the emergence of about 32 clearly identifiable slums of various sizes in different localities within the city (UA).

1.6 OBJECTIVES

The inadequate analysis of the economic status of women which have a bearing on the social status is the motivating force behind this study.

The principal objectives are :

1. To examine how the whole process of urban poverty manifest itself in the slums of Shillong;
2. To study the social, economic and ethnic factors which create differences in the status of women ;
3. To examine the differential impact of urbanisation on the tribal and non-tribal sections of women in poverty pockets of Shillong ;
4. To determine the health, education and employment situation of women in poverty pockets of the city as it affects their status and role in the society.

Contd. from p.22: Jail Road, Sweeper Lane, Part of Laitumkrah, Demseiniong, Malki, Madan Laban, Riat Laban, Lumparing, Lower Mawprem, Upper Mawprem, Wahingdoh, Barapathar, Wahthapbru, Laban, Part of Lama Villa, Part of Riat - Samthiah and Part of Umsoshun.

1.7. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objective of the study raise certain research questions to be investigated. They are :

- (a) Whether there exists significant differences between the urban poor tribal women and non-tribal women in respect of their poverty situation ?
- (b) Does better education have a bearing on health status and employment/earning abilities of women?
- (c) Do educated, employed women have higher status than uneducated unemployed counterparts ?
- (d) Does the type of employment have a impact on status within and outside the family ?
- (e) Whether women employed in white collar jobs command greater authority and have more freedom ?

1.8. DATA BASE

The study will be mainly based on data collected from primary sources as Shillong city has been selected as the study area.

Primary Source :

Data regarding the existing indices of poverty and the status of women in the selected study area will be collected through a structured questionnaire.

Secondary Sources :

The information pertaining to the evolution and growth of urbanisation of the study area, analysis of occupational distribution of the people, data regarding various indices of poverty and status of women like mortality rates, health condition, literacy, have been collected from published reports, papers and relevant sources like survey conducted by NIUA,

NECERT, NSSO, Health Survey and Meghalaya census tables and reports.

1.9.METHODOLOGY :

The study envisages a sample survey of two notified slum localities of Shillong Municipality, Upper Lumparing with a total household size of 600 and Barapathar with total household size of 700. It may be pointed out that the choice of the localities has been basically guided by the fact that Upper Lumparing is primarily inhabited by Scheduled Tribe communities (Khasis) and Barapathar is inhabited by non-Scheduled Tribe communities, primarily Nepalese, Assamese and Migrants from Bihar. The sample size is 10 per cent i.e. 60 from Upper Lumparing and 70 from Barapathar. This provides a comparison between the S.T and non-tribals in terms of their status (health, education and economic) as well as their receptiveness to various cardinal services. The survey has been carried out on the basis of a detailed questionnaire made available by the State Training Institute, NEHU and formulated by the Ministry of Urban Development, GOI for Bench Mark Surveys in UBSP towns. However, additional information has been obtained on dietary habits etc on need based basis.

1.10 DATA ANALYSIS :

After field survey data has been compiled for the two areas into primary and secondary tabulation. The data has been tabulated keeping in mind three primary aspects of status of women studied, i.e. on health, education and employment. The indicators so derived are as the following :

- (a) Nutrition (antenatal & neo-natal)
- (b) General health condition
- (c) Pregnancy and antenatal care
- (d) Number of children per mother
- (e) Status of breastfeeding
- (f) Immunisation
- (g) Literacy
- (h) Educational level
- (i) Type and quality of employment salary, wage or self-employment
- (j) Earning and income level of women and households
- (i) Cultural variable like ethnic composition
- (k) Housing condition
- (l) Water supply situation

By cross tabulation linkages have been attempted between education and income levels, health and family size and so on.

A number of diagrams and graphs have been provided to represent statistical data. It may be pointed out that the statistical analysis has been by and large confined to simpler ones keeping in view the time and data limitations. Moreover, since this happens to be first of a status study of poor women of Shillong, no attempt at hypothesis testing was attempted, since the study is envisaged to provide some basis facts and directions on which any such hypothesis testing could be attempted on an expanded scale and in depth.

1.11. SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is a preliminary investigation into the diverse aspects of the status of women from a geographical viewpoint. Since the women cannot be seen as a homogeneous group both vertically and horizontally the geographical appraisal is of primary importance.

Because of the differential impact of development and urbanisation a macro analysis of women's educational, health and economic status cannot tell the whole story. Therefore the city of Shillong has been selected as the study area for micro analysis of the problem which is a dominantly tribal region. So, over whelming ethos of the tribal social order is manifested. The economy of the city remains by and large backward and poverty is widespread.

In a city like Shillong, variations in the processes of urbanisation gets impressed through the city's demographic, socio-economic and technological attributes degree of diversity leads to variations in the nature of its urban problems. The study of the urban scenairo of Shillong is only a case study which may or may not be a truly representative case.

Poor women constitute a major chunk of the poor pockets and slum ares of Shillong. The status of these poor women with respect to health, sanitation, education and employment is extremely low. They have to bear the drudgecy of home work as well as menial jobs outside with no opportunities or means for education, they are doubly oppressed.

Thus the study of the status of women in the urban poor

pockets has great significance because any strategy to ameliorate the situation of the urban poor cannot deal with the complex implication of urban poverty without taking into account the special needs of these doubly disadvantaged women.

Chapter 2

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT :

Social progress is closely linked with the role played by women in a society. The attitude to various aspects of women's position differs from country to country depending on the level of economic development and the socio-cultural system.

The Constitution of India, provides for equal rights and privileges for both men & women and also contains provisions of both general and special welfare of the women. A series of legislations have been enacted to ensure that women get equality and also to safeguard their rights. But women still have to go a long way before achieving equal status as there are many areas where equality is yet to be translated into reality. Therefore, it is important to have the right environment in which changes can be brought about. Many great social reformers, have stood up for the cause of women's advancement and emancipation.

The stereotyped ideals of Indian womanhood is rooted in mythology and reflects a predominantly male world view. Like the mythological 'Sita', the image of the good Indian woman is of a quiet beauty who puts all other before self and the husband above all.

2.2 WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT :

Development anywhere in the world is possible when it is a people's movement. In the early seventies it was realised that the process of development could not progress, especially in the Third World because nearly half of the population consisting of women had no access to the development process and their problem was not taken care of. Women have been disadvantaged

everywhere in the world. The benefits of development are not equally shared by men and women. Several studies bring to light the fact that development is detrimental to the status of women.¹

Wherever development has set in, it has had two consequences. Firstly, it has increased production, consumption and dependence on monetary values, independently. Secondly, the status of individuals has become measurable, and individuals can be grouped by the arbitrarily chosen parameters which have become measurable. Throughout the world, the social status through development has become measurable.²

As a consequence of this, women have become visible as a discriminated statistical group, both in the rich as well as poor countries. Half of the world's population the women, are great sufferers in the patriarchal social norms. They are often victims of development.³ Development therefore, has to be a multi-dimensional process having the same positive effect on different segments of society.

The U.N. Decade for women (1976-1986), resulted in the developing of a new consciousness among people regarding the rights and responsibilities of women in society by focusing attention on the need to involve women in the development efforts

1. (a) Roopa Vohra, Arun K. Sen, Status, Education and Problems of Indian Women, Akshat Publications, Delhi, 1985. p.3.

(b) Sushila Agarwal, Status of Women, Printwell Publishers, Jaipur, 1988, P. IX.

(c) Ester Boserup, Women's Role in Economic Development, George Allen and Unwin, 1971.

2. Ivan Illich, "Keynote speech", Asahi Symposium, Proc. on Women In a Changing World, Oct. 23-25, Asahi Evening News, Tokyo, 1985, p.23.

3. Sushila Agarwal, op.cit, p.X.

in any country. Since then, considerable amount of work has been done in the developed and developing countries on how to bring women into the mainstream of economic and social life. The developing countries now acknowledge that the status of their women is extremely low and subordinate, i.e, a major source of their underdevelopment. The roots of this concern lie in the fact that, even though women constitute half of the humanity, their involvement in the development process has been insignificant, or at best marginal. The strategies of development have tended to bypass them.⁴

The programmes which the UN has suggested to reach women and involve them the development process are :

- a) Promoting equality between men and women
- b) Integration of women in the development
- c) Strengthening of world peace by increasing participation in international and national decision making.

As a result, many countries like India have tried to design new initiatives and programmes to address the needs of women. Gender planning has emerged in a few countries as a potential tool for meeting the strategic needs of women.⁵

If we analyse the work of the Women's Decade (1976-85) we find that it is dominated by three schools of thought. (i)The first school consists of those who argue that women play at best a marginal role in development, and that their access to all what development symbolises- productive employment, adequate

4. N.I.U.A, Gender Bias in Employment, Women in the Urban Informal Sector Research Study Series, Number 20, New Delhi, October 1987, P.1.
5. N.I.U.A, Women, Urban Poverty and Economic Development, Research Study Series, No.43, , New Delhi, July 1989, P.1.

shelter and basic infrastructure and services is grossly limited owing to the distorted market conditions and several other forms of institutional, historical and cultural barriers. Their arguments are based on the aggregate data on gender ratios, female participation in the labour market, the the structure of female occupations.

6

(ii)Scholars and practitioners representing another school of thought opine that women play an extremely important and critical role in development. In many countries, they form an integral part of the survival strategies. However, because of the existing methods of national social accounting and other classification systems and the manner in which concept like "work" are defined and perceived, women's role and work are neither seen nor recognised nor counted. There is a male bias in data collection and analysis, with the result that there is gross underestimation of women's work in the development process and the picture will be revealed in micro-level studies.

There is a third category of scholars and practitioners who point out that the developing countries have shown little or no sensitivity to the needs, problems and potentials of women in formulating development policies, plans and programmes.

Development in whatever way, it is understood and assessed, has bypassed women. The much talked about trickle-down of development to women has not occurred, nor is it likely to occur because development processes and strategies do not

6. N.I.U.A,1989, op.cit., p.2.

differentiate between males and females, and are neutral and not specific to gender.⁷

Those holding this view argue that any strategy that fails to directly involve women cannot yield for any country a sustainable level of development. Women in such situations will remain a wasted economic resource, hard to afford by developing or any group of countries.

2.2.1 Socio-economic development and women's work participation:

Changing socio-economic environment, increasing complexity of production, increasing mechanisation and urbanisation all have resulted in the women being thrown away to the periphery of development.

With greater socio-economic development and availability of occupations of higher prestige in large numbers, women usually withdraw from work, because lack of education and skill does not permit them to avail jobs in tertiary occupations, which are taken as indicators of the high socio-economic development.

⁸ ⁹
Boserup and Mies conclude that woman's status declines with their diminished productive role in the transition to an 'urban industrial economic' based on waged labour. The productive role of women declines as they are no longer involved in agricultural work and the industries of a peasant economy. This

7. N.I.U.A, 1989, op.cit, p.2.

8. Ester Boserup, op.cit., 1971.

9. Mies, "Capitalist Development and Subsistence Reproduction : Rural Women in India", Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, Vol.12, No.1 (January-March); 1980, pp.2-14.

is particularly important where rural to urban migration is involve. According to Boserup, in the traditional society the female participation in cultivation depends on the existing agricultural economy. They are active in swidden cultivation but tend to drop out in plough cultivation. But a more developed economy in general proves detrimental to female employment.

Agriculture and other traditional industries in developing countries are being modernized through new technologies it is the poor women who have been most affected by this modernization by losing both income and status. Men are being given training in scientific agriculture production and women in home economics, food processing and nutrition. Rural women who have been copartners in agriculture and home-based industries in developing countries from times immemorial have been reduced to appendages by modernization. Mechanization has totally ousted women from certain traditional industries, such as tin mining and pearl fishing.

The introduction of new technology both in agriculture and in industries, displaces women and restricts their access to new jobs. Laurdes Arzpe argues that. During the first stage of industrialization, the types of industries that are established, mainly textiles and leather, are labour intensive and provide additional employment for women. But when mechanization advances, employment acquires a predominantly male bias.

10. Hema Goonatilake, Keynote Speech on 'Status of Women' in Asahi Symposium, Proc. on Women in a Changing World, October 23-25, Asahi Evening News, Tokyo, 1985, p.17.

11. Laurdes Arizpe, "Women in the Informal Labour Sector : The Case of Mexicolity" in Women and National Development : The Complexities of Change, (ed), The Wellesclay Editorial Committee, University of Chicago Press, 1977, pp.28-29.

One of the major characteristics of economic development is a reduction in the relative importance of agriculture and an increase in the importance of non-agricultural activities. Urbanisation and Industrialization are important elements in the process of socio-economic development. The structure of production changes as the development proceeds and agriculture naturally loses its importance as a source of work. The manpower gets reallocated in secondary and tertiary sections of the economy Agrarian societies with family as the unit of production and household industries being the most important activity transforms themselves into industrial societies with modern organised industries. The process destroys the traditional division of labour and individuals and not families serve as units of labour. New Skills are required for the changes in the production method.

Norma S Chinchilla maintains that "Industrial growth and modernization might actually bring about greater restrictions on the ability of females to contribute directly to family economies and create ideologies that justify the continued work of the majority of women in the home."

2.2.2 Changing Modes of production and women's work participation:

The nature and type of women's participation in work changes with a change in the mode of production. Marxian scholars

12. Ester Boserup, op.cit.

13. Norma S. Chinchilla, "Industrilization, Monopoly, Capitalism and Women's work in Guatemala", in Women and National Development : The Complexities of Change (ed.), The Wellesley Editorial Committee, The University of Chicago Press, 1977, p.39.

maintain that women's economic participation is largely affected by the capitalistic family structure. The women's economic role in the context of social relations prevailing within the society at any epoch can be analysed with a model of patriarchy according to Marxists.

14

Bebel maintained that the institution of private property and the emergence of class structure is largely responsible for excluding women from work at a social scale. In the socialist mode of production, women will again enter the work force at a social scale, and the domestic activity would then account for insignificant amount of time.

15

Engels also opined that the development of private property created a clear cut division of labour which diminished the value of female production from social use to private use of the household unit.

2.2.3 Impact of capitalism:

The development of capitalist mode of production promotes the exploitation of women by excluding female domestic labour which remains unpaid. Saffoti holds that the household

16

14. August Bebel, Women and Socialism, Schocken Books, New York, 1971.

15. Frederick Engels, The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State, 1884, reprint ed., International Publishers, New York, 1972.

16. Helith B. Saffoti, "Female Labour and Capitalism in the United States and Brazil", in Women Cross Culturally : Change and Challenge (ed.), Rohrlich Leavity, The Hague : Mouton and Co., 1975, pp.59-94.

maintains women as a reserve labour force available to join capitalist production when required as in war time.

Because of their passivity in the labour relations, which prevents them from improving bargaining position, women's wage labour is particularly suitable to capitalism, as a means of reducing the cost of production.

Boserup in her study reveals that if industrial capitalism relegates women to the periphery of the economy, the capitalism of the dependent nations make their position even more difficult.¹⁷

Thus, female participation declines with development. A large service sector grows in such a situation and women hold a disproportionate number of jobs usually the low status one, in this sector.

Industrial Capitalism, an indicator of development, has also promoted the home-based putting-out system which is a process of making housewives of the production forces. Here the women's work is defined as supplementary to the income of the husband. This conceptualization of women as housewives and supplementary earners has been influenced by the colonial ideology that introduced the nineteenth century Victorian norms of the domestication of women. an important outcome of this strategy of housewifezation is the perpetuation of patriarchal norms. Thus, we find that as development advances, women are more and more marginalised. Take up any indicator of development, be

17. Ester Boserup, op.cit.

it urbanization or industrialization, women are thrown away to the periphery by these modern forces because they are not skilled or capable of handling modern sophisticated technology. So the women work force are rendered redundant. They occupy only lower strata occupations. As a result more and more women are thrown within the four walls of the house increasing dependence on males¹⁸ which leads to further deterioration in their status.

Land reforms and settlement policies in developing countries have reduced women's control over land by denying women's traditional rights to land and giving land title only to male head of the household. The discrimination against women is evident, in fact, women are considered as beneficiaries of welfare programmes and not as participants of economic programmes. This is the result of women being perceived as dependent housewives and not as producers and active participants in traditional industries. These are the strategies adopted by planners influenced by western-oriented development models.¹⁹

2.2.4 Women, Colonialism and Dependency:

The economic participation of women cannot be seen independent of the constraints of the international economic relations in the form of dependencies and the impact of international political economy. A number of studies reveal how the mode of production affects the work participation of women in the Third World countries, a part of an international system

18. Hema Goonatilake, op.cit., p.16.

19. Ibid, p.17.

based on dependency.

One study by Hema Goonatilake on how and why the status of women has declined in the developing world, reveals that the de-humanizing experience of colonialism in all the Asian countries except Nepal, Thailand and Japan have had lingering effects on socio-cultural, economic spheres of life even after
20
gaining Independence.

In the old economic order, raw materials were produced in Asian countries, transported into industrialized countries in Europe and the US and later also to Japan, and were transformed into industrial products. These were exported back to the developing countries. Thus, the developing countries provided not only cheap new materials, labour and food but also the markets for the manufactured goods. This process resulted in the marginalisation of women from the world of work with home-based industries and local crafts becoming redundant. Increasing male migration into the cities led to the growth of female-headed households.

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Boserup in his study asserted that, if not all, in several areas, female participation decreased as a result of
22
colonial influence. Glaura Miranda argues, " during the process

20. Hema Goonatilake, op.cit, p.15.

21. Ester Boserup, op.cit.

22. Glaura, Vasques de Miranda, "Women's Labour Force Participation in a Developing Society : the case study of Brazil" in Women and National Development : The Complexities of Change (ed.), The Welleseley Editorial Committee, The University of Chicago Press, 1977, pp.261-262.

of dependent capitalist development, rising levels of unemployment and underemployment may be expected to occur simultaneously and to affect women's participation in the labour force more than men".

Colonialism often differentiated the social and domestic labour. There is an emphasis and need for integrating women in the strategy of development. Though even during colonial and post-colonial periods, women were integrated into the strategy of development as low paid plantation workers, factory workers and farm workers and unpaid housewives. But this female labour was invisible although it subsidized the male wages and in many countries, the economic growth and development was at the expense of women, without reaping the benefits of development.

The new strategy of women into development meant, in most cases, getting women to work in some income generating activities, integrating women into market oriented production and thus, integrating women into the world market economy. It was not meant that women should expend their subsistence production and produce more for their consumption, more for their own food and their clothes. Income generation meant export-oriented production for the benefit of the more industrialized countries.

23

Even in this strategy of income generating activities, the bias towards women is evident as women's work is defined as supplementary work, as an additional income to the income of the

23. Jun Nishikawa, Keynote speech on "Status of Women", in Asahi Symposium, Proc. on Woman in a Changing World, Asahi Evening News, Tokyo, 1985, p.20.

husband who is the primary earner. This strategy is based on the perception that remains in developing countries as secondary earners, which is not the empirical reality. In many developing countries, an increasing number of households are female headed and more and more women are becoming the primary income earners. The concepts of supplementary work and secondary earners provide the justification for the low female wages²⁴".

Another development strategy which is widely practised in Asia is tourism. In this, women and often children themselves form the main exportable commodities, i.e. prostitution in the name of 'leisure tourism'. In Thailand, ten per cent of female population between the ages of 14 and 24 work as prostitutes and massagers. In Manila alone, there are hundreds of thousands of girls engaged in the trade. Eighty to 90 per cent of the tourists in South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand are Japanese sex tourists. This is a reflection of dominant economic and political relations of Japan with other developing countries in which the main sufferers are women.²⁵

If we examine as to why the oppression based on gender, nationality, class and ethnicity have increased, the answer is that the oppression of women is rooted in economic, political, social and socio-cultural structures. The existing economic and political structures which are often the historical legacy of

24. John Winslow Irving, "Status of Woman", in Proc. on Women in a Changing World, Asahi Evening News, Tokyo, p.21.

25. Yvette Roudy, Keynote speech on "Status of Women", in Asahi Symposium, Proc. on Women in a Changing World, October 23-25, Asahi Evening News, Tokyo, 1985, p.28.

colonial domination are highly inequitable between genders, nations, classes and ethnic groups. Although the developing countries gained independence in the 1940's and the subsequent decades, they continue to bear the marks of economic and cultural dependence. Economic relations between the developing and developed countries still operate against the interest of the former as they used to be during the heydays of colonial rule.²⁶

The oppression of women is only a part of the whole exploitative economic and political system which exploits both men and women. Women are doubly oppressed at work, at work places and at home.

During the recent decades, many development models have been experimented upon in these countries and in the 1960's the growth models were tried out and an annual growth rate of five per cent had been achieved by many developing countries. Nevertheless, unemployment increased and disparities in income distribution widened. In spite of the rise in G.N.P., poverty continued. Since, the growth model did not bring the expected results, the developing nations began to demand for a new international economic order and demand for equitable share in world's resources and better 'terms of trade'. The efforts now is to change the stereotyped image of women in the reproductive roles which dominated the developing countries in the 1960's.

This has had further three consequences for women - (i) for the woman who works, the income over any long period of time, say five-year period, has moved farther away from the

26. Hema Goonatilake, op.cit., p.19.

income of men. This is so in Japan as well as in the United States, but this is also in all but some very poor countries.

(ii)Second, the growing rates of the employment among women has led everywhere to a growing double burden. Indeed, there was some liberation from housework but only for the cost of having obliging the women to go out and do extra work to buy the machinery which liberates them from housework to some extent. So women are being docilely oppressed in the sense that they are being forced to bear the double burden of wage work and domestic labour. This is the case in poor countries. The increasing number of female headed households has resulted in women being primary income earners in the poor areas. The concepts of supplementary work and secondary earners provide the justification for the low female wages and discrimination in terms of job opportunities.

(iii)Third, everywhere in the world, particularly in the developing countries like India, there is a generalization that where in rich countries, the status of a small group of women has been significantly improved. It has resulted in the distance between the women privileged through the new awareness of laws and the average poor women in the rest of the world. So the present idea of development may lead to an unavoidable structural sexism.²⁷

Given the right direction, women can play a crucial role in development. This realisation dawned on the people of India when in the mid 1970's, a small group of Himalayan village

27. Ivan Illich, op.cit.

women played a significant role in preventing mountain forests being cut down for industrial purposes. "We will hug the trees as a mother hugs her child to her breast to save it from the tiger's wrath",- giving the movement of non-violent protest its name 'Chipko' (to hug).

The women depend on the forests around their villages for firewood, fodder, timber for their house beams and herbs for medicine. Extreme poverty has led to large-scale migration to the plains for employment, making women virtual heads of their households. The women's contribution to the movement helped to concentrate on women's special need to control their own resources. For the world, Chipko has become a symbol of community action. State of Environment report in 1982 was dedicated to
28
these women.

During the Women's Decade, the woman's double burden of drudgery in the field and in the home has drawn attention of many planners. The poor woman's energy crisis became an issue after firewood scarcity had been written about in the western press. The poor woman's quest for water drew attention with the launching of the UN's International Water Supply and Sanitation
29
Decade in 1980.

Among the family of developing countries, India has a long history of planned development. Policies relating to women's development have changed dramatically over the years and become

28. Central Social Welfare Board, Indian Women and the Media, The Changing Image in India, Indraprastha Press, Delhi, p.5.

29. Ibid.

wide-ranging. In the earlier plans, it was women's reproduction roles and their roles as mothers that determined the primary response to their problems.³⁰

Accordingly, the First and Second Five Year Plans placed emphasis on the expansion of antenatal and post-natal facilities and services.

The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) is a landmark in the women's cause, because it introduces the concept of Women and Development. No more piecemeal strategies, but an integrated, realistic and regenerative development effort, the pyramid, so long wobbling unsteadily on its axis, is at last being set right. The target is now visualised in terms of economic independence for women, as well as educational advancement and access to comprehensive health care system.³¹ It has been realised and recognised that any genuine developmental effort must aim at improving the quality of life of women in society.

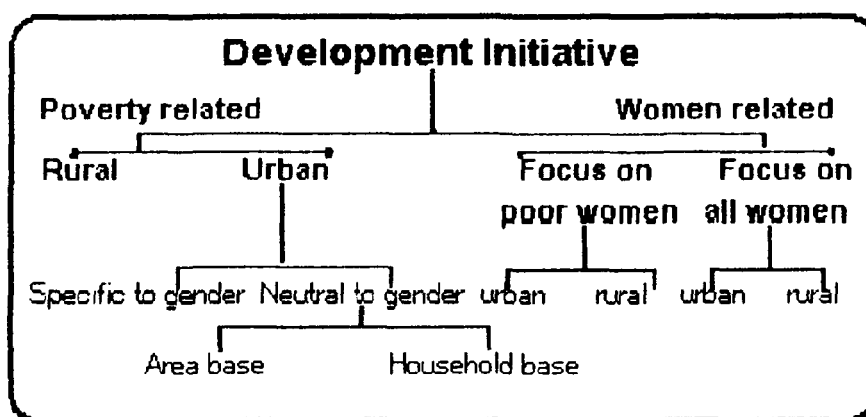
The position at the commencement of 1990s is very different with women being projected as active and equal partners in development. A recent, 1990 document of the Planning Commission states that, "Women's role is to be seen not only as beneficiaries, being denied their due share in development. Their experience of life management, in production and environment and in fighting chronic social ills, is directly relevant to the alternative development thrust."³²

30.N.I.U.A, 1989, Op.cit., p.34.

31.Central Social Welfare Board, (Qu.)in Empowering Women, Indraprastha Press, New Delhi, 1985, p.7.

32. Planning Commission, "Approach to the Eighth Plan", published in Financial Express, March 1, 1990.

Policies represent an understanding and appreciation of the existing situation. During the past forty years or so, the Indian Government has taken up a large number of programmes and initiatives both to reduce the incidence of poverty and to involve the women into the mainstream of socio-economic development and to enhance their contribution to national welfare. These initiatives fall into several categories as shown in the chart below:



There are two streams of initiatives evident from the chart, first related to poverty alleviation, and the second to women's development. In the first stream falls programmes like the Urban Basic Services Programmes, Self Employment Programmes for the Urban Poor, Housing for the Economically Weaker Sections and Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums. As these programmes are neutral to gender, except the Urban Basic Services Programme which is particularly designed to reach more women and children who are more disadvantaged among the urban poor households.

The second stream consists of a large variety of programme, which are aimed at:

- a) Urban Poor Women:- comprising of vocational training of adult women; Women's Development Corporation; Scheme for Socio - economic Programmes for Women;
- b) Women in the Urban Areas:- With no distinction between high, medium and low income consisting of entrepreneurship Development Programme; Women's Vocational Training Programme; Science and Technology for women; and institutes for Rehabilitation of Women in Distress;
- c) Urban Poor:- and neutral to gender Shramik Vidyalaya; Institutes for imparting nonformal education and training to urban workers; and
- d) poor women without any urban-rural distinction.

33

Training and skill upgradation constitute a major plank of the development initiatives that have been taken so far to reach and benefit the urban poor women. Evidently, it is necessary to bring more and more urban poor women into the mainstream of socio-economic development.

There is need to improve the access of poor women to basic services (water supply, sanitation, primary health and primary educations). It is also a major development initiative that takes note of the needs of urban poor women, particularly. Moreover, employment -focused programmes have to be introduced.

All-round development of women and children constitutes an important component of human resources development. Therefore, the Government of India created a separate Department of Women

33.N.I.U.A, 1989, Op.cit., pp.38-39.

and Child Development in September 1984 having two bureaus: (i) Nutrition and Child development bureau (ii) Women's development Bureau.
34

In all the developing countries including India, increased emphasis is placed on creating a network of women development functionaries for the benefit of women. These functionaries are the new genre of professionals involved for the specific purpose of promoting socio-economic development of women and to increase the receptivity of women for modernization. They work both in rural as well as urban areas. In India, they are auxiliary nurse-midwives, family planning workers, school teachers and Gram Sevikas. This is true with countries like Nigeria, Somalia and Afghanistan. It is reported that, "Many traditional health personnel are found who, if their skills are upgraded, can be incorporated into modern health services. So that they can play a role in development. "Operation Midwives" was a programmes started in Nigeria to train midwives in improved and more hygienic delivery practices and also to advice mothers on child care and nutrition. Similarly in Somalia, traditional midwives who have received training are effectively working to change society's attitudes toward women.

These functionaries act as 'friend, guide and philosopher' for the people and act as link up agencies between government and target groups. Therefore, in a tradition bound society they work as viable and effective change agents, a

34. H.C.Upadhyay, Status of Women in India, Vol.1, Anmol Publications, New Delhi, 1991, pp.201-211.

catalyst in the process of social development. In view of this, a beginning for creating a network of such functionaries for rural transformation was made in 1953-54 as part of the Community Development Programme. There is need to extend this to urban areas. Until the Sixth Five Year Plan, the field of women and children development seems to have been relegated to a lower priority .³⁵

The Sixth Plan(1980-85) outlines a new approach to recruit the WDF's for health services. The emphasis on selecting girls "from local areas, relax minimum educational qualifications, raise upper age limit and give preference to widows and deserted women. In almost all the hospitals, the nursing personnel are mainly female. The training facilities for them will be expanded"^{,36}. Furthermore, the Sixth Plan also emphasises the need for streamlining the admission process to technical education with a view to promoting women enrollment.

The CSWB has also contributed to this end. Thousands of women are providing valuable services to the community. As dais, nurses and primary school teachers they also spread ideas about nutrition, hygiene, and family planning. By living and working within local or tribal communities, they are able, by their own example to make great inroads into local habits and customs that normally resist change, especially when it comes from the outside world. Most important, these women by earning their own living,

35. Mukkavilli, Seetharam, "Problems of Women Development Functionaries", Yojana, Vol.XXVII, New Delhi, July 1982, pp.1-15.

36. Planning Commission, Draft Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85, New Delhi, p.426.

establish that a woman can be independent, and thus, hold a torch
37
upto others.

A whole spectrum of socio-economic programmes have been started for women poor women. Financial assistance is given to them. With these new schemes, not only women have benefited but many training-cum-production units, handloom units and agro-based units have benefited.

As women break new grounds and in increasing numbers, so many new inputs are necessary. More and more training camps should be organised all over the country to encourage women to participate in the developmental process at the grass-roots level. Grass-root organisations of women were earlier seen as delivery mechanisms for certain services and for training women in household activities and traditional activities like stitching, knitting, embroidery. But many new economic dimensions have been added now to these organisations.

For the first time now these organisations are being viewed as not only possible instruments of employment generation and economic development of women but also as channels for socio-political development of the most deprived sections of women.

Thus, every attempt should be made to ensure that more and more women participate in the vital decision making process of the community, because decisions affecting women are so often taken in various fora where their voice is strangely silent. More and more camps should be organised for women to educate and motivate them to play a greater, more meaningful, role in their

37. Central Social Welfare Board, Op.cit., pp.6-7.

own lives.

2.3 POVERTY AND WOMEN:

We hate poverty no matter who is in it. we are increasingly becoming concerned with hunger issues not only in our own country but through out the world. One of the reasons that we are so concerned with poverty questions is because women and children are the largest component of poverty.

Women as it is, are oppressed on every level of society. But poor women are doubly oppressed. Violence against women specifically, in economic terms is an example of the unchanging attitude of men. Men must be shown that oppression of women is oppression of the society. It epitomises a non-⁴⁰ realization of more than half of society's potential.

Majority of studies in the women's decade reveal that women's relative access to education, income, employment and economic resources has worsened. Although poor women's burden at work has increased, the educational, health and nutritional⁴¹ status has declined.

As of 1982, 800 million people in the developing world lived in absolute poverty, and the majority of them are women. Around 500 million people suffer from hunger and malnutrition and the worst affected are the women and children. Around 20 million

38. Central Social Welfare Board, Op.cit., p.8.

39. H.C.Upadhyay, Op.cit., pp.220-221.

40. Jun Nishikawa, Keynote speech in the Asahi Symposium, Proc. on Woman in a Changing World, Oct. 23-25, Tokyo, 1985, p.51.

41. (a) Hema Goonatilake, Op.cit., p.57.

(b) Jun Nishikawa, Op.cit.

(c) Ivan Illich, Op.cit.

(d) H.C. Upadhyay, Op.cit.

people die every year of hunger related causes and the majority are women and children. Women and children constitute of more than 90 per cent of all refugee population.⁴²

Today, the urban population in developing countries has touched the 1.3 billion mark causing serious shortages of shelter and basic services. The poor constitute between one-third and one-fourth of the developing countries' total urban population. Furthermore, this number seems to be ever increasing. It is in this context of increasing urban poverty that the developing countries have begun to ask whether 'women' who constitute 50 per cent of the total number of the poor, have any role in the reduction of poverty, and if so, in what way can they be enabled to play that role more effectively and efficiently?⁴³

The economic statistics everywhere in the world are shocking. On a continuum of international economic conditions of women, the United States is doing relatively better than most other countries. Yet by the year 2000, American women and their children will almost entirely compose the poverty class, the phenomena of the 'feminization of poverty', as it is known in the United States, is typical however, worldwide.⁴⁴

As the age of low economic growth set in the mid 1970s, in most of the countries, poor women bore the brunt of policy changes. Proportion of women in the labour force became high.

42. Hema Goonatilake, Op.cit., p.57.

43. N.I.U.A, 1989, Op.cit., p.4.

44. Eleanor Smeal, "Structure of Discrimination", in Asahi Symposium, Proc. on Woman in a Changing World, October 23-25, Asahi Evening News, Tokyo, 1985, p.36.

Their need to work was "to add to the household income. Wage differentials between the sexes in all the advanced industrial countries widened from 100 to 56 in 1976 to 100 to 52 in 1984"⁴⁵.

The typical features of women workers in Japan changed from "young, single, and quick turn-over" to "middle-aged, married and part-time". This does not imply any change in the traditionally ancillary position of women in Japan's labour market. But reveals the fact that women are doing supplementary work as secondary earners for the family and are getting low wages for it.⁴⁶

The United States' right wing in 1984 succeeded in drastically cutting Federal funding of the abortions for poor women and for family planning services.⁴⁷

In the rich countries, the equal job opportunity or equal wage legislation benefits only a fraction of those women who have jobs. It has, therefore, the paradoxical effect of increasing division between women. The great majority of poor women became relatively more disadvantaged, not only in relation to man but to the women protected by the new legislation.

For these poor women, everyday is a battle against poverty. It is a question of their survival as they have to bear the brunt of poverty, have to look after children, have to feed the starving children, who have to send the children to school.

45. Eleanor Smeal, Op.cit., p.37.

46. Chizuko Veno, Keynote speech in the Asahi Symposium, Proc. on Woman in a Changing World, Oct. 23-25, Asahi Evening News, Tokyo, 1985, pp.69-73.

47. Eleanor Smeal, Op.cit.

The men do not suffer so much as these women, who realize how serious is the threat of hunger, of famine and other calamities.

It is often said that 'Third World' women do not wish to be 'anti-men' as the feminist movement is mistaken for it. Their problems are those of class, primarily. What poor women need, it is argued, is eradication of class inequality. They along with the men of their class are denied a decent standard of life, access to social resources and political power. What this ignores is that over and beyond this, women from the lower classes also suffer oppression because they are women. Their labour is exploited as cheaper labour by employers, their labour is available as domestic service to their own men. They are being doubly oppressed in the sense that they are being forced to bear the double burden of wage work and domestic labour as the main feature of the export oriented Industrialization has been the growing absorption of the female labour force as cheap labour.⁴⁸

The earnings of poor women are extracted by their men for liquor or other needs of their own as a matter of right. They are subject to sexual abuses both by the men of other classes as well as of their own.⁴⁹

Western feminists also naively assume a 'universal sisterhood', in the sense of identity of interests ignoring the role of international capital in dividing nations. If women in the advanced countries enjoy a standard of living that is built on the exploitation of women of the less developed countries,

48. Chizuko Veno, Op.cit.

49. Jun Nishikawa, Op.cit., p.51.

their relationship to the latter cannot be of sisterhood, unless they recognise their own part in this exploitation. When their governments engage in the countries so affected become victims, then, the women from the imperial and the overrun countries are not "equal".⁵⁰

Thus, poverty among women is not only an issue in developing countries, it is equally an issue in developed countries. The I.L.O notes that women pensioners are the worst off partly because inequality during their working life is reflected in the lower pension. In the U.S.A., eight million women who are over the age of 65 make up by far one of the poorest groups in America with almost half of them living below the poverty line.⁵¹

Social security and tax system in advanced countries take the family as the basic unit of assessment on the assumption that money coming into the family is shared equally. In this connection, Jane Lewis (1980) rightly observes that in regard to the division of resources within the family studies have shown that wives often do not know how much their husbands earn and that money controlled by the wife fails to keep up with inflation or increases in family size.⁵²

A number of studies reveal that a large percentage of adult women living below the poverty line, both in rural and

50. Hema Goonatilake, Op.cit.

51. Kapoor, 1985, "Female Poverty Data Constraints and Issues", in Poverty in India : Data Base Issues, (Ed.), G.K.Kadekodi and G.V.S.N Murty, Vikash Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992, p.215.

52. Jane Lewis, 1980, (qu.) in Poverty in India : Data Base Issues (Ed.) G.K.Kadekodi and G.V.S.V. Murty, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992, p.216.

urban areas are in worse conditions than the male counterparts across the world. It was also found that the incidence of FHHS is growing particularly in developing countries. Therefore, the issue of poverty among women assumes great significance. Female headed households (FHHS)'s defined as a household where a female member is the chief provider/ protector and the contribution of all others are negligible or nil. While some studies conclude that female headed households are severely disadvantaged and poverty stricken, some others conclude that they are not disadvantaged than male headed poor households. Studies undertaken in India reveal that majority of the FHHS are either close to poverty line or below poverty line.⁵³⁵⁴⁵⁵

All poverty studies in India, whether they use per capita income or per capita calorific intake, go by the assumption that distribution of income or consumption within the family is equal or as per the required needs of the individual members in the household. But this is not so. In a society like

53. J. Massiah 1982, Youssef and Hetler 1982, "Female Headed Households and Employment in the Caribbean", papers presented at N.G.O Forum during U.N. Mid-decade Conference on Women, Copenhagen, 1982.

54. (a) S. Chatterjee : "Rise in Female Headed Families" in The Indian Women's Search for an Identity, Vikas Publishers, New Delhi, 1988.

(b) P. Visaria, "Indian Households with Female Head Incidence Characteristics and Level of Living", in workshop on Women and Poverty, 17-18 March, 1983.

(c) M. Buvinick, "Women Headed Households : The Ignored Factor in Development Planning", I.C.R.W., Washington D.C., 1978.

55. (a) G. Parathsarathy 1982, Visaria & Visaria 1983, "Rural Poverty and Female Headed Households, Need for Quantative Analysis", New Delhi, 1984.

(b) Ranjana Kumari, Women Headed Households in India, Radiant Publishers, Delhi, 1988.

India where even women in affluent families get lower than what men get (because of the custom of women taking food after men are served), in a poor family, women virtually starve for most of the days in a year. The spirit of self-sacrifice inculcated from childhood forces them to literally starve after feeding all the members in the family, with what little is available. This situation has been further aggravated by loss of employment opportunity for women in the informal sector with the advent of modernization. With increasing unemployment, these women have been pushed down in the economic ladder and their sufferings are more compared to those of men of their category.

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Another study brings to light the plight of poor women who do not enjoy any rights or privileges. They have the economic equality within the family as they cannot spend their own earnings. Since, most of the men at the lower rung of society are addicted to social evils like smoking, gambling and alcoholism, they not only do not contribute for family maintenance but even grab women's earnings. They accumulate debt and the women of the family are forced to pay back the loan.

57

The strategies and programmes for development due to the entrenched patriarchy of modern development overlook the right of women. Even in the poverty alleviation programmes, only

56. (a) K. Shanti, Women in Home Based Production, Madras University School of Economics, U.G.C., 1989.

(b) Youssef and Hetler, "Rural Households Headed by Woman : A Priority Concern for Development", I.L.O. Working Paper, 1984.

57. Devaki Jain, "The Household Trap - Report on a Field Survey of Female Activity Patterns", in Women in Poverty : Tyranny of the Household, (Ed.) by Jain Devaki and Nirmala Banerjee, Vikas Publishers, New Delhi, 1985.

the male population was considered significant. The contributions of women, who formed more than half of the total numbers, particularly poor women, were all but ignored as was the deeper impact of the development process on latter.

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A study on the South Asian region by Ponna Wignaraja reveals that there are three interrelated aspect to issues of gender and equity. The first aspect highlights the fact that a section of the population who are both women and poor face a double burden. Women, as it is both in the traditional and modern social structures, have always been the victim of the greatest exploitation. It is now well established that poor women have the least access to basic needs, such as food, health and education, both within the family and without. Their work remains primarily invisible permitting little social recognition. They are often the first ones to be thrown out of jobs, particularly when an employment squeeze occurs. The displacement is more acute if the labour force is restructured as a consequence of newer, more productive technologies. The only sectors of economy in which poor women remain a dominant section of the labour force are those which demand low skills and repetitive functions, and which generate low returns. As such, poor women function mainly in the informal sectors and have hitherto not been organized. Alongside exploitation in the economic sphere, women face an atmosphere of violence within and outside the family. Wife beating, rape, bride

58. Sukhamoy Chakravorty, Development Planning : The Indian Experience, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987.

59. Ponna Wignaraja, Women, Poverty and Resources, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1989, p.9.

burning - which are all too familiar forms of social oppression, demonstrate the hazardous and insecure lives of women in most Third World Societies. For poor women, who are at the bottom of every hierarchy, these oppressions are further magnified as they 60 toil under the double burden of gender and economic deprivation.

The second aspect relates to the important role poor women play in development and to the various factors which have prevented them from benefiting from the kind of economic and growth-oriented development processes that have hitherto been dominant. From the time of the Fifth Five Year Plan in India, it became very clear that Indian planning had not given sufficient 61 attention to the problems of poverty. What is true for India is also true for other countries in the sub-continent. Even in Pakistan, most of the development programmes had not benefited the most needy, of whom poor women constitute a significant 62 section.

The present agricultural sector is the lynchpin of the economies of South Asia. In this sector, poor women play an important part, both in rural and urban areas. Despite agriculture's significant contribution to development, the benefits of progress have not spread in an equitable manner. There happens to be a severe problems of absolute poverty in this sector and poverty perpetuate itself. The proportion of the

60. Gowrieh Ponniah, "Ideology and Status of Women in Society" in P. Wignaraja and A. Hussain (eds.), The Challenge in South Asia : Development and Democracy and Regional Cooperation, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1989.

61. Sukamoy Chakravarty, Op.cit.

62. Shoib Sultan Khan, Rural Development in Pakistan, Vikas Publishers, New Delhi, 1980.

population in absolute poverty in Bangladesh was 64 per cent, India 46 per cent, and Pakistan 43 per cent. Their poor were among the poorest of the developing countries and women formed a large chunk of the poor.

More recent studies show, in all countries the problems of poverty and malnutrition are increasing with poor women being affected the most. Levels of primary education and primary health care in India and Pakistan is one of the lowest, despite a high economic growth rate.

There are certain indications that poverty among urban women would increase significantly by the year 2000. The causes of the paradox of rising poverty among women together with increasing agricultural output per head, and growth in gross domestic product, are complex encompassing both the general reasons behind poverty and number of factors peculiar to gender.

It is clear from many studies that more than a decade of rapid growth in underdeveloped countries has been of little or no benefit to perhaps a third of their population. Although the average per capita income of the Third World has increased by

63. P. Wignaraja and Akmal Hussain (ed.), The Challenge in South Asia : Development, Democracy and Regional Cooperation, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1989.

64. M.S. Ahluwalia, N.G. Carter and H.B. Chenery, "Growth and Poverty in Developing Countries", Journal of Development Economics, Vol.6, No.3, 1979.

65. A.R. Khan and E. Leel (eds.) Poverty in Rural Asia, I.L.O. (ARTEP), Bangkok, 1985.

66. Buvnick and Lycette, 1982, (qu) in Ponna Wignaraja, Women, Poverty and Resources; A.K.Sen, Poverty and Famines : An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1981, p.3.

50 per cent since 1960, this growth has been very unequally distributed among countries, regions within countries and socio-economic groups.
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The third aspect focuses on the continued adverse effects on poor women of the conventional reformist solutions implemented through the delivery of inputs, particularly credit which do not address the gender conflicts and are inadequate to tackle the double burden poor women faced. A number of studies have confirmed the failure of the fragmented, 'targeted' credit programmes for poor women such as delivery of inputs approaches to achieve the desired results of development. As in the case of India - IRDP and National Rural Employment Programme, RLEGP started after Sixth Plan; their records show that there is a gap between 'targeted' and 'delivered' credit programmes in reaching the poor women. As a result they never get the credit facilities.
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A recent study by the Asian Development Bank in six countries, (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand) confirmed that despite the

67. (a) "What Now ? Another Development", in Development Dialogue, Dag Hammar Skjold Foundation, No.1/2, 1975, p.5.

(b) Mhee, "The Mobilisation of Informal Sector Savings : The USAID Experience", Paper presented at International Workshop on Mobilisation of Informal Sector Savings, December 8-12, Society for Development Studies, New Delhi 1986.

68. A Chenry, et al, Redistribution with Growth, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1972, pp.XIII.

69. Keith Griffin, Robert Chambers (1983), Bernard Le Comble (1986) in The New Economics of Growth : A Strategy for India and the Developing World, Cornell University Press, Itahaca, 1986.

70. G.V.S. De Silva, Wahidul Haque, Niranjana Mehta Anisur Rahman (ed.), Towards a Theory of Rural Development, Progressive Publishers, Lahore, 1988.

existence of several targeted programmes, poor women continued to rely on informal credit markets (usury) for their economic and social needs, because of easy access, flexibility of rescheduling. In the formal credit systems, poor women face many constraints like certification of identity, husband's co-signature for loan and above all the bias of formal system against poor women. A woman cannot become a member if the male member is already a shareholder in a concern!⁷¹

Thus, the reliance on informal credit market who charged on exorbitant rate of interest, further increased their dependence and permitted continuation of their exploitation in various forms.⁷²

The crisis of development lies in the poverty of the mass in the Third World, as well as that of others, whose needs, even the most basic - food, habitat, health, education - are not met, it lies, in a large part of the world, in the alienation whether in in misery or affluence, of the masses, deprived of the means to understand and master their social and political environment.

2.4. STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.4.1 Status of women during the Vedic period :

The status and position of women in India have undergone changes in different historical times. An attempt is

71. Sundeep Bagchee, "Poverty Alleviation Programme in Seventh Plan : An Appraisal", in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XIII, No.4, January 1987.

72. M. Lipton, Why Poor Stay Poor : A Study of Urban Bias in World Development, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1979.

made to present a few facts systematically. There were distinct stages of rise and fall in the status of women in India during various historical phases.

It is believed that the women during Vedic Age, enjoyed an almost equal status as that of men. They participated in all the fields of life like the men and took active part in every sphere of life. Woman was man's friend, his co-worker, enjoyed property rights and had access to the property of her father and husband; she had free say in the political as well as social issues. They went to Gurukula to receive education and married only after getting education. There was no seclusion of women and they moved about freely in the society. She had equal rights with men in matter of selecting the life-partner on her own.

The vedic family, which was supposed to be a undivided one, was headed by the father. He used to give name to the family based on gotra. In such a tradition bound society of the Aryans, birth of a male child might have been more welcome than the birth of a female child; but it did not mean however, that the Vedic
73
Aryans hated girls.

The institution of marriage was well established in the vedic age. The vedic literature does not show any indicator of promiscuous society. It was regarded as a social and religious duty. Marriage opened a new period of holy life which was to be
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led at the altar of truth and duty. Though marriage was regarded

73. Rigveda, 1, 97, 20; III, 123, p.85. Quoted in-Tripta Desai, Women in India Munshi Ram Monoharlal Publications, New Delhi, 1991, pp.12-13.

74. Rigveda, X. 55.24, quoted in Tripta Desai, op.cit.

as highly desirable for both men and women, yet the society did not insist that it should be performed at all costs. The vedic literature often refers to spinsters; use of word amub in Rigveda (one who grows old in one's parents house), denotes an old maid.⁷⁵

There was no tradition of child marriage prevailing in the vedic society. Marriages of girls took place at a fairly advanced age of 15 or 16 years. Though settlement of marriage was done by the eldest male member of the family, girls however, had effective voice in the selection of their spouses. Kshatriya society conceded the exclusive right of brides of selecting their own consent and this custom was known as swayamvara (self-choices).⁷⁶

Monogamy normally prevailed in the Vedic Age. According to Zimmer,⁷⁷ monogamy is the more civilized condition of society and thus indicates the high status of women in the Vedic period. The word Dampati indicates 'two joint owners of the household' and excludes a third person from the conjugal right. Though there are instances of a few polygamous marriages in the Vedic Age but they were looked upon with disfavour. Only the kings and rich were at times allowed a second wife. For the general people, if the first wife was found barren, then only it was permitted to

75. Dr. A.S. Altekar : The Position of Women in Hindu civilization (ed), Anmol Publication, New Delhi 1956, p.52

76. Atharvaveda, XIV. 1.43 and Rigveda, X85 : 27,47 quoted in Madhu Sashtri, Status of Hindu Women, Any printers, Jaipur 1990, p.10.

77. Zimmer, "Alten dischen Leben", 329, quoted by Shakuntala Rao Shastri, Women in Vedic Age, New Delhi, 1975, p.25.

have a second wife.

Available references in the vedic literature show that a widow was allowed to remarry if she so desired. The widow was taken charge of by the brother of the deceased, who could remarry her with the permission of elders. The burning of the widow did not appear at all.

Niyoga was more popular in the Vedic age than remarriage. At this period, a widow could get as many as three sons by 'Niyoga', so the 'Niyoga' relationship practically accounted to remarriage,. Widows having sons indirectly inherited the property of the husband as a guardian of minor sons. But since she was allowed to remarry, she was not recognized as an heir to husband's property.

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Women seemed to have equal rights with men during the Vedic age as far as religious rights and privileges were concerned. Most women received education and could recite Vedic hymns. Thus, unmarried girls used to offer sacrifices after their initiation ceremony i.e upanayana sanskara. After her marriage, the husband alone would not offer sacrifices; the presence of wife was absolutely necessary. Religious prayers and sacrifices were offered jointly by husband and wife. The period prior to marriage was utilized to impart education to them. The Atharva Veda observes that a girl can succeed in her married life only if she has been properly trained during student life. They could pursue their studies even after marriage.

78. Atharvaveda, XI.5.18, Op.cit.

Attainment of women in intellectual field is to be inferred from the fact that some of the hymns are attributed to female Rishinis. In the vedic era, women had sufficient freedom of going to attend fairs, festivals and assemblies. Women were free to attend samana which means a popular festival or social gathering in which men and women could take part. Women and young girls could freely meet and talk to one another. Men women could also go for pleasure trips. There is no mention of purdah in the
79
vedic literature.

The proprietary right of women according to vedic laws could be classified into the following heads :

- a) Woman's right to property vis-a-vis her husband
- b) Woman and her stridhan
- c) Woman and rights of inheritance.

a) Woman's Right to property vis-a-vis her husband :

In the Vedic age the principle accepted was that the husband and wife should be the joint owners of the household and its property. The husband was required to take a vow at the time of marriage that the rights and interests of his wife in economic
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matters shall not be transgressed.

b) Woman and her Stridhan :

Stridhan is a property on which wife has an absolute and exclusive right of ownership. In its origin, stridhan was vitally connected with the custom of 'bride price'. Even when no

79. Vedische Studies, 2.314. (Pischel), quoted in Tripta Desai, Op.cit.

80. Brahdaranyaka Upanishad, quoted by Indira, M.A. Status of Women in Ancient India, Delhi, p.75.

bride price was paid, the bride used to receive some wedding gifts in the vedic age. The Vedic literature is silent as to whether the wife could dispose of her property without her husband's permission.⁸¹

c) Women and Right of Inheritance :

There is no authentic text in the vedas which lays down any rule conformable to the succession of women in general. There is no principle of female exclusion in the vedic literature either.

Among women, a brotherless daughter became first to get her right of inheritance. In the Vedic period, women were fairly well educated and very often they remained unmarried. In such cases they were allowed to have a share in the father's property.

Widows in the vedic age could claim maintenance as joint family of the patriarchal type was the order of the day. They used to get husband's share of property indirectly as custodians of minor sons.⁸²

The high veneration accorded to women in the Vedic era owed partly to the Aryans understanding of the main role played by women in domestication of plants and animals, especially the latter, since they were herders and domestic animals was the main sources of individual prosperity. Women also played a vital role in all other spheres of economic activities of the contemporary society. Women of the elites assumed vocations. A teaching career proved enticing to the intellect of many a woman, well educated

81. Rigveda X. 85.22.47, quoted in A.S.Allekar, Op.cit.

82. Mitten Nath Dwarika, The Position of Women in Hindu Law, 1913, reprint 1984 pp.12-449.

as she was. A separate word for a female teacher, acharya, distinguishes her from the wife of male teacher. These teachers specialized in abstract subjects, such as theology and philosophy.

Music was yet another vocation which women could adopt. Fine arts, such as singing and dancing, and other aesthetic activities inside home and outside was the accepted
83
norm. The role women played in public administration still remains a matter of controversy among historians. The cases of queens ruling independently by their own right, number so few as to be inconsequential.

In the Vedic age, democratic assemblies must have existed as the marriage hymn explicitly states the desire that the bride be able to speak with composure in public assemblies. So women were allowed to participate in the public gatherings and
84
address them.

2.4.2 Status of women in post-Vedic period :

In the post-vedic age, the status of women began to decline, probably dating to the Christian era, the Manusmriti offers glimpses into the severe restrictions on women's
85
activities and status.

The first post-vedic literature was the 'Sutras'. A Sutra means an aphorism, the most important Sutra works are Vedangas-Siksha, Chhanda, Nirukta, Jyotisha and Kalpa. The

83. Tripta Desai, Op.cit., p.11.

84. Shakuntra Rao Shashtri, Op.cit.

85. Manusmriti IX, p.1, quoted in Tripta Desai, Op.cit.

kalpasutras give valuable information of the contemporary family life. They are divisible in two categories : the Sarita- Sutras and Grihya-sutras. Then, Dharam-sutras were concerned with the individual as a member of the society and state . Most of the sutras were composed after the advent of the Buddha i.e. Fifth century B.C.

Another major source of information regarding the conditions of women in the Post-Vedic age is the smriti literature. They extended over a period of 800 years. The most important ones are the Manava, Dharamasastra or Manusmriti which is also the oldest composed between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D.

The rise of Buddhism was to a great extent responsible for the creation on a new social and religious consciousness, which challenged the old notions of social organization. Therefore, for the study of status of women in the post-vedic age Buddhist and Jain canonical texts (fifth century A.D) give valuable information.

All these sources reveal that in the Post-Vedic age woman started to lose the status in the society which she enjoyed during the vedic age. She lost all her freedom. According to Manu, the Hindu Law giver," a woman must be kept in subordination day and night by the male members of the family without considering their age". She became a subject of protection from that time onwards. A woman has to be protected by her father in

86. G.M.Pande, 'The Antiquity of Grihyasutras', Visvashvaranand Indological Journal, I., No.3. p.p. 287-90.

87. Manusmriti, IX,3.

childhood, by her husband in young age and by sons in the old age. Moreover, he opined that women are caged birds in the household and unworthy of sharing serious responsibilities of men.⁸⁸

Available evidences suggest that in India, birth of a daughter was not as welcome as a son because a son was considered a greater asset to the family. Sons could fight wars which girls could not. Then after marriage, in contrast to the daughter, a son did not leave his parents but stayed with them and looked after them. Though sons were preferred, yet Manu regards daughter as an object of the highest tenderness. She is to be brought up with as much affection and care as is bestowed upon the male child, rather greater kindness is to be shown to her as she is physically more tender and vulnerable.⁸⁹

Marriage became obligatory for females. Several factors were responsible for this development. During the peak of Buddhism and Jainism many girls joined monasteries but were not able to live upto exacting ideals of asceticism. Social leaders therefore, began to enforce marriage upon girls. They now no longer had the freedom to choose their own life partners. Love marriage were looked down upon.⁹⁰

Moreover, in Manusmritii, Manu did not contemplate equality between men and women for running a race with each other in different walks of life. His ideal was that of oneness of the two and not of equality and competition.

88. Manusmriti, IX, 32-34.

89. Manusmriti, III, pp.55-59.

90. Tripta Desai, Op.cit.

He believed that there is a vital structural difference between men and women. Each one is suited for different types of work. Man is intended by nature to do all the rough and hard work for earning bread while woman is designed for household affairs and duties.

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During this period patriarchs reduced marriageable age to 12 years which subsequently led to the custom of child marriages which was a blow to woman's education. Even in the Epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata stories underscore the point that marriage was indispensable for girls. Society began to draw a distinction between a fallible man and a woman-astray. The former deserved pardon, the latter condemnation. To prevent any sinful commission by a girl, religious writers around the beginning of Christian Era began to advocate prepuberty marriages. Absolute chastity was demanded of a girl. Only at the peril of potential disgrace would parents permit daughters to remain unmarried after this period. So the tradition of child marriage started which was more prevalent among Brahmins and Kshatriyas or the warrior class, leaving many child widows.

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The Jain texts do not tell us definitely about the age of marriage. According to Dharamasutras also the girls should not remain at their father's house after 12 or 13 years of age. Even Manu opined that the maximum age for the marriage of girls was twelve and that girls should not be encouraged to choose their own life partners.

91. Manusmriti, IV, p.184.

92. Tripta Desai, , Women in India : A brief Historical Survey, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 1992.

It became gradually difficult to obtain a divorce in the Post-Vedic Age. Dharamsutra writers of 400 B.C. to AD 100 described various situations in which a woman could obtain a divorce, e.g. a brahmin woman had to wait five years for her husband who had left on a long journey before remarrying. In his ⁹³ Arthashastra 400 B.C., Kautilaya makes reference to divorce rules. He suggests that 'if a husband and wife hate each other, divorce is to be granted'. Manusmriti - which served as the basic code in the last century B.C. also recommended that a wife could abandon a husband who is insane or seriously ill. Till the Christian era, divorces and remarriages did take place and the woman had the right to leave their husbands to carry on their lives on a new manner. As she was illiterate and immature at the time of marriage, she had to stay in the house. The prevailing practice of child marriages doomed women.

Settlement of marriages was done by the eldest male member of the family in the post-vedic age. Girls had no say in the matter. Buddhist sources of this period do not inform as much of the qualities sought for in a bride or bridegroom and of the mode of solution. They only inform us that the brides were selected, either by the tutors or by the parents, and that beauty and intelligence were taken into consideration. The sutra literature informs us that the party of the bridegroom looked for a girl who possessed intelligence, beauty, good character, auspicious characteristics, and was free from diseases. Any girl

93. Kautilya, Arthasashtra, 400 B.C., p.20.

who was physically deformed like a haunch-back or so was not selected.

Marriage referred to in the Brahmanical sources are of eight forms, viz, Brahmya, Daiva, Aisha, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasa and Paisacha. From the Buddhist sources Rakshasa marriages were common i.e. the victor carries away the girl and marries her. This reveals the low status of women at that time, as women were considered as prizes. According to Dharamsastras, Bramhya and Prajapatya marriages were the most popular. Marriages which took place on account of love were few. The Buddhist sources tell us that marriages were settled mostly by parents, and auspicious days were fixed for the marriage ceremony.

The forms of marriage mentioned in Jain works may be classified into three types marriages arranged by parents of both the parties, swayamvara and Gandharva marriages. Generally, marriage within one's own caste was the rule.

The Dharmasastras do not allow the sale of a bride, but this practice assumed a distinguished form under the name of Aisha marriage, in which the bride's father received a bull and a cow at a the time of daughter's marriage. The practice of buying a wife was encouraged by old persons who contracted a second marriage, and also by poor parents of the girls, who would lose their services after they were given to other families.

The various sources reveal that around the beginning of

94. Altekar, Op.cit.

Christian era, polygamy became the rule. The first wife had to suffer humiliation at the hands of the husband and yet they were denied the option of divorce, even though the husband could be a physical and moral wreck. Even in the Buddhist sources, there was frequent reference to polygamous marriages. Paraskara-Grihyasutra states that a Brahmana should have three wives, a Kshatriya two, and a Vaisya one, besides one Sudra wife to all. Common people could take second wives only if the first wife was barren. A few religious scriptures go as far as to stipulate that the first wife must urge the husband to take a second wife if she is
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barren.

The encouragement of the religious scriptures along with the lowering of marriage age for girls, proved disastrous for women's status. Evidence of widow-marriage during the period under review is conflicting. There are cases of permission as well as prohibition. The Dharmasastra literature shows that both Niyoga and widow-marriage were practiced only in some sections of the society. Only few among the higher sections of society allowed widow remarriage, whereas in the lower classes cases of widow remarriage were more frequent. Women and children even after the death of husband was regarded as the property of the husband's family. Between 300 B.C. to AD 100, there was an
96
increase in the general prejudice against widow remarriages.

The sutra writers were not so much in favour of Niyoga.

95. Dharmasashtra, XXVII, quoted in Tripta Desai, Women in India,
96. History of Dharmasashtras, Vol.III.

They placed son from Niyoga next to Asuras. In the opinion of Kautilya, an issueless widow can remarry after about an year of the husband's death. The Dharmasashtra writers agreed that if remarriage of widows has to take place, it should be confined to a member of the family of her deceased husband.⁹⁷

Manu clearly opposed the marriage of widows. He says, "nowhere is a second husband declared for virtuous woman, in the procedure of marriage there is no declaration about the marriage the widow and a maiden can be given only once". These statements clearly show that he does not permit the widow to remarry on any account. He says "Till her death she should be forbearing, observe vows, should be celibate and should hanker after that most excellent duty which is prescribed for wives who have one husband only". His disapproval of the marriage of a widows is further evident from the fact that he places the son born of a remarried widow very low in the list of sons. "He treats him as a mere kinsman to his father and not as an heir".⁹⁸

Thus, from time of the smriti writers the society began to look down upon the remarriage of widows. But even at that time, the condition of widows not so miserable as it became later on. Except that they had to lead chaste life, no restrictions were imposed upon them. They were not looked down as inauspicious and were not debarred from taking part in ceremonial festivities. It was only much later that the deplorable custom of sati

97. Gautama Dharamasastra, XXVIII, p.20 quoted in Madhu Sashtri, Op.cit.

98. Manusmriti, II, pp.223-226.

appeared. Thus widows were debarred the right to remarry in the Post-Vedic age, whereas the widowers could remarry soon after the death of the first wife.

Women no longer were free to pursue their education. By this time child marriages had become a rule. They were preordained for procreation. They had no other function. They were excluded from education because their marriage could not be put off. Baudhayan and Manu both were of the opinion that women do not need any education. Manu clearly says that marriage of girls forms their initiation into the study of Vedas. Thereafter, marriage of a woman came to be regarded as equivalent of Upanayana (initiation into studenthood) and the husband was considered her guru (teacher) who could mete out physical punishment to a wife for a violation as a teacher could punish his student in Gurukala. This shows the prejudice and male bias towards women. Buddhism also admitted women into religious order. This practice gave impetus to the cause of female education. Jainism also followed the practice of educating girls. The cause of women's education began to suffer from the beginning of Christian Era. Even in Buddhism, the practice of educating girls declined. During the first millennium of Christian Era, only a few female scholars were found.

During this time, unlike the vedic age women were not treated at par with men. Even in Buddhist and Jain literature, though initially women were admitted into religious order, and

99. Manusmriti V, pp.158-160.

100. Manusmriti II, p.66-67.

many of them followed lives of celibacy but later on, female acceptance and religious initiation declined. Nunneries went out of existence by the fourth century A.D. Manusmriti which served as the basic Hindu social code, propounded that the woman was not eligible for the study of Vedas, nor for the use of mantras in performing sacraments except marriage. The nuptial ceremony is to be the only vedic sacrament for women. Thus women were no longer allowed to partake in the religious sacrificial ceremonies which during the Vedic age they could perform, even in the absence of the husband.

In the vedic time, brides enjoyed affectionate and respectable treatment in their in-law's house, and they were expected to take over the reins of the household in the new home because they were mature and educated. Wife and husband were referred to as dampati or joint owners of the house. This attitude was very much responsible for the high status of the wife during that time. Though the Vedic society was basically a patriarchal society and supreme command rested in the husband, yet the man was expected to treat his wife with utmost courtesy and regard. She was the ornament of the house. The husband did not have the power to coerce his wife physically. According to the Vedic passages, 'a man is incomplete and cannot ascend to heaven without his wife'. The two epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata also reinforced the same viewpoint. These conditions accorded a

101. Mitter Nath Dwarika, Op.cit., p.300.

102. Manusmriti V, p.168.

103. Tripta Desai, Op.cit.

very high status to women in the family and continued till around 300 B.C. Manu regarded that for women, there can be no freedom at any stage in life. Woman was supposed to be under the control of man in all circumstances. "She is required to serve, obey and honour her husband. Though destitute of virtues or seeking pleasure elsewhere, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife".¹⁰⁴

2.4.3 Women and proprietary rights :

The perusal of Dharmashastras and other post-vedic literatures show that woman hardly possessed a status of legal a person and therefore, was almost incapable of possessing any property. She was treated to be a perpetual minor having no proprietary rights of her own. Baudhyana and Apastamba do not mention any female in connection with inheritance. In spite of anti-women laws, we do find mention of some female heirs.

1) Daughter as heir : From the code of Manu it appears that unmarried daughter was entitled to one-fourth of the share patrimony received by brothers. The separate property of a mother known as stridhan, should be given to unmarried daughters. For a man dying without a son, wife is the pronounced successor to the wealth of the husband and in her default the unmarried daughters.¹⁰⁵ Other writers also supported this view. In ancient India, a peculiar class was also known as appointed daughters. A hindu male who had no son might make his daughter an appointed daughter i.e., the male child born of her would perform his

104. Manusmriti, V, 151 to 168.

105. Manusmriti, IX, pp.118-131.

funeral rites. Vasistha also opined that his grandson would inherit all the property.

Jimutavahana also recognizes the right of daughter to inherit property. Dekshita, also maintains that a daughter who is the mother of male issues, or who is likely to become so, is competent to inherit, not one who is a widow or is barren.

In the event of death of husband, property will go to the eldest son. If the son dies unmarried, his property then will go to his mother. During the lifetime of husband, wife is not entitled to any share in the property. Katyayana says that the widow should succeed to her husband's wealth provided that she be chaste and defaultless and in her absence let the daughters inherit, if unmarried.

Perusal of Dharamsastras reveal that in the lifetime of the husband, wives were not entitled to any property. Woman as a widow had plenty of rights on her husbands property. Kautilya strongly supports widow's rights of inheritance by expressing his own view - "widow who was loyal and faithful to the bed of her husband, may under the protection of her teacher enjoy his property as long as she lives".

It is clear from the text of Dayabhaga that widow takes a limited estate under it. But she could not gift, mortgage or sell property at her pleasure. Her power of disposition was

106. Dayabhaga, XI, 4 and 5.

107. Dayabhaga XI, Ibid, 1-8.

108. Quoted in A.S. Alleka, Op.cit.

109. History of Dharmasastras, Vol.III, p.771.

110. Quoted by Prof. Indra, The Status of Women in Ancient India (2nd ed. 1955), p.169.

limited by the other male members of husband's family. Further, it has been cautioned that she should not waste the property of her husband.¹¹¹

Thus the legal position as well as status of women as daughters, wives, widows and mothers was by no means, one of complete disability, but one dictated by a few restrictive laws. It was by no means as good as in the Vedic age.

In the post-Vedic Age, the tradition of child marriages greatly limited women's access to education and subsequently, that of employment. Women were no longer free to pursue careers as teachers. Girls had little time to learn music because of the family responsibilities and the rules of decorum imposed upon them. Music which during the Vedic Age was one of main vocations became the exclusive province of courtesans who were held in low esteem.

Even Buddhist and Jain literature shows evidence that women were restricted from entering nunneries and becoming priestesses. Manusmriti states "procreation of children, nurturing of those and routine work of the household are the main duties of a woman"¹¹². It led to a change in the society's attitude which began to regard that women should devote their lives to their homelife only. Dharamsastras reveal that Hindu marriage aimed to ensure the full growth and development of husband and wife and to preserve family and society by the

111. Dayabhaga, Chapter XI, pp. 44-56.

112. Manusmriti V, pp.157-168.

procreation of children and their proper upbringing. Motherhood, therefore, represented the cherished goal of a Hindu woman. The birth of a son heightened her status in family and the society.

Women and Public administration :

In this age, because women's education declined following generations of child marriages (beginning around 300 B.C.) women's participation in the public spheres and politics died down. Manu opines that women are in-competent for administration as her mental faculties are inferior to that of man. He regards woman as more emotional and less rational by nature than man. She lacks the ability of true appreciation and balance of mind and does not possess much depth of reason". That is why they can not be good heads of states. He had also prohibited the King from consulting the women for secret messages because she would betray secrets.

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Thus, we see a sea change in the status of women from the Vedic to post-Vedic age. Women were held in high esteem by men in the Vedic age and had equal access to education, property and employment. A husband could not become a spiritual whole or ascend to heaven unless his wife accompanied him in the performance of sacrifices, no god would accept oblations offered singly by a man. Women were educated and wise.

In the period of the Brahmanas and Upanishads about 1500 B.C. to 500 B.C. the Volume of Vedic studies became extensive and the theory became popular that if one committed any

113. Guatama Dharamsashtra, XXVIII, pp.21-22.

114. Manusmriti, IX, 18.

error in the recitation of the Vedic hymns, one would produce disastrous consequences. Society then began to insist that only those who could devote twelve to sixteen years to Vedic studies could undertake the project. Girls could at the most devote eight years until they got married at the age of sixteen, and hence lost the opportunity to chant the hymns.

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The post vedic period is marked by the transition from a loosely emerging private property structure in the society to that of a codified system of private properties and property rights culminating with the Kautilyan codification. The transition is also marked by the emergence of empires compared to the largely communal organization of the state, earlier. The empires needed larger resources based on a taxation system which was possible and effective under private property system. Larger labor investments by private proprietor on land led to higher productivity, thus higher taxes, compared to the earlier system. But higher investment either physical or financial entailed private property rights.

In this changed economic matrix of things, women represented both labour and producers of labour, thus, the change of attitude from 'women as active participants to women as assets' and therefore, to be owned by husbands or for that matter to be gifted by the father to the son-in-law. This materialistic interpretation of status of women in post-Vedic transition is often missed out by authors engrossed in the textual niceties of post-Vedic elaborations.

115. Shelth, Smriti, Religions and society in the Brahma Purana, Sterling Publishers, Delhi 1919, p.91.

2.4.4 Status of women during the medieval period :

From post-Roman Empire in Europe and post-Gupta period in India to about the end of the Fourteenth century can be termed as the Dark Age, specially so far women, world over, are concerned. Invigoration of feudalism far and near, religious codification of normal social interactions proved detrimental to the position of women in general. In India, Islamic influence and the Shariat after post-12th century also influenced the Hindu society, as a process of imitation of the ruling class (by and large, the neo-Islamite Turks and Pathans). But, even under more liberalized and benevolent emperors like Akbar, there was little change, largely because of a one thousand year fraud perpetrated on women in banning them access to education and outdoor roles. The point is, though Islamic influence did worsen the situation, the grip of feudalism and the Varnashrama system within the social dynamics of Hinduism had itself closed all doors on women.

WOMEN AND MARRIAGE :

Since, the system of large gifts of property and movables has become the norm ('dowry system'), the society, cutting across religious divide winked at parents committing infanticide to prevent a life to penury. Marriage had become obligatory for girls and unmarried women were looked down upon. The popularity of early marriages increased during the medieval period. The girls were married off by the age of eight or nine years. They could not receive any education, thus, they were in no position to exercise any decision making in family affairs.

Divorce was not permitted, though polygamy was practised by many Hindu men. Since, women had little property rights, desertion could lead to economic insecurity and social castigation, especially among the high caste Hindus. A married women had no place outside the four walls of her husbands house.

Women were totally secluded from the male members of the society and could not even express any wish regarding their marriage. They were mostly settled by the parents. Love marriages were totally unknown. Many young women were married off to men twice their ages.

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

During the post-Vedic age the cause of women's education had begun to suffer. The further lowering of marriageable age for girls dealt a serious blow to women's education. By 1000 AD only a few female scholars and poetesses were renowned. Probably they belonged to the rich and cultured families who could make special arrangements for their education even after their marriage. In ruling families, girls received both military and administrative training. This practice was common among the Rajputs and among the Maratha clans.

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During the Medieval period, Hindu society developed a prejudice against women's education. Patriarchs fueled the fire of the belief that a girl who could read or write would become the cause of her husband's untimely death, thus rendered a widow.

116. Tripta Desai, Op.cit.

117. Madhu Sashtri, Status of Hindu Women, Any Printers, Jaipur, 1990, p.20.

STATUS OF WIDOWS :

Not only marriage of widows was prohibited, but as a culmination of the feudal order, consigning the widow to the funeral pyre of the deceased was glorified thus leading to the obnoxious practice of Sati. In the Atharvaveda, a funeral ritual is described when a widow ascends the funeral pyre of her husband. She alights and prayer is offered that she may lead a life of children and wealth. One may thus, infer that a widow was expected to remarry rather than to immolate herself.¹¹⁸

In the Brahmana and Upanishad literature (1500 B.C. to 500 B.C.) no reference to sati exists. Even in the period 500 B.C. to 300 B.C. when Grihyasutras were composed, the custom of sati did not appear, rather the widow's relations brought her back to the house with the hope that she will lead a prosperous life.¹¹⁹

During the medieval period (especially AD 700 to AD 1100), Sati became more frequent in Northern India, initially it was confined to Kshatriya families. Brahmin women were discouraged to immolate themselves. But around AD, 1000, Brahmin widows also began to perform Sati. By tenth century AD the custom spread to South India as well. Rajasthan, in the western part of India, became the most notorious for high incidence of Sati. After AD 300, widows belonging to weavers, barbers, and masons also began to commit Sati, not so much by voluntary desire or

118. Atharvaveda XI, p.18.

119. G.M.Pande, Op.cit.

grief but often forced by the family, caste & clan to the violent and repugnant system supposedly sanctioned by religion. In Karnataka, many inscriptions dating AD 1500 to AD 1800 testify to the gory events called sati.

WOMEN AND PUBLIC LIFE :

During this period the purdah system became a mandatory custom for women which was a blow to the already low status of women. Largely imitating the Islamic tradition of purdah many Hindu elites adopted purdah system, which in course of time even reached lower wrong of the society.¹²⁰

Thus, the status of women touched an all time low with no freedom, no education and no vocation other than looking after the household duties. Their public life was non-existent. They had no say in the family matters, leave aside public administration. They were ill treated and subjugated totally and had no identity of their own.

2.4.5 The Position of Women during the British Rule:

Indians when came in contact with the British (and other Europeans) in the later half of the eighteenth century, the position of Indian women had reached the nadir. Ideologically women were considered completely inferior species, inferior to male having no significance, no personality. Socially she was kept in a state of utter subjugation, denied any right, suppressed and she was further branded as basically lacking in ethical integrity.

The Britishers at first followed a policy of non-

120. G.M.Pande, Op.cit.

interference in the social and religious life of the people of India. The patriarchal joint family, the customs of polygamy and its concomitant the purdah the property structure, early marriage, self-immolation of widows or a state of permanent widowhood, all contributed to the smothering of the free development of woman.

It can easily be stated that the Indian woman was treated as an appendage of man with a distinct and meekly accepted conception of her family duties and obligations. She had not even the haziest awareness of her rights in the early years of British rule in India.

A galaxy of social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy who led Brahma Samaj, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, became the harbingers of the endeavor for improvement in the status of women. The British rulers enunciated these new principles theoretically and adopted a dual standard in India, the conquered territory. They brought changes in Indian society only to the extent that suited to their own needs as they came as traders; they were interested in profits not the welfare of people. The social reformers were influenced by the liberal ideology adopted by Western people after the French Revolution in the eighteenth century which introduced the concept of human freedom. Women were influenced by these demands and Mary Wollstorcraft of England was the first woman who raised her voice against the unequal and unjust treatment given to women. These developments influenced the Indian elite, particularly those who took to Western

education and they began to emphasize the need for education of Indian women.

SATI CUSTOM AND WIDOW REMARRIAGE :

Raja Ram Mohan Roy raised voice against the abominable practice of Sati and because some of the degenerate practices were foreign to the European view, they supported the indigenous reformers. In 1829, William Bentinck issued regulation against Sati custom. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar raised voice against the prohibition of widow remarriage and the British government responded with the passage of the Widow Remarriage Act in 1850, though social disapproval of widow remarriages still acts as a powerful deterrent.

ABOLITION OF CHILD MARRIAGES :

Hindu reformers agitated for raising the age of marriage of girls. In 1861 the age of consent was raised to ten years; subsequently in 1881, it was raised to twelve years. So the attempt to abolish child marriages was made. The Sarda Act of 1929 raised the age at marriage of girls, further to fifteen years.

WOMEN AND EDUCATION :

In order to improve the condition of women and carry out social reforms effectively, social reformers felt the need for providing education to girls. They were given encouragement by the opening of schools and colleges for women. The Christian

121. Raksha Saran, "Status of Women", Encyclopaedia of Social work in India, Vishal Printers, New Delhi, 1966.

122. Hermasath Charles, Indian Nationalism and Social Reform, Princeton University Press, 1961.

missionaries in Bombay started the first school for girls in 1824. With the cooperation of Bethuen, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar started a school for girls in Calcutta 1849 which later became Bethuen College. He also started several primary schools for girls in villages of Bengal.

Thanks to the efforts of social reformers like Dayanand Saraswati and Rañade, women's education gained ground from idea when the first school was opened in Bombay. Before this, in Bombay, no girls were reported to be attending the public indigenous schools(1824-29), but there is enough evidence to show that the girls in upper-class families received some education at home. However, within the first five years as many as 400 girls were enrolled in this school. The missionary efforts received support from the people. The 'Indian Society' was formed in 1851 to start girls' schools in Bombay Presidency. The famous Woods Dispatch of 1854 reported that there were 65 girls schools in Bombay Presidency with 3,500 pupils, 256 girls schools in Madras presidency, attended by over 8,000 girls and 288 girls'schools in Bengal Presidency attended by over 7,000 pupils. But in the rest of the country there were very few schools for girls.

Girls'education, increased in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. While in 1854, only about 25,000 girls had been enrolled in schools, the enrollment went beyond 1,27,000 in 1892. For the first time two women from Bethuen School graduated from the Calcutta University in 1883. By 1902 there were over

123. Hermasath Charles, Op.cit. 1964, p. 50.

124. Report of the National Committee on Women's Education, published by Ministry of Education, Delhi 1959, p.13

2,56,000 girls in the various institutions and as many as 169 in
the liberal art colleges and 87 in the professional colleges.¹²⁵
This was a major achievement for women. Outstanding work for
women's education was performed by Dhandokeshab Karve. He started
a school for girls in 1908, later in 1961 first ever university
for women's education was established by him in Bombay. Among the
first colleges for girls founded by the British were medical
colleges. Bombay was an early center for education of widows and
women generally as well as for social reforms.¹²⁶

Though social reformers advocated and worked for
women's education, the purpose of imparting education differed
from time to time and from one reformer to another. Vidyasagar
pleaded for women's education to raise the age of marriage.
Middle Class educated males wanted "educated" wives who would mix
with Europeans. Framji Bomanji, a Parsi leader wrote in 1883 "we
want the English language, English manners and English behaviour
for our wives and daughters, and until these are supplied, it is
but just that the present gulf between Englishman and the Indian
should remain as wide as ever". Dayanand Saraswati advocated
women's education, so that they could participate in religious
rituals.¹²⁷

D.K. Karve believed that "for a large number of women
it is necessary to have an education which would equip them for
the place they would be called upon to occupy - a place which was

125. Report of N.C.W.E., Op.Cit.

126. Hemasath Charles, op.cit.

127. Quoted by Madhu Kishwar, The Arya Samaj and the Women's
Reform Movement, 1978.

distract from the men". But whatever the reason, women were now not forbidden to acquire education which is a great force for improvement in the status of women apart from other legal reforms and rights of women.

WOMEN AND PROPRIETARY RIGHTS :

Raja Ram Mohan Roy strongly favoured the granting of the right to property to women as it had been advocated in the rules of Dayabhaga. In his pamphlet, Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Female, he pleaded for a change in the Hindu Law of Inheritance so as to improve the lot of the Hindu widows. Married Women's Property Act was passed in 1874.

WOMEN, POLITICAL AND LEGAL STATUS AND ROLES :

Women who had been denied the right to participate in any public function and who had been banned from all political meetings, woke up to their plight with the encouragement of social leaders and the impact of French Revolution and the encouragement of Mahatma Gandhi. Women of England who were fighting for their equality formed a Central Committee of Women's suffrage" in 1884 to demand a right to vote. From 1906 onwards woman suffrages became a center of public discussion. Their undaunted struggle led to the passing of the Representation of the People Bill, in 1917 by the House of Commons, giving "all women householders and the views of householders a right to vote". Annie Besant, Margaret Cousins who participated in suffrage movement at home, took a lead in India. They appeared

128. Chandravarkar G.L., Maharichi Kavya, Bombay Book Depot, 1958, p.174.

before Montague on December 17, 1917. They demanded women's franchise on the same basis as men's in the new constitution and more facilities for women's education and health care. The said delegation consisted of 18 Indian women and 4 European women with Sarojini Naidu as the leader of the delegation. Thus, Women's India Association was created in 1917 with Annie Besant as its first woman President with the aim of fighting for the cause of women.

In 1919, the women leaders from this first political body appeared before the franchise committee in London. The woman leaders presented a memorandum putting forward the argument that to revive Hinduism, women's suffrage is necessary. They stated sex as a barrier only came with western system and claimed that the opponents of women's suffrage object to the revival of the old Hind custom of recognizing women's place in public life. Sarojini Naidu asserted that the women's franchise would strengthen the Hindu-Muslim unity, because all women would form a single front.

The British Government, however, left the matter to the Indian legislature. The women leaders opened their campaign as soon as the British Government published 'The rules of elections to Provincial Legislative Councils in 1920'. Women from different provinces as well as almost all women's association joined the campaign. The Indian nationalist political ^{parties} passed the necessary

129. Tana Matson Everett, Women and Social Change in India, Heritage publishers, 1979, p.103.

130. Ibid, p.104.

131. Ibid, p.105.

resolution without much difficulty. Some Indian State Legislatures even enfranchised women - Rajkot in 1923 and Travancore-Cochin in 1924. In Bengal, the women's suffrage resolution was first defeated in 1922, but was finally passed in 1925. In subsequent years different Indian states allowed their women to vote; in 1926 Punjab and Assam; the Central Provinces in 1927, Bihar and Orissa in 1929 enfranchised women. However, ownership of property and income were the basis of franchise. Since most of the Indian women did not own any property, in practice the franchise did not help women. Only one lakh women were enrolled as voters.

After securing franchise, women leaders started a campaign for the removal of the ban on women entering legislatures. Women organized public meetings, met officials and presented their demand before the Reform Inquiry Committee in 1924. The committee received 9 out of 130 written representations from women.

Disqualification on the basis of sex for becoming a member of provincial assemblies was lifted in 1927 in Madras, Bombay, Punjab Central Provinces, United Provinces and Assam. Thus, women leaders won both the campaigns: the women's suffrage and the campaign for political representation. But they did not use the right to develop political consciousness among women. Tana Matson Everett observes there is no evidence, however, that and large scale efforts were made by women's organizations to

132. Neera Desai, Bhartiya Samajma Stritijivan, published by R.R. Sheth & Company, Bombay, 1963, p.20.

133. Tana Matson Everett, op.cit., pp. 108-109.

'reach those who were enfranchised'.

Sarojini Naidu in 1925 became the first Indian Woman President of the Women's India Association. The All India Women's Conference in 1927 was established. To participate in the freedom struggle women now actively began to participate in rallies and the political activities. The second phase of the women's campaign for political representation began with the appointment of Simmon commission in 1928. Women asked for an extension of women's franchise and increased representation of woman in the legislatures. Thus, after mid-nineteenth century some social reformers formed several women's organizations in major cities. Later, associations were started in small towns also. The fight for the rights of women then began in earnest. In the early decades of this century, educated women came forward to form women's organization. Some of the important organizations were 'Ladies Social and Literacy Club' (1902). 'The General Stree Mandal' (1903), the Women's Zawastrain Association (1903) etc. 'The Bharat Stree Mahamandal' was one of national level organizations founded by Sarla Devi Chaudhrani in 1910. The National Council for Women with the initiative of Margaret Cousins, the All India Women's Conference, later on also known as Akhil Hind Mahila Parishad, came into existence in 1927.

All these women leaders worked together for the betterment of the lives of women. The educational problems of women were taken up. Moreover, leading women's organizations

134. Sharda Mehta, Jivan Sambharna, Vadodra, 1938.

135. Neera Desai, op.cit.

asked for adult franchise for all women. They believed that franchise based on property or education would not benefit a large number of rural women. They emphasized that the right to vote was very important for raising the status of rural as well as urban women.

WOMEN AND PUBLIC LIFE :

Thus the third force for change in the status of women was the movement for national independence. Women left the seclusion of purdah in large numbers not to join a woman's movement per se but to participate in a struggle for independence from Colonial rule. The most potent agent in bringing women out of purdah and the house was the force of one man's personality and appeal, Mahatma Gandhi. He listed equality of women in his Nine-point Programmes. He opined, " I would love to find that my future army contained a vast preponderance of women over men. If the fight came, I should then approach it with much greater confidence than if men predominated. I would dread the latter's violence. Women would be my guarantee against such an outbreak".¹³⁶ Moreover pressured to act, the British Government passed the following measures :

- 1) The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1921
- 2) The Prevention of Prostitution Act of 1923
- 3) Hindu Inheritance Act of 1929¹³⁷

By participating in the national movement women gained

136. M.K.Gandhi, Women and Social Injustice, Ahmedabad, 1942, p. 170.

137. Ministry of Home Affairs, 'Index to proceeding', housed in the National Archives, New Delhi.

political experience and confidence which extended their spheres of action beyond the home. Women and national movement both benefited from active participation in the independence movement.

LEGAL REFORMS POSITION AFTER INDEPENDENCE :

Independence inaugurated a new chapter in the history of the struggle for improving the status of Indian woman. The Constitution proclaimed the equal status of woman with man in every respect. As India was declared a welfare state, and in pursuance of the principles laid down in the constitution, a series of legislative enactments were passed to improve the social status of women. In 1955, the Hindu Marriage Act was passed which abolished polygamy, included a provision for obtaining divorce by mutual consent and specified the marriage age for girls at fifteen. The Special Marriage Act of 1954 legalized secular and mixed marriages. The Hindu succession Act of 1956, provided for equal inheritance of sons and the widowed mother. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act of 1956 provides that even if a father appoints a guardian for minor children, any such appointment will not be effective during the lifetime of the mother.

The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Bill provided the right to the Hindu woman to adopt a child. Also a man could not adopt without the consent of his wife. It also provided separate maintenance for a woman under certain conditions where legal

138. Anil Chandra Banerjee, A Survey of the Indian Constitution, Mukerjee publications, Calcutta, 1957, pp. 20-25.

separation was not sought. Suppression of Immoral Traffic of Women and Girls Act came into law in 1956 which aimed towards egalitarianism. This was amended in 1986. Again the initiation of Five Year Plans further helped to transform the socio-economic status of women. Community Development Programmes aimed at improving women's education. The Govt. started Adult Literacy programmes and many female teachers were appointed. Women were encouraged to take part in public affairs. Gram Sevikas started working for women's welfare.

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The Dowry Prohibited Act was passed in 1961 which was later amended in 1984 and 1986. Termination of Pregnancy Act was passed in 1992. The Equal Remuneration Act was passed in 1976 to provide for payment of equal remuneration to men and women for some type of work. Moreover it was amended in 1987 to prevent discrimination against women at the time of recruitment.

The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1978 raised the age of marriage for girls from 15 to 18 years. The Factories Act, 1976 provided for establishment of creches against 1 for every 30 employed women. The Maternity Benefits Act, 1961 was amended in 1976 to cover women, who do not fall within the Purview of the Employees State Insurance Act. The criminal law amendment Bill was passed in 1983 which entailed stringent and effective measures to be taken to prevent crimes against women.

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The various Articles 1 to 15 aimed at providing equality to Indian women, to prevent discrimination against women

139. Tripta Desai, Op.cit., p.35.

140. H.C.Upadhyaya, Op.cit., pp.263-265.



to provide equal political rights and equal rights in inheritance
141
and other family matters.

It is true that the Indian Constitution guaranteed "equality of status and opportunity" as revealed by the articles 1 to 15. But the status of women still remains low because no comprehensive programmes of legislation was undertaken to translate the promise of equality into reality. The government realized that a fundamental change in social structure was very necessary to eliminate all the obstacles in the form and the extent of institutional complex as well as the prevailing
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ideology to the freedom for women.

The main areas of concern even today for the low socio-economic status of women in India are :

- 1) Improvement of women's rights and their status in the legalisation.
- 2) Development of women's education especially training in different professional courses.
- 3) Health care.
- 4) Economic Independence.
- 5) Legitimate rights in the family and community.
143
- 6) Care of victimized women.

A new society based on the new socio-economic relations and a new ideology is necessary to make women conscious of their subjection, for the growth of women's freedom in all spheres of

141. D.D. Basu, Commentary on the Constitution of India, 5th Edition, Calcutta, 1965, p.134.

142. Md. Mahari, Director of Consolidation, Allahabad Law Journal, 1969, p. 63.

143. Mullah, Principles of Hindu Law, Delhi, 1970, p.631.

life and for realization of their real role in society as the participants of the development process than just being beneficiaries.

2.5 WOMEN AND EDUCATION:

In any society, the educational system plays an important role in the training, development and allocation of its manpower resources. Ideally, it sorts people according to their interests, and ability, channels them into streams of training which develop their interests and potentials, encourages them to aspire to adult roles that are in keeping with their talents, and imparts such types and levels of information, knowledge and training to individuals as are necessary to enable them to fulfill the demands of their occupational roles on one hand and to meet the society's needs for trained man power resources, on the other hand.

In a developing country like India, the educational system becomes a powerful instrument of economic and social change for accelerating the process of transforming of living into those of a modern and industrial society.

Because the status of women depends upon economic power, the extent of women's access to education largely determines her position in the hierarchy of prestige. It also plays a significant role in changing the general societal attitude towards women. It helps remove inequality of sexes. So

144. Sorokia 1927, Parson 1959, Sewell and Shah 1967, quoted in Vimla Mehta, Attitudes of Educated Women Towards Social Issues, Vikas Publishers, Delhi, 1979.

145. Shan and Patel, cited in H.C. Upadhya, Op.cit., p.24.

crucial is education that it ranks as one of the Human Rights in the constitution of UNESCO.

Education is a major avenue of upward social mobility. Education is the key that opens the door to life which is essentially social in character. Stup makes a pertinent remark in this direction, "No one doubts that there is a close relationship between education, social stratification, and mobility. In studying social life, sociologists rely heavily on factors related to the stratification of society and education ranks the highest on the list of important stratification variables"¹⁴⁶. In this respect education is also important for women. Education for women should also be related to jobs in offices and factories and in this sense, rural women suffer because this would mean their migration to urban areas. It is also opined by a few researchers that education women lead to alienation from their homemaking role.¹⁴⁷ One study by Lewis reveals that the expanded educational opportunities available to girls have served to make them less satisfied with their traditional homemaking role. There is considerable evidence that many women, having been encouraged by our educational system to think like men, find homemaking to be a relatively unstimulating way of life. They want to share their intellectual interests. A job may meet these needs reasonably well. Therefore, present day girl's education must emphasise family education and cultural values which have been

116. Holger R. Stup, The Sociology of Education, Dorsey Press, Illinois, 1975, p.137.

147. B.N. Mukerjee, "A multidimensional Conceptualization of Status of Women", in Social Change, March-June, 1985.

handed down from one generation to another, for one of the chief aims of education is to maintain and transmit culture after having made our personal contribution to it. 148

In the history of women's education in India, those who have stood for women's emancipation since the nineteenth century have emphasized women's desperate need for learning. The Indian reformers of that century, however wanted to educate women to better them in their roles as wives and mothers but not to make them direct participants in the national development of the country. The British government also supported this limited viewpoint of women's education, as the Victorian model of the angelic and perfect female held sway.

The Independence of India in 1947 and the preparation of its constitution in 1950 built a different conceptual framework for women's education. Declared equal with men, women had to play equal and multiple roles in the political, social and economic life of the nation. This new attitude led the First Five-Year Plan (1951-1956) to emphasise that the general purposes of women's education should not differ from those of men. 149
Moreover, women's education must have an occupational content.

Mahatma Gandhi and many other leaders opined that it is the women of India who will progressively better the life of

148. Edwin c. Lewis, Developing Women's Potential, State University Press, IOWA, 1968, p.209.

149. Sudha R. Shenoy, Progress or Poverty : A Review of the Outcome of Central Planning in India 1951-1969, National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980.

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the country and this can be done through education. Dr. Radhakrishnan believed that women have a leading role to play in the educating our future citizens for a new society. In order that this may come to pass, equal opportunities must be provided for both girls and boys as far as education is concerned.

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Indeed, Pandit Nehru went so far as to say that "While it may be possible to neglect men's education, it is neither possible nor desirable to neglect women's education. The reason is obvious - if our women are educated, our men will be affected and above all our children will benefit, if they are not, the whole community will suffer."

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Thus the necessity, not only for equal opportunities of education for women and men, but also for preference being given to women. For, not only have they to be prepared to take their place in the social and economic life of the community, they must also on account of biological differences and the corresponding social obligation, be prepared to assume the role and responsibilities of motherhood. All education should be vocation oriented; girls are prepared in school to take up some vocation later.

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If we peruse the various studies which throw light on

150. Quoted in Indian Women, by Jain Devika (ed), Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcastings, Government of India, New Delhi, 1978.

151. Quoted in Barbara Ward's "Solutions to the Problems of Development : Not December but choice", in Convergence Vol.VI, No.3-4, 1978, p.5.

152. Barbara Ward, Op.cit., p.6.

153. Tripta Desai, Op.cit., p.60.

the position of women's education during the last 200 years i.e. from Vedic age to the present modern world, we find that after the Vedic age till Independence, girls were confined to four walls of the house with only a very limited access to education. It started to change slowly with the advent of the British education system but women are still victims of the basically
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exploitative mechanism operating against them.

It is widely known that the present high illiteracy rate 64 per cent in 1991 is one of the major constraints on the scope of their employment and attainment of higher social status through economic independence. Empirical studies on cost-benefit models of educating women have proved that primary education can be cost effective, increase women's productivity and reduce
155
inequality within the family.

A study by Kapoor has brought out a very interesting account of the need of women's education in the context of national development programmes. "Education of women is even more important than that of men. They count more during the early formative years of person's life. Being enlightened themselves,
156
they can bring up a generation of enlightened citizens".

The influence of schooling on women is carried further to such internal issues as decision making power in the family,

154. "Women in Ancient India" in Women in India (ed) Tara Ali Beg, Publication Division, Delhi, 1958, p.1.

155. K.K.Sinha, and U. Sinha, Evaluating Role of Women in Development, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1987.

156. M. Kapoor, "Women's Education for National Development", Indian Journal of Adult Education, Vol.39, No.7, National Publishing House, New Delhi, July 1978.

but, it is subject to certain restrictions. One such restriction of a major nature is that it depends upon the skills and knowledge a woman has acquired. The best place for a woman to acquire this is school. Robert states "Schooling trains people in verbal skills and knowledge which facilitates decision making quite directly. In addition, schooling contributes to the effective participation of the individual in the community which in turn strengthens the power position of the individual. So, whether directly or indirectly, the better educated partners
157
bring greater resources to the decision area".

Quite often women of different social groups or social status do not have opportunities for social interactions which, if, had for a considerable period, may have the effect of lowering the social barriers. One of the fora for this radical social change is the school environment. "For most adolescents the school is the ecological centre of interaction. It is the one place within the community where there exists the possibility of every adolescent interacting with other adolescents.

As a social system, the school and class room provide opportunities for students alienated in home to become integrated into another institution. Often the alteration in home carries over into the school and barriers to educational progress appear. The system being more flexible and possessing more facilities
158
than the family, can act to confront such barriers".

157. Robert O. Blood, JR : and Donald Mcwolfe, Husbands and Wives : Dynamics of Married Life, New York, Free Press, 1960, p.33.

158. Carl Weinberg, Education and Social Problem, The Free Press, New York, 1971, p.9.

School plays a vital role in shaping the destiny of women in rural as well as urban areas. School has the unique capacity to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, high and the low and thus, paves way for an egalitarian society. Weinberg observes, "There is no structure in our society as is the school". "The school attempts to assimilate the poor by instilling in all students a similar set of values. Assimilation is also intended by way of providing an access for all strata to educational and occupation opportunities". So long as women are kept out of schools, their value system remains unaltered despite fast changes taking place in the society. Their values come into conflict with the new values that emerge out of the rapid Industrialization and Urbanization. The traditional notions of higher status based on class and caste considerations are likely to disappear.

For women, both formal and non-formal education would be essential. For those who have already crossed the age limits for formal education, non-formal education is the only alternative. "Non-formal education especially, if viewed a set of alternative to the formal system of education offers a way to devise an affective approach to learning and education".

The importance of education for women in particular has been brought out in many studies. That education is needed for a cultural revolution is brought out by Iran Illich.

159. Carl Weinberg, Op.cit., p.40.

160. Ted W. Ward and William, A. Harzoo, Effective Learning in Non Formal Education, Michigan State University, Michigan, 1977, p.76.

161. Ivan Illich, The need for a Cultural Revolution, Vol.VI, No.4, 1970, pp.37-38.

According to Bane and Jenks, and Coleman, schools provide equal opportunities for children from unequal groups. 164
Waynee observed that it is through education alone that better socialization takes place. 165
Freire says "... education is essential for creating awareness among the people. This awareness will help women to develop their personalities and change their status in society". 166
Mridula, Ahuja and Bhatta have emphasised the importance of womens' education and have made useful observations regarding women's education in the Indian situation. 167

The main object of social legislation is that which serves the present social and economic objectives of the nation and deals with the current social problems.

However, the constitutional directive to provide free and compulsory education for all children upto the age 14 years is the beginning of regulated enrollment of children. The state of Karnataka enacted the Compulsory Education Act 1961. This legislation has imposed legal sanctions against the parents/guardians who do not enroll their children in the school going age section 5(3) of the said Act, read as follows.

"The Attendance Authority or any person appointed to

162. Mary To Bane and C. Jenks, "Schools and Equal Opportunity" in Saturday Review, September 16, Washington Government Press, 1972, p.41.

163. James S Coleman, Equality of Educational Opportunities, Government Press, Washington, 1966.

164. Edward Waynee, "Education and Socilization - A Complex Equation", in Education Research, December 1972.

165. Paule Freire, "Education for Awareness", in RISK Vol.IV, No.4, 1970, p.14.

166. Mridula Seth, "Educating Women through Economic Activities", in Social Welfare, Vol.XXV, No.8, November 1978, p.14.

167. Ram Ahuja and Bhatta, "Female Education in India", Social Welfare, Vol.XX, No.9, December 1973, p.2.

assist the Attendance/ Authority may put such questions to any parent or require any parent to furnish such information about his child, as he or she considers necessary, and every such parent shall bound to answer such questions or to furnish such information, as the case may be, to the best of his knowledge or belief.

Section 6 says, "It shall be the duty of the parent of every child to cause the child to attend an approved school, unless there is reasonable excuse for his non attendance within
168
the meaning of section".

It means that the Act has been in force during the last several years, and all parents, unless otherwise exempted are bound to enroll their children. This piece of legislation is a great boon, atleast theoretically, because it makes enrollment of girls also compulsory. But in actual practice, when it comes to the question of giving education to girls, there is tendency among parents to prefer boy's education to girl.

The National Committee on the Status of Women observes that the Constitution directs to provide free and compulsory education for all children upto 14 years, has remained
169
unfulfilled till now. Educational experts admit that this failure is, mainly due to the slow progress of education among girls. It further states that only 66 per cent of the girls in the age group of 6-11 were in school at the end of Fourth Plan period. In

168. Government of Karnataka, The Karnataka Compulsory Primary Education Act 1961, Government Press, Bangalore 1967, pp.7-8.

169. Report of the Committee on Status of Women, Towards Equality, pp. 236-241.

the age-group 11-14, this figure was only 22 per cent. The comparative figures for boys and girls were 100 per cent and 48 per cent, respectively.

One of the major problems of Indian educational system is the massive wastage and stagnation, generally termed as 'drop-out'. Children from families generally known for their socio-economic disadvantages are prone to be drop-outs as soon as they enter the schools. Quite a few studies have brought to light the position of massive drop-outs, particularly at the primary school levels.

171 172 173 174
Sharma and Sapre, Aggarwal, D'Souza, Bose and Prakash and Chikemane have made extensive observations on the subject. To position among the female members in one study was that out of the total number of children who had dropped out from the schools, the majority were female (60 per cent). Poor girls to look after siblings and to do home work drop out. In urban areas this is more. Poor women go out to works and young girls look after the siblings and the house.

Moreover, in the case of poor, illiterate parents - boy's education is given preference over girl's education. The

illiterate mother in particular has very little chance to realise

170. Indian Council of Social Science Research, Status of Women in India, Allied Publishers Pvt. Limited, New Delhi, 1975, p.89.
171. R.C.Sharma and C.L.Sapre, Wastage and Stagnation : of Primary and Middle Schools in India, N.C.E.R.T., New Delhi, p.66.
172. J.C. Agarwal, Progress of Education in Free India, Arya Book Depot, New Delhi, 1966, p.50.

173. Victor D'Souza, Education, Social Status and Democracy in India : Social Determinants of Educability in India, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, p.95.

174. A.B.Bose & Prakash, "Educational Development among Scheduled Castes" in Man in India, July-September, Vol.50, No.3, 1970, pp.218-222.

that she should guarantee better education to her daughter at
175
least.

In India the gap between the two is very striking. In 1981, 46.74 per cent of the males, as against 24.88 per cent of the females were literate. The National Committee on Women's Education concluded : "the education of women has not made satisfactory progress between 1947 and 1957. Even today, there is a very wide disparity between the education of men and women and only 36 girls are under instruction for every hundred boys at
176
schools."

The growth rate of boy's and girl's enrollment at different levels till the mid-70s again indicates, "slackening of the efforts. It may be maintained that higher education among girls is mostly confined, even more than secondary education to urban upper and middle classes". The Committee on Status of Women in India pointed out, "The image of the Indian women created by a few women holding high position or academic qualifications conceals, rather than reflects, the low status and educational
177
level of the average woman in India." Similar bias against girl's education prevails in other developing countries. A case study by Juliet Borne of urban slums in Pakistan reveals that about 8.5 million children of the 36 per cent of school going age, do not go to school, especially the girls. Only 45 per cent of the girls complete secondly school. Many Pakistanis, especially the poor,

175. R.C.Sharma and C.L.Sapre, Op.cit.

176. Quoted in Shan and Patel, Op.cit., p.1.

177. Towards Equality, Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, pp.261-266.

believe that education is unnecessary for girls and that it may corrupt them. Most communities have separate schools for girls and boys. Moreover, girls are not allowed to study after the age of 14-15 years. Looking after younger siblings, fetching water, selling biscuits/toffee in dirt lanes, in front of their houses and helping in other household chores, constitutes their major work. Many families depend on the earnings of their children. Gulshan-e-Sikandarabad, a slum in Karachi has 8,000 illiterate households, each one with three children and none of them go to regular schools. The starting of non-formal schools has helped a bit but the attendance by girls is very poor.

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If we trace the progress of literacy among girls in pre-Independent, period we find that in 1881-82 percentage of literacy of women was 0.2, 1901-02 - 0.7, 1921-22 - 1.8, 1931-32 - 3.0 and 1946-47 - 6.0 and 1951 - 7.93, only. So the increase even in the post-independent period was not very significant, despite the declaration of the Constitution, which emphasised "to uplift women and children and to develop consciousness among them".

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A study by Neera Desai regarding the position of women's education during the nineteenth century reveals that the situation was quite deplorable. It was an age when the mass of women were steeped in complete illiteracy. Education was

178. Juliet Bonne, Gemini News Service, article given in Meghalaya Guardian, "Racing Towards Literacy", August 1, 1993, p.5.

179. Prabhash Prasad Singh, Women in India : A Statistical Panorama, Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1990, p.168.

180. Neera Desai, Women in Modern India, Vora Publishing Private Limited, Bombay, 1957, p.74.

restricted even among boys, only to a small section. Education among girls was still meagre.

The Indian Government made efforts to promote the education among women. In 1959, National Council for the Education of Women was created. Given women's low enrollments in schools, nation-wide an expansion of separate educational institutions for girls was started to increase female enrollment in the cities. The major flaw was the poor quality of science and mathematics teachers and equipments in the middle and high schools, thus, very few girls enrolled in technical colleges.¹⁸¹

Although urban attitude towards women's education changed dramatically in 1960s, a survey conducted by the Committee on the Status of Women revealed that a few of the respondents believed that girls should receive no education at all. The survey found that the affluent and the poor rejected girls' education; the rich on the grounds of tradition and the poorer sections, for economic reasons. The number of women per 100 men in institutes of higher education increased from 24 in 1965-66, to 33 in 1975-76. The percentage of female literates to total population increased from 13 in 1961 to 18.72 in 1971, whereas the figure for males was 39.45 in 1971. In the Urban areas out of the 52.37 per cent literates males accounted for 61.24 per cent and females 42.05 per cent. The census of 1971 presented startling figures about female literacy. The number of

181. Chandrakala, A. Hale, Changing Status of Women in Post Independent India, Allied Publishers Private Limited, Bombay 1964, pp.113-114.

182. Towards Equality, Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, 1975, Op.cit., pp.262-266.

illiterate women rose from 18.5 crores in 1961 to 21.5 in 1971, i.e. 55.6 per cent of female to total illiterates. 29.8 million or 56.75 per cent of women between the ages of 15 and 18 years were illiterate. The number of illiterate women in the age group above twenty five was 94.5 million, or 88.6 per cent. This led the Central and state governments to launch an aggressive programme of adult-literacy for working mothers. This programme enjoyed a vigorous follow up in the succeeding Sixth and Seventh Plans (1980-90). In 1981 out of the total 36.23 percentage of literates, female literacy rate was 24.82 as compared to 46.89 per cent for males. The percentage of illiterate women to the total illiterate population remained a disappointing 56.3 per cent. Table 2.1 reveals the bias against women's education.

Table 2.1
Enrollment in the Educational System in India, 1950-51, 1980-81

Year	Boys	Girls	Excess of Boys over Girls
1950-51	191.42	64.00	127.42
1960-61	337.05	142.60	194.45
1970-71	539.77	284.26	255.51
1980-81	720.36	389.64	330.72

The growth of women enrollment in all age groups was slow and far behind that of boys. In 1970-71, 59 per cent of girls in the age group 6-11 years received schooling as against the coverage of 92.6 per cent for boys. In 1980-81, the figure

183. Tripta Desai, Op.cit., p.93.

184. Prabash Prasad Singh, Op.cit., p.223.

185. Ministry of Education and Culture, Educational Development of Women in India, Government of India Press, New Delhi, 1982, p.33.

were 64 per cent for girls, compared to 95.8 per cent for boys. Moreover, only 20.8 per cent of girls in the age group 11-14 years received schooling as against 46.5 per cent of boys. In 1980-81 the figure was 29 per cent of girls against 54.3 per cent of boys. In the age group 14-17 years, only 10 per cent of the females received education against 27 per cent in the case of males. There was not a significant increase even in 1980-81. Only 11.5 per cent of girls as compared to 25 per cent of boys received schooling.¹⁸⁶ Worse is the drop-out rate (1981) among girls. Of every 100 girls enrolled in the first grade, only thirty, on an average reach the fifth grade. In grades nine to twelve, the dropout rate is 77.7 per cent.¹⁸⁷

For every 100 men attending institutions of higher education, only 38 women shared the opportunity for advanced education in 1981-82. In 1984-85, the figure rose to only 41. Moreover, female education in colleges is confined to upper and middle class women living in towns and cities. Though the colleges meant extensively for women have increased from 430 in 1971-72 to 609 in 1980-81 to 676 in 1983-84, yet female literacy still lags behind that of men.¹⁸⁸

The literacy programme among women has crept forward slowly, owing to the unattractive environment of the classes,

186. Prabash Prasad Singh, *Op.cit.*, p.170.

187. R.K.Bhandari, *Educational Development of Women in India*, Ministry of Education and Culture, Government of India, New Delhi, 1982, Table 17, p.44.

188. *Ibid.* Table 20, pp.48-49.

lack of motivation and the prejudices prevalent against women higher education. The Hans Mehta Committee was appointed in 1964 to make recommendations about removing inequalities between the male and female curricula at colleges. Some of the recommendations pointed out that education should be related to the interests and capacities of individuals and not to sex. Moreover, girls should be encouraged to study science and mathematics at the secondary and high school levels, so that they could enter technical colleges later on. A study by Madhu Kishwar also reveals the importance of equal accessibility to matters and processes of technology while apparently forgetting the prejudice against women. "Literacy alone will not enable women to get access to most better paid jobs, unless simultaneous efforts are made to break down the prejudices against women learning to handle technology. Then only their status will improve".

Thus progress in attaining literacy has been much slower for girls and women. Half of the Africans over 15 years of age are illiterate; while among the women, the figure was as high as 70 per cent. In other Latin American and Asian countries also this situation prevail. Similarly in India, the gender gap in education exists despite many efforts by the government. The All India drop-out rate for girls at the elementary level is seventy four per cent, owing to such factors, as early marriages in rural

189. Report of the Commission on Higher Education for Women, University of Madras, Madras 1977.

190. M. Kishwar and Vinita (Ed.) "In Search of Answers : Indian Women's Voices from Manushi", London, Review published in the Illustrated Weekly of India, July 14-20, 1985, p.49.

191. Barbara E. Ward (Ed.), Women in Asia, UNESCO Publication, 1963, pp.171-203.

areas and in urban slums and due to parent's unwillingness to educate girls. Thus, the extent of wastage or drop-outs was much higher in the case of girls, especially in the age group 10-15 years. The problem of drop-outs of enrolled children and the problem of stagnation has serious implications for the economic development of a poor country like India. The National Committee on Women's Education has estimated that 25 to 30 per cent of wastage among girls was due to social customs like marriage and parental apathy to girl's education. Similar results are revealed in a study by Sharma and Sapre, who found that the slow progress in enrollment and high drop-outs and failing in the education of girls sprung from the same reasons and ultimately, affect the overall progress of women's education.

At the university stage, the total enrollment in general education, i.e. in Sciences, Humanities and Social Science is about 9 lacs or above 1.3 per cent of the age-group 17-23. Though enrollments in teaching, medicine and fine arts was substantial, but their enrollments in other courses like commerce, law, agriculture or engineering is still very small. In Science and medicine, in 1991, 400 girls had degrees as compared 39,200 boys. In Science, the number of women degree holders was 200 compared to 11,000 men. In Engineering, 3,500 as compared to 2.4 lacs for boys. Technical, Vocational/ Trade, 1200 as compared to 18,500 boys. In nursing 3,400 as compared to 400 boys. So the

192. Educational Development of Women in India, Op.cit., p.255.

193. R.C.Sharma and C.L.Sapre, Op.cit.

representation in professional fields remains very slow.

The situation in Urban areas due to poverty is quite deplorable as far as education, especially as that of women is concerned. According to the Census of India, urban literacy rate was 57.4 per cent. However, the literacy rate of people below poverty line was estimated to be only 28 per cent, according to NIUA data sheet (1986). Among the illiterates, the majority were women and girls. Similar results have come to light from a number of studies on the slum areas of various cities. This is because, majority of the people who live below subsistence level. Poverty is the predominant factor governing the attitude to girl's education. They are willing to make sacrifices for boy's education but are unable to afford the girl's education. Moreover, a large majority of girls, by the time they reach the age of eight are required at home for work. In another study by NIUA, of 20 urban centres, reveals that illiteracy is particularly high amongst the females of the low income and poor households. While over 50 per cent of the males over the age of 5 years are educated upto middle and secondary levels, only one third of the females over 5 years of age are educated upto this level.

The table shows that the difference between the education levels of males and females become sharper after the primary

194. Towards Equality, *Op.cit*, p.257.

195. Report of the National Commission on Urbanisation, Vol.I, New Delhi, August, 1988, p.95.

196. R.K. Bhandari, *Op.cit*.

Table 2.2
Literacy Levels by Sex (For ages 5 yr. and above)

Literacy	All poor households		BPL Households*	
	M	F	M	F
Illiterate	36.5	59.8	45.4	69.2
Literate	7.4	5.8	7.3	4.1d
Primary	28.0	21.9	27.1	19.7
Secondary	25.7	11.8	19.5	6.8
Graduate	2.2	0.6	0.7	0.2
Professional/Technical	0.1	0.1	-	-
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

*BPL: Below Poverty Line

level, as girls from poor households are not encouraged to study
197
beyond the primary level. The sharp increase in the number of
illiterate women, inspite of the rapid expansion of education of
women at various levels, points to severe imbalance in the
distribution of educational efforts and resources among different
sectors of the population. The main difficulties in the way of
facilities of girl's education is, (a) shortage of schools in
general, (b) absence of separate schools for girls in many
places, (c) absence of women teachers, (d) lack of adequate
transport arrangements and (e) irrelevance of education as
imparted in schools. Parents have not accepted the utility of
educating girls, find in its irrelevance, justification for
their apathy. (f) The early marriages of girls, (g) poverty.
Girls in poorer sections stay at home to look after siblings and
198
housework while mothers go away at work.

197. NIUA, Profile of the Urban Poor : An Investigation into their Demographic, Economic and Shelter Characteristics, Research Study Series, 10; New Delhi, June 1989, p.10.

198. GOI. Towards Equality, Op.cit., p.266.

Parents inculcate the inequality of sexes during upbringing by exhibiting different patterns of behaviour toward male and female children. While boys continue their schooling after the primary level, girls find themselves kept at home to attend to their traditional roles as defined by society.

Given that education alone can change these stereotypes about women, National Policy on Education (1986) proposed a new action plan whose emphasis was on ensuring that no child between the age group of six and eleven would remain outside the structure of formal and non-formal education throughout the country by 1990, the end of Seventh Five Year Plan. It envisaged that the enrollment of the school children in age group of 6 to 11 would be 99.2 per cent, for age group 11 to 14 would be 59.76 per cent. The percentage of children in schools in the age group of 6 to 14, thus, would be 85.85 per cent of the total child population . This can be achieved only if girls education is ensured. The special steps for this taken by the National Policy on Education are: (a) appointment of women teachers, (b) special attention to children and girls of weaker sections of society, (c) non-formal education, (d) provision of incentives like free books, stationery, uniforms, mid-day meals for regular attendance.

To increase the girls enrollment, the government since 1983-84 has liberalized the programme of non-formal education. During the Seventh Plan (1985-90), considerable emphasis on the

199. Victor Jerridasom, Non-Formal Education for Rural Women to Promote Development of Young Children, Allied publishers, New Delhi, 1981.

adult-literacy programme was laid so that both literacy and
200
prejudices against girls change. Moreover, the need of poor
families for additional income and for facilities for placing
infants under day-care while adult women go out to work is a
major instrument to the education of poor girls. A study in
Ahmedabad reveals that schooling rate in urban poor females is
much lower than the general and the drop out rate exceeds, 65 per
cent. So for these poor girls, school timings have to be
flexible. Moreover, some income supplementation in the form of
food supplementary scholarships may instituted to encourage
201
parents to send more girls for education. Studies have also
reveal that non-formal education would create part-time
opportunities for the poor women. A skill development programme
is therefore, necessary, along with the development of the 3-R
skills to improve the earning capacity of working women from poor
202
families.

Thus, all efforts should be made to encourage girls to
attain education. Various studies have shown that maternal
education is one of the most powerful lever for raising family
203
well being. The World Bank concludes that maternal education is

200. Women in India, Tripta Desai, Op.cit., p.95.

201. Report of the National Commission on Urbanisation, Op.cit.,
p.106.

202. (a) Sushma Sapru, Socio-Economic Status of Women : Problems
and Perspectives, Allied Publishers, Delhi, 1989.

(b) Barbara E. Ward, Op.cit.

(c) M.Kishwar and Vinita (Ed), Op.cit.

203. (a) Sushila Agarwal, Op.cit.

(b) Roopa Vohra, Arun K. Sen, Op.cit.

closely related to child health. Illiteracy of women has very serious implication for children's welfare as literate women usually have healthier and fewer children and realise the importance of a clean, safe environment. Since women manage most of the resource base in the developing world, female education may also be closely related to environmental protection. This supports the care for strengthening educational programmes for these vulnerable groups of women. Thus, women are important environmental educators, yet one more reason for ensuring that girls becomes literate. By the year 2000, more than 2 billion people will live in cities and towns in the developing world. The deteriorating environmental conditions have profound impact on women. The need for educating women is imperative to raise them from their deplorable status.

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Shantha (1982) found out in her study that private expenditures on education is a viable investment from lower primary education to vocational levels. However, the highest returns is to the secondary level followed by upper primary, lower primary and vocational levels professional education yields the highest return.

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Thus, it is now recognized that education is the major instrument which societies can use to direct the process of change and development towards desired goals . It provides for vertical mobility and can there by, help to equalize status

204. UNICEF and UNESCO, Report of the State of World Environment, 1990.

205. UNICEF, An Analysis of the Situation of Children in India, New Delhi, 1984, p.17.

between individuals coming from different social strata. The movement for improving women's status all over the world has always emphasized education as the most significant instrument for changing women's subjugated position in society. The better is women's education, the greater the availability of social opportunities. Whenever new opportunities come in, there is conflict with existing institutions. This leads to a change in thinking and in the pattern of living as indicated below :

Educated woman- has greater opportunities, desire to exploit opportunities, -change in attitudes leads to conflicts with existing institutions, acceptance of new challenges which leads to improvement in the women's status.

The status of women in any country depends upon their ability to earn the status. Adequate education and knowledge helps to hold a strong position at home and in the society as a whole. The bulk of the Indian women are still deprived of equal rights with men as far as access to education is concerned. Education has been emphasized as the most significant instrument for changing their subjugated position in society, as it passes through the darkness of superstition. Women educated in the right way will contribute immensely to nation's development.

2.6 WOMEN AND HEALTH :

Malnutrition is today, the most widespread and serious problem affecting the young with various infections. It is major cause of death of millions in the developing countries. It has social, economic and political roots and is closely related to poverty.

A recent estimate by F.A.O puts the number of

malnourished in India around two hundred million, i.e. nearly
205
half of the world's total !

Adequate nutrition is now accepted as part of the purpose of development. In developing countries, malnutrition is the principal obstacle to human productivity and to socio-economic development. Where women are concerned, no figures is readily available to tell us as to how many working days are lost due to ill health, but we may be sure that the figure will be a
206
large one.

Concern for privacy, shortage of female medical personnel and women's lack of time to seek health care for themselves have led to a much higher male than female occupancy of hospital beds. There has been recognition as discrimination against women and the current health strategy now gives priority
207
to training of women doctors and nurses.

Despite cultural variations, women tend to be more at a disadvantage in the poorer countries, as measured by various health indicators like sex ratio, life expectancy and MMR. For eg. sex ration in India is 929/1000(91). The declining proportion of females to males is indicative of the neglect of health of females.

According to the World Bank report, 1988 - 'where resources are plentiful, "natural" life expectancy for women

206. Kumud Sharma, National Specialised Agencies and Women's Equality, C.S.W.B, Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi, 1985, pp.10-15.

207. World Bank, Recognising the Invisible Women in Development, the World Bank's Experience, Washington D.C, October 1979, pp.17-18.

exceeds that of men as data from higher income countries demonstrate' (Table 2.3).
208

Table 2.3

WOMEN'S EQUITY AND DEVELOPMENT STAGE
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (1986)

(in years)

	MALE	FEMALE	GAP
Low Income ex-China and India	52	54	2
Low Income	60	61	1
Lower Middle	57	61	4
Upper Middle	64	70	6
Industrial Advances	73	79	6

The 'normal' situation is for women to outlive men. In India life expectancy of females was 54 in 1981 as compared to 56 of males.

Moreover, the ratio of girls to boys upto the age of four is below 95 in a number of countries, particularly in the South Asia. In another study by Chatterjee, it was found that the mortality for very young girls was disproportionate, especially for India and China. Moreover, mortality among females in India was greater than males at all ages and especially between 15-35 years. The maternal mortality rate (MMR) is 418 per 100,000 cases corresponding figure for Sweden (1979):1, USA (1978):10 and UK (1980):11. This shows that health status of women is really poor and needs more attention in India.

208. World Bank Development Report, 1988, Table 30.

209. Population Report Series, Delhi, 1984, P.27.

210. Chatterjee, "Women in the Health Sector : Past and Present", Journal of Family Welfare, Vol.2, No.2, December, 1975.

211. UNICEF, Op.cit., p.70.

A study by Sen (1987) reveals that age specific mortality rates for women in the child bearing years are also higher than for men, as in India and Ethiopia. In the developing world as a whole, millions of "missing women" have died prematurely. Women's health is not well studied, but it appears that maternal deaths account for over one-fourth of all deaths of women in the child bearing age, in many developing countries. About half of all maternal deaths occur in the low income countries of South Asia and 30 per cent in Africa.

Poor women are the worst off as far as health and nutrition is concerned. Moreover, urban poor women suffer from additional health hazards because of the unhygienic and squalid living condition of the slums in big cities.

Such gender related disadvantages tend to diminish as incomes increase. With increased wealth, families treat children of both genders more equally and women's reproductive health improves.

A number of studies by Horowitz 1980, Chatterjee 1988, Pitt and Rosenweig 1988, Schultz 1989, reveal that women's disadvantage as measured in health indicators, reflect cultural traditions, such as reserving the best food for men or boys, feeding men or boys first, devoting more time to the care of boys

212. Quoted in H.C. Upadhyay, Op.cit., p.120.

213. W.H.O. 1987, Quoted in Brita Brondlzaeg, Women, Food and Technology, Washington Press, Washington, 1990.

214. Uma Joshi, "Imperatives of Women's Uplift" in Yojana, March, 1990.

than to girls, when children fall sick.

Some evidences from Africa, near East and Philippines, indicates that family members reportedly spend 23 per cent less time in child care for girls than for boys.

The sex bias in nutrition for the male and against female infants, girls and women has been exposed in several studies. Girls enter into marriage and motherhood from their pre-existing malnutrition position and this impairs their health further.

Gopalan, 1982 has referred to a household survey in the villages around Ludhiana showing 50 per cent of the girls and 20 per cent of the boys below five years of age as severely malnourished.

Another study by Maitreyi Chaudhuri reveals that the percentage of severely malnourished girls are higher than the boys. Even in households having small number of children, the

215. (a) S. Chatterjee, "Rise in female headed families", in the Indian Women's Search for an Identity, Vikas Publishers, New Delhi, 1988.

(b) M. Lipton, Poverty, Concepts Thresholds and Equity Concepts, International Food Policy Research Institute, Mimeo, 1988.

216. B. Miller, The Endangered Sex : Neglect of Female Children in Rural North India, Cornell University Press, Itacha and London, 1981.

217. (a) C.H. Shah, "Food Preferences and Nutrition : A Perspective on Poverty in Less Developed Countries", Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics, Vol.35, No.1, Jan-March 1980.

(b) S. Sengupta and R.D.Joshi, "A note on the Determination of Poverty Line; Based on 27th NSS 27th Round Data", Sarvekshana, Vo.3, No.1, 1979.

218. UNICEF, Op.cit., p.58.

219. C. Gopalan, "The Population Problem : Its Qualitative Demension", Demography India, No.2, 1982.

discrimination exists against girls.

In a situation of deprivation, the senior male being the principal earning member, receives preference in terms of food quantity, while the woman as a housekeeper has to satisfy herself with whatever is left, which in many poor areas amounts to a very meagre meal. Exact data is not available for calorific consumption according to gender and age groups, but intra-family inequalities in distribution is wide in evidence.

While the low nutrient intake may help to maintain her own health and nutritional status, such as it may be, the demands on the body during pregnancy and lactation drastically depletes her already scarce reserves - leading to entrenched deficiencies and ill health.

The reports of the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau reveal that while only 28.4 per cent of the adult Indian males are suffering from calorific inadequacy, for non-pregnant, non-lactating Indian women, the percentage is 57.3 and for lactating Indian women it is 46.5.

Another survey by Batliwala shows that the caloric

220. Maitreyi Chaudhari, 'Sex Bias in Child Nutrition', Social Change, Vol.14, No.3, 1980.

221. Amartya Sen, Poverty and Famines : An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981.

222. Report of the National Commission on Urbanisation, Op.cit., p.92.

223. A.K.Sen and Sunil Sengupta, "Malnutrition of Rural Children and the Sex Bias", Economic and Political Weekly, Annual Number, 1988.

224. National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau 1980, National Council of Applied Economic Research, Household Income and its Disposition, New Delhi, 1980.

intake of Indian women is about 100 calories (per women per day) less than they expend. Srilatha Battiliwala works out the relative food intake per man, women and child as 3270 calories, 2410 calories and 1649 calories per day, respectively. In India, a poor women's role extends beyond her maternal responsibilities to playing a crucial part in agricultural activities of the family.²²⁵

Thus, women show an intake deficit of 100 calories per day while men show an intake surplus of nearly 800 calories.²²⁶ Seasonal over employment of women of lend-lease labour families rise to over 60 per cent in the peak crop months. Despite such hard work, a woman does not receive enough nutrition to replenish her energy reserves, i.e. women contribute 53 per cent of human energy required for survival tasks but their food intake is less than what they require. The result is a cruel combination of overwork and undernutrition. Lean agricultural seasons bring with them unemployment, low or no income and minimal food consumption in the family.²²⁷

Thus, disparity between women's caloric expenditure and caloric intake is manifested various illnesses especially, *anaemia*. Intervention at the time of child birth does not make any impact on the well-being of women. Unfortunately, women health

225. Srilatha Baltiwala, "Women in Poverty : The Energy Health and Nutrition Syndrome" in Devaki Jain and Numala Banerjee (Eds), Women in Poverty : Tyranny of the Household, Vikas Publishers, New Delhi, 1980.

226. Karkal Matini and Divya Pandey, Studies on Women and Population : A Critique, Himalayan Publishers, 1989.

227. Kusum P. Shah, Assignment on Children, UNICEF, 1981.

has been identified only with maternal health by policy
 228
 planners.

A study by Whitehead shows the poor nutritional intake
 of poor women in urban areas. (Table 2.4)

Table 2.4
 MATERNAL DIETARY INTAKE OF POOR WOMEN IN URBAN BARODA,
 DURING PREGNANCY AND LACTATION

Kcal	1500-1600
Protein (g)	35-40
Fat (g)	30
Calcium (mg)	400
Vitamin (mg)	10-15
Vitamin A (ug)	125
Iron (mg)	20-25
Folate (mg)	0.5-0.7
Vitamin B (mg)	0.5
Thararin (mg)	1.0-1.5
Ribo flavin (mg)	0.5
Niaera (mg)	5-6

Source R.G. Whitehead.

Another study of poor women in India subsisting on a
 diet of less than 1800 kcal a day showed that nearly a third of
 229
 the pregnancies were wasted in miscarriages and still births.

The effect of poverty on maternal malnutrition is
 clear. A calorie deficiency of 540 kcal per day can depress by as
 much as half the normal weight gain during pregnancy. Inadequate
 weight results not only in low birth weight but also in low fat
 230
 stores unequal to the energy demands of breast feeding.

228. R.G.Whitehead (Ed.) Maternal Diet, Breast feeding capacity and Lactational Infertility, U.N. University, Tokyo, 1960.

229. G.K.Kadekodi, G.V.S.N Murty (Ed.) Poverty in India : Data Base Issues, Vikas Publishing House, 1992, p.217.

230. A.K.Chakraborty, "Health Status of Rural Population of Singer as revealed in Repeat General Health Surveys 1975", Indian Journal of Medical Research, Vol.68, December, 1978.

There is substantial evidence in India, as elsewhere, to show that with a modest 150-250 kcal increase in daily intake, a statistically significant increase in birth weight could be achieved. The nutritional well being of the pregnant women is the most decisive factor in preventing low birth weight (< 2.5 kg) which is the most important factor in the chances of infant survival.

A study by K.T.Singh reveals that higher the status of women, higher is the age of marriage, greater is the knowledge of adopting of family planning methods and lower the fertility. The lower the fertility the better is the health status. Higher the social status, earlier is the adoption of family planning and lower is the incidence of mortality and higher is the economic status. Therefore trends for women in health, nutrition,
231
education and income are all interlinked.

Thus, the poor women suffer from inferior health and condition of urban poor women is far worse. The study by Shanthi and Dhanalakshmi indicate that among women employed in the wholesale shop in Dindigul Town (Tamil Nadu) 61 per cent females, the head of the household is a woman, 57.5 per cent live below the poverty line, only 17.5 per cent of the women were able to
232
buy all the items required for sufficient food.

231. K.T.Singh, Social Status Categories and Socio Economic Characteristics of Women, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1988.

232. K. Shanthi and N. Dhanalakshmi, "Family Survival Mechanisms - A Case Study of Women in Wholesale Trade in Dindigul", paper presented into Fourth National Conference on women studies published in conference volume by Indian Association for Women's Studies, December 1989.

Recurrent fever is found among 35 per cent of the women and 62.5 per cent of children. Typhoid, Jaundice, Measles are some of the other diseases which afflict these families. ²³³

A number of other studies reveal that in most work places women worked in very cramped conditions. They were crowded together in the assembly line. In many industries women had to stand and work for the whole day like jute, cotton industries and garment export companies, head loaders, paper pockets, cotton pod openers, papad makers, vendors all suffered due to longer hours of work with lower wages and no medical facilities at all. Consequently they suffered from spells of nausea, headaches, cramps and other ailments. ²³⁴ Additional health hazards were suffered by women working in industries like "beedi industry" in which predominantly women workers are engaged especially ²³⁵ respiratory diseases.

The major segment of the urban poor in India constitute of women and children i.e. more than two third of the total urban poor. The conditions of these women and children living in urban poor pockets and slums are even more difficult as the following parameters reveal :

233. I.L.O., Report on the Impact of the Recent show down on the Employment Opportunities for Women, World Employment Programme, Research Series, Geneva, 1977.

234. (a) M.E.Khan, "Nutrition and Health Practices Among the Women : A Case Study of Uttar Pradesh, India", Working Paper 31, Delhi, 1983.

(b) V. Rukmini Rao, Sahiba Hussain, Women's Work and Struggles in the Garment Export Industry, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992.

235. Struggles of Women at Work, edited by Sujata Gothoskar, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992, p.2.

- Birth and death rates of slum population are higher by 40-60 per cent compared to overall urban population.
 - IMR for slum areas is 1.8 times more than urban population as a whole.
 - 30 per cent of slum people never consume milk.
 - 85 per cent deliveries take place at home (47 per cent non-slum area).
 - 65 per cent of deliveries are conducted by local dais (32 per cent in non-slums).
 - 25 per cent of deliveries cases result in abortion/miscarriages.
 - 66 per cent have no ante-natal check-up (18 per cent in non-slum).
 - 77 per cent did not get immunised against
 - 33 per cent families in slums are not aware of family planning measures.
 - 70 per cent children are not immunised.
 - 13 per cent women knew about oral rehydration therapy.
- All these reveal the comparatively lower health status of women in poor urban pockets especially slum areas.

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2.7 ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN, PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY:

A proper understanding of the participation of urban women in the work force is of crucial importance because of their vital contribution in the development process. Development in any society is not possible without full participation of all sections of the population.

The economic status of women is now accepted as an indicator of society's stage of development. Status of any given section of population in a society is ultimately connected with

236. Nagara, U.B.S.P News Letter, State Training Institute, NEHU, Shillong, 1993, p.2.

its economic position which depends on rights, roles and opportunities for participation in economic activities.

In his book, "The Subjection of Women" J.S.Mill did recognise the importance of women's economic role and noted that the power of earning is essential to the dignity of women.²³⁷

To emancipate women and make her equal of man is and remains an impossibility as long as the women is shut out from socially productive labour and restricted to private domestic labour. The emancipation of women will only be possible when women can take part in production on a large social scale and domestic work no longer claims anything but an insignificant amount of her time.²³⁸

Traditionally, women's position in all societies has been one of general subordination to men. Even in matriarchal societies the actual power holders in the families were men. The U.N.O in 1948 opened the doors of freedom to woman all over the world by recognizing "equality as a fundamental human right irrespective of sex, race etc". As a result woman of today is striving to bridge up the centuries old gap between the man's and so called woman's sphere of work.²³⁹

The role of man as the natural bread winners has got recognised in almost all societies, whereas "home" and "family" have been seen as the "appropriate" domain of women. Thus, the

237. J.S.Mill, The Subjection of Women, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, 1970.

238. Frederick Engels, The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State, International Publishers, New York, 1972.

239. Roopa Vohra, Arun Sen, Op.cit., p.53.

social practice has created two separate fields of responsibilities divided along the sex-lines; 'home for women and the world outside the home for men'.²⁴⁰

Education has played a tremendous part directly and indirectly to the evolution of women's employment. With increased opportunities for education provided by the society, more and more women had the opportunity to pursue higher education which made the road to employment straight and smooth.

A number of American studies show that there is a definite correlation between the educational level of women and their employment Klein 1968, Ginsberg argues, that the more education a woman has, the more likely she is to be in the labor force.²⁴¹

Norma S. Chinchilla, while analysing the question of female employment, maintains that female's exclusion from work participation, or sex segregation in employment, are to be related to the socio-economic changes and the sequential changes in the occupational structure and in the allocation of work by sex.²⁴²

Industrialization almost universally destroys or weakens artisan industries, which are usually in the hands of women. But the economic participation of women then, she argues depends on whether industrialization absorbs women displaced from

240. Sudhir Chaudhary, Women in Employment, Delhi School of Social Work, Delhi, 1969.

241. Klein and Ginsberg E. and Associates, Life Styles of Educated Women, Columbia University Press, New York, 1968, p.50.

242. Norma S. Chinchilla, Op.cit., p.39.

productive roles in home or traditional pre-capitalist economy into manufacturing which in turn, is dependent upon the total political - economic context in which it occurs, and the extent to which it breaks down feudal or pre-capitalist relations, creates a demand for labor in the dynamic sector of economy and redistributes wealth internally.

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Increasing industrialization of society with its ascent on the expansion of the service sector has made the induction of woman into the service sector not only desirable but necessary. Today, women are the integral part of new economic order and important part of its manpower resource.

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Collver and Langlois and Willbert E. Moore hold that the relation between economic development and overall participation rates of women is indeterminate in the sense that the process which operates is one of reshuffle rather than acceleration of overall participation. Activities such as domestic services, petty trade and primitive types of home industries are superseded by employment related to public services, commerce, the professions and factory work.

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The variations in the labour force behaviour of women, according to the studies by a number of authors, reflect

213. Norma S. Chinchilla, Op.cit.

214. Robert H. Wellee, "A Historical Analysis of Female Labour Force Participation in Puerto Rico", Social and Economic Studies, Vol.XVI, March 1968, pp.60-69.

215. Andrew Collver and Eleanor Langlois, "The Female Labour Force in Metropolitan Areas : An International Comparison", Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol.10, 1962, p.65.

216. Wilbert E. Moore, The Impact of Industry, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1965, p.65.

essential differences in women's reaction to work opportunities. Youssef, from a study of few Latin American and Middle Eastern countries, concludes that there is differences in the structure of demand for workers.²⁴⁷

Assuming certain type of activities appropriate or suitable to women, few authors argue that with socio-economic development, availability of such activities would undergo changes implying a corresponding increase or decrease in women's participation in economic activities. D'Souza after comparing different regions concluded that the extent of female participation in economic activity will depend on the extent of the availability of low prestige jobs and the percentage of people engaged in tertiary occupations. Female participation will be higher if jobs of lower prestige are available in larger numbers. With the economic development, the proportion of jobs of higher prestige, expands at the cost of jobs of lower prestige. Consequently, participation of women in economic activity declines.²⁴⁸

Evidences prove that women's drop out from labor force is not exclusively related to prestige consistency. Andrea Singh in a study of women in Delhi's squatter colony, finds that a large proportion of the working women did not wish to continue

247. Nadia Haggag Youssef, "Social Structure and Female Labour Force Participation in Developing Countries", Dissertation submitted in Sociology, Graduate Division of the University of California, Berkeley.

248. Victor D'Souza, "Changing Socio-Economic conditions and Employment of Women in India, Trends of Socio-Economic change in India 1871-1961", Transactions of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Vol.III, Simla 1969, pp.443-457.

work even if their husband's income increased.

2.7.1 Women, family and work :

Due to the traditional viewpoint of women's role as homemakers, a number of scholars emphasise that women's economic participation outside the home is a function of the compromise between the family and the economic system. The growth or decline of female labor force is not only dependent upon the socio-economic development, but more importantly upon variables related to social organisation, particularly the prevailing family system. Patriarchal norms greatly hampered women's access to employment.

Collver and Langlois, for example, observe that her key roles have been and remain those of wife, mother and homemaker and even when she is not yet married, her expectations of assuming these roles exercise an influence on the character and extent of her economic activities.

In India the nature of work participation reveals the male bias against working of women. In the context of India two specific patterns are identified : (a) a tribal Indian pattern and (b) a low-caste Hindu pattern. In both the cases the participation of females in economic activity is of a very high degree, apparently due to their traditional social ethos and lack of social taboos which inhibit high caste women from accepting

249. Andrea Singh, "Women and Family : Coping with Poverty in the Bastis of Delhi", The Indian City : Poverty, Ecology and Urban Development, (Ed.) Alfred De Souza, Manohar Publications, Delhi, 1978, pp.77-78.

250. Andrew Collver and Eleanor Langlois, Op.cit, p.367.

work. In case of Shillong - Tribal pattern, poor low-caste Hindu pattern and intermediate kind is prevalent.

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Paul H. Douglas concludes from a study of Britain and United States of America, high wages were negatively associated with proportion of women at work. Gadgil and A. Chapman Smock hold the view that females work primarily in those occupations in which household responsibilities can be easily combined with productive work. Female participation would depend more on the fact that whether the 'female sectors' of the economy are expanding or shrinking, than on overall level or rate of economic development.

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In predominantly agricultural system, women often have less of a problem reconciling roles, because of the flexibilities in the work schedule. Industrialization brings new problems, since the rigidity in factory employment makes it less easily combined with motherhood and family life; as a consequence women have little choice but to retire to home.

Along with the expansion of the service sector of the economy, the improved employment prospects for women in the

251. Paul H. Douglas, The Theory of Wages, New York Press, New York, 1957, pp.272-74.

252. D.R.Godgil, Women in the Working Force in India, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965, p.26.

253. Andrey Chapman Smock, "Determinants of Women's Role and Status" in Women, Role and Status in Eight Countries (Eds.) Gille, Janet Zollinger and Andrey Chapman Smock, New York, 1977.

254. International Centre for Research on Women, Keeping Women Out : A Structural Analysis of Women's Employment in Developing Countries, prepared for the office of Women in Development, A.I.D., Washington, D.C., 1980.

highly industrialized countries are related to a lessening of the conflict between work and family roles. A 'U' pattern, thus, emerges in relation to female employment over time.

Thus, women suffer from two sets of discrimination in the labour market : (i) Pre-market discrimination, that is, the lack of access to factors such as education, training, experience, and so on which increase human capital and enhances the marginal product of labour; and (ii) Post-market discrimination, namely, differential wages for a similar quantum of human capital.

Therefore, any simplistic theory of biological inferiority of women cannot explain this complex problem. Considering the vast differences in the level and extent of female employment between countries and within each country and regions, a geographical perspective on female participation in economic activity emphasising the spatial and temporal dimensions of the economic status of women is necessary for understanding
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the underlying processes to women's participation.

In fact, the debate regarding women's economic role and the need for equality of rights and opportunities for economic
256
participation centres on three arguments : women's economic subjugation or dependence leads to exploitation and is a denial

255. (a) A. Oakley, Housewife, Allen Lane, London, 1967.

(b) Leela Gulati, "Female Work Participation; A Study of Inter-State Differences", Economic and Political Weekly, vol.10, No.182, January 11, 1975, pp.40-41.

256. (SWI Report, On the Status of Women 1971-74, ICSSR, New Delhi, 1975, pp.59-115.

of social justice and human rights, the development of a society requires full development of the potentialities of women, and the modern trends in demographic and social changes (raising age of marriage, smaller families, rising costs) are simultaneously introducing major changes in women's role and responsibilities.

The urban scene with respect to employment of women presents a dismal picture. This is because urbanisation is generally accompanied by a shift from subsistence modes of production to commercialised and mechanised production. The opportunities created by this change are not shared equally by men and women. Ambannavar from the study of India's urbanisation concludes that the process of urbanisation plays a key role in the decline of the participation of women in the work force. With the growth of industries in urban areas, the rural household industries decline without being accompanied by a structural change in employment which might improve female participation. Other studies also emphasise the decline in the female

257. Gandhian Thought and Contemporary Society, Private Publishers, Bombay, 1978, p.21.

258. (a) H.C.Upadhyay, Op.cit., p.76.

(b) M.N.Srinivas, 'The Changing Position of Indian Women, The T.H. Huxley, Memorial Lecture delivered at the London School of Economics, Oxford Universities Press, 1976, p.15.

259. J.P. Ambannavar, "Change in Economic Activity of Males and Females in India", 1911-61, Demography, 1975, pp.51-52.

260. (a) Kalpana Dasgupta (Ed.) Women on the Indian Scene : An Annotated Bibliography, Abhinav Publishers, Delhi, 1976, pp.14-15.

(b) Sarathi Acharya, "Employment of Women and Men in India. A Historical Review, 1901-1951", The Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Vol.22(3), 1979, p.138.

(c) D.R.Gadgil, Women in the Working Force in India, Asia Publishing House, University of Delhi, 1965.

(d) Kamla Nath, Female Work Participation and Economic Development : A Regional Analysis, Akshat Publishers, Delhi, 1985.

(e) E. Boserup (1970), Op.cit.

(f) Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, 1975, Op.cit

participation in work force due to a more developed modern economy.

In a recently concluded work, Mitra, Srimany and Pathok have drawn attention to a markedly declining trend in the participation of Indian women in household and non-household activity in both rural and urban areas.

In 1981, the total urban population of the country was estimated at 157.68 million, of which 73.80 million or 46.8 per cent were females. The 1981 census reported only 6.13 million women as "working", female population, or a meagre 8.32 per cent of the urban female population. In rural areas, this was estimated to be 30 per cent in the same census year. This reflects the conservative view that women's role must be confined within rigidly defined limits of the household work.

Krishna Ahooja Patel writes : "Women are the poorest among the poor (no matter how poverty lines are drawn), the most economically vulnerable and are almost always to be found lowest in the occupational ladder of the Indian economy and the last in line as the recipients of benefits derived from modernisation and industrialization.

Historically also the situation with regard to female participation has not changed perceptibly. In 1971 out of the total 29.6 per cent of urban work force, females accounted for only 7.2 per cent of the work force. In 1981, it was placed at

261. Krishna Ahooja Patel, "Women in Industry in Developing Countries", Mainstream, Vol.XVIII, No.28, 19 March, 1979, pp.11-14.

262. N.I.U.A, Gender Bias in Employment Women in Urban Informal Sector New Delhi, October 1987, p.3.

8.3 per cent, registering only a 1.1 per cent increase in a period of 10 years. In terms of absolute numbers, the addition was 2.5 million as compared to 15.4 million increase in the total urban force.²⁶³

Moreover, due to immense pressure on the available employment opportunities and the inability of the formal employment sector to absorb the fast expanding labour force, women are likely to further lose out to men in the competition for a limited number of jobs. It is estimated that out of the 5 million people added to the labour force of urban areas every year, only 0.5 million or 10 per cent are able to find employment in the organised sector.²⁶⁴ It is stated that pressures even on the informal employment market have mounted in recent years, and if these trends continue, then men will supplant women. Moreover, a large number of females work in a non monetised sector. Their work in many cases is invisible and unrecognised and defined as unpaid family labour.²⁶⁵

Another feature of the women in the work force is that they are mainly (94 per cent) employed in the unorganised sector and only 6 per cent are employed in the organised sector according to 1981 census.²⁶⁶

The situation with regards to poor women in urban areas is dismal. The main motivation for work for these women is the

263. National Productivity Council and UNICEF Indian Informal Sector, New Delhi, 1985.

264. (a) Gender Bias in Employment, Op.cit., p.4.

(b) Krishna Ahoja Patel, Op.cit., pp.11-14.

265. H.C. Upadhyay, Op.cit., p.89.

266. Roopa Vohra and Arun Sen, Op.cit., p.55.

hard economic necessity. Under whose pressure, opposition to the gainful occupation of women is steadily diminishing even among the traditional, orthodox and conservative groups. Moreover, the rising cost of living, education, and social changes in the urban areas have led to the withdrawal of the taboos that earlier affected women of the upper classes and have enabled some of them to enter new professions/occupations in the territory sector which were closed to them earlier.

In services, sports and recreations their number went up from 5,000 to 13,000 in 1960-68. The number of women employed as administrative, executive and managerial workers increased from 10,000 in 1960 to 12,000 in 1966.

In India, as in many developing countries, poor women, who work, are largely found in the informal sector. This is primarily because of the twin disadvantages faced by women : (i) an ideological disadvantage in which their labour is considered to be less productive because of the fact that they are women, and (ii) a technical disadvantage whereby they are not able to gain equal access to educational and technical facilities. In addition, the triple burden of women, namely the upbringing of children, domestic work and economic responsibilities, make work in the informal sector an attractive possibility because of the

267. CSWI Report, Plans and Prospects of Social Welfare in India, 1951-61, Planning Commission, Delhi, pp.365-366.

268. Renu Chakravarty, "Women Liberation in India", in Women On the March, Vol.9, No.2, Allied Publishers, Delhi, February 1975, pp.19-21.

269. (a) Women, Urban Poverty and Development, Op.cit.

(b) Shelly Feldman; "Formalising the Informal Sector : New Forms of Domestic Exploitation for Bangladeshi Women", Paper presented at the 12nd Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, Chicago, 5-8th April, 1990.

flexible hours and the option to work at home.

Another feature of female's work which reveals the low economic status of women, lies in the casual nature of their jobs and employment. According to National Sample Survey, an estimated 26 per cent of the total female workers are 'wage employees', 28 per cent are "casually employed", and another 45 per cent are in the category of "self-employed" in 1983-84. In comparison, the incidence of casualisation is low among male workers being 14.75 per cent only.

There exist spatial variations in the female participation rates in India which have only been recently studied. Leela Gulati did a pioneering work on Inter-state variations in female participation rates.

A number of studies suggest that female labour force participation rates decline sharply in prosperous states where male earnings are high. Dholkia and Dholkia used both economic and socio-cultural factors for explaining spatial variations.

In states like Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, West Bengal, which have a higher per capita income than the all India level,

270. NIUA, Gender Bias in Employment, Op.cit.

271. Saraswati Raju, "Sita in the City : A Socio-Geographical Analysis of the Female Employment in Urban India", Discussion Paper, University of Syracuse, 1981.

272. Leela Gulati, Op.cit., pp.35-42.

273. (a) J.N.Sinha, "Rural Employment, Planning Dimensions and Constraints", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.8; Annual No, 1978, pp.295-313.

(b) Devaki Jain, Women's Quest for Power, Vikash Publishers, Ghaziabad, 1980, pp.100-101.

(c) Bakerl H. Dholkia and Ravindra H. Dholkia, "Inter State Variations in Female Labour Force Participation Rates", Indian Journal of Labour Economics, January, 1978.

the work participation rates are consistently low.

Omvedt in her study has emphasised 'poverty' as the major factor of regional variations and for women to seek work outside their homes. She opines "where the agricultural productivity, income, and wage rates are low, female work participation tends to be high simply because women of the poorest families are forced to work irrespective of male desires. 274

The study by National Institute of Urban Affairs reveals that women who work as self-employed, have earnings which are adequate to stay above the poverty line whereas occupations, such as domestic services, packing of beedis and agarbattis, their earnings continue to be extremely low. It is also evident from the study that these women have no fixed place to work from. They worked longer hours and got comparatively lower wages for their work. Poverty and the fear of being replaced by men in the informal employment market, led to their exploitation. Urged by their households deteriorating economic condition and the need to give their children a better lot, forced women to take up jobs that are low and, tedious and often mere extensions of household work. 275

In a study by Maria Mies (1986), it was revealed that disadvantaged position of Third World women working in many new industries, is a direct result of certain deliberate policies followed by capital to cast women workers in the image of

274. Gail Omvedt, "Women and Rural Revolt in India", Social Scientist, No.6, pp.1-18.

275. (a) N.I.U.A, Op.cit. p.VI.

(b) Swapna Mukhopadhyay, "Women Workers in India : A Case of Market Segmentation of Women in Indian Labour Force" International Labour Organisation 1981, pp.93-119.

housewives or of young girls joining the labour market temporarily. This way women workers become invisible or marginal to the working class and can be exploited to a greater degree. 276

One of the major problems in development is that those who are entrusted with responsibility for the planning and implementation of development, are very often far removed from those for whom development matters the most.

Little is being done for the urban poor. They do not have access to land for housing at a cost which they can afford, nor are they provided with any civic amenities. They are accepted in the city only as a necessary evil, without which the city would not function. 277

Today, about 50 million children and women are living below the poverty line in the cities and towns of India. Children alone number 18 million. Many of them are unnecessarily poor and incapacitated because services do not reach them. They have very little knowledge about where the services are available or, if they are available, how they can obtain them; and who can help and guide them in such matters. 278

The urban poor have become an inevitable concomitant of the development path which many countries, including India, have chosen. The poor in urban areas not only help grow the economy, but also help city governments make services, low cost, because the poor offer their labour at ridiculously low wages. The Indian

276. Quoted in Nirmala Banerjee, Indian Women in Changing Industrial Scenario, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1987.

277. Karl Eric Knutsson, "The poor make the city work; can the city work for the poor" ? UNICEF Statement, pp.1-3.

278. National Seminar on Urban Poverty, New Delhi, August, 1989.

city can not be imagined without the poor malnourished loader, the scavenger and the conservancy labourer.

The need of the hour is to demonstrate true developmental wisdom by adequately compartmentalizing the big galaxy of problems into relevant and actionable clusters. One such is the basic poverty continuum, which demonstrates itself in low income, inadequate nutrition and basic services, limited or no education, low skills and no or inadequate income. Secondly, there is the environmental poverty continuum, manifesting itself through inadequate service and housing, overcrowding, pollution, exposure to disease, low productivity, low income, inability to pay for adequate services and housing. Finally, there are the psychological dimensions such as insecurity, stress, depression, defiant social behaviour, no room for ambition, or aspirations, lack of opportunity to demonstrate one's productivity and again low income and the consequent inability to ensure family security.

Chapter 3

OVERVIEW OF STATUS OF WOMEN IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

3.1 INTRODUCTION:

The spectacular careers of a few women in India is likely to blind one to the plight of the vast majority of women who are neither aware of their rights nor provided with facilities and opportunities to exercise them. A lot of prejudices stand in the way of treating them as equal with men.

The North - Eastern Region, consists of the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Women in this region, with its unique setting having a predominantly tribal population enjoy a far better status than their counterparts in rest of the country. The three major tribes of Meghalaya, i.e, the Garos, the Khasis and the Jaintias, share a common matrilineal tradition that sets them apart from most other traditional societies of the country. Though each of the communities of this region differs in ways like racial, language, social organisation, cultural pattern etc. having their own traditional values and norms, it is difficult to generalise anything overall applicable to them. The women of this region enjoy a far desirable status as they have a major role to play in the contributing at the household level, in the various social and economic matters. Social evils like satl, dowry etc., are totally absent in the region. Women have more freedom in matters regarding marriage, employment, ownership and inheritance of property etc.

3.2 POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY :

The tribal communities share a common matrilineal tradition where descent is recognized from the female lineage and

the children belong to the clan of the mother. A very distinctive feature of these matrilineal societies is the rights and responsibilities vested on the youngest daughter and also as the custodian of family property. This system is more prevalent in the Khasi-Jaintia society. Garo Society is also matrilineal with matrilineal descent, matrilineal inheritance and uxorilical residence. As such, status of women is expected much higher than that of matriarchal society. But a close investigation into the Garo social structure shows that matripodistas exist more in name than in actual practice. The real power is concentrated in the 'Chras', i.e., the maternal uncles and the elder brothers of the woman, and the Mahari or clan.

3.3 BIRTH OF FEMALE CHILD :

The birth of a female child in these societies is hailed with a great joy as that of male one. In general, both boys and girls are treated equally. However, it may not be an exaggeration to say that parents often feel happier to have a female child, being the line of continuity of the family and clan. So women are accorded a much higher status right from the birth itself.

3.4 WOMEN AND MARRIAGE:

Women in the North East have the freedom to choose their own life-partners; parents and relations have only the role of facilitator.

In the Khasi society, no child is an illegitimate child, whether the mother has borne the child from a legitimate

marriage or not. The child has all the rights of inheritance. Unmarried women with babies are not looked down upon.

Women have full rights to remarry after widow-hood. They also have the freedom to leave their husbands if the circumstances so required and remarry. Moreover, they have full authority and responsibilities regarding the upbringing of children. This sets these women apart from women of non-tribal societies who do not enjoy such privileges and freedom. Both husband and wife have to share the household responsibilities equally. Garo women cannot remarry or divorce their husbands without the approval of 'Chras' and 'Mahari'. She has to go by the decision of Mahari. In this respect, Khasis and Jaintia women are much better off and enjoy an equal or even higher status than males. Marriage among them is neither sacrosanct and nor indissoluble. So, divorces are common and easily accepted in the society. Remarriage is also not prohibited by law. Proportion of divorced and separated males and females is low. Polygamy, monogamy and polyandry, to some extent in all three forms, is prevalent.

3.5 WOMEN AND POLITICAL ROLE :

Women of the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo society though occupy quite a high status in social and economic role, certain restrictions are forced especially in political affairs. Traditionally, in political matters, a woman did not have any place or role as she is not allowed to participate in political

decision making process. Women were not allowed to attend any durbar or council meetings. They were not given the right to speak or attend any public meeting which concerned the political affairs of either a village or Hima (State). According to traditional customs, they were not given the right to vote in any election to the offices of traditional chiefs. Thus, as far as political affairs and activities were concerned, men dominated. But though women do not sit in the durbar, yet they do influence it from within their hearth and home through their representative, i.e., the maternal uncle.

3.6 POVERTY AND STATUS OF WOMEN IN NORTH EAST INDIA :

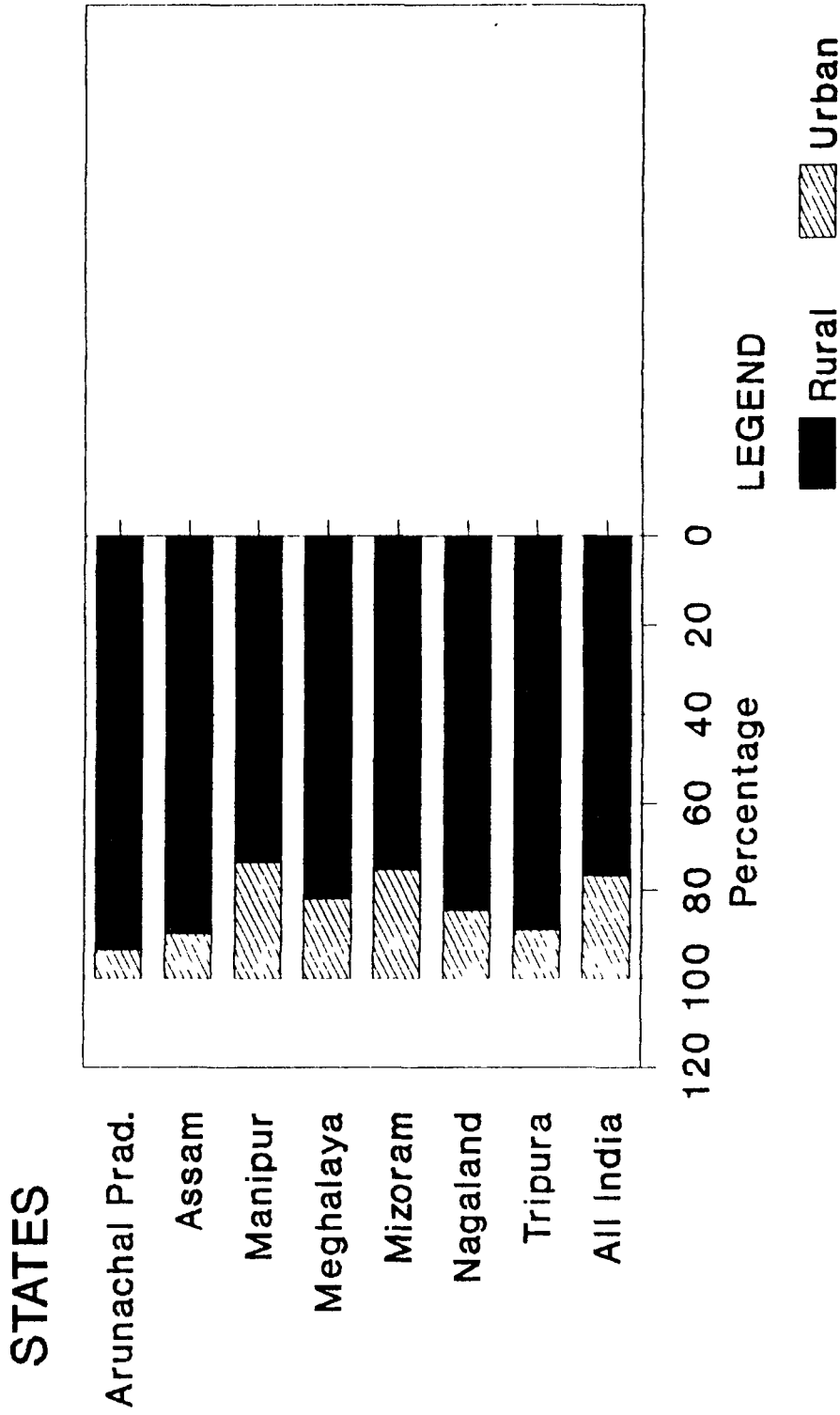
As a result of complex variety of factors including the historical past, British colonization and socio-economic exploitation, the country emerged into freedom faced by the challenge of social development and removal of poverty. The resultant problem of poverty include marginal levels of living, illiteracy and malnutrition.

The North Eastern Region has a distinctive socio-economic situation which differs from the rest of the country due to its topography, isolation from the developments from other parts of the country and problems of communications. Many of the problems of the region, the chief being poverty and underdevelopment, are directly related to these specific socio-economic conditions, and these forces have affected the development processes in the region.

This region with its unique setting, having a

NORTH-EAST INDIA

Rural-Urban Population Distribution (81)



1955

Fig. 37

predominantly tribal population except for Assam, having their own unique norms and culture, experience relatively different poverty scenario than the plain states. In Meghalaya, the prevalence of matrilineal system helps women to have financial security and upper hand in household and economic matters unlike the rest of the country where women are totally dependent on the males. In this respect women enjoy a much better status. The girl child is not looked down upon and is not discriminated against as far as access to nutrition, education etc. are concerned. The population of this region has been growing rapidly.

Table 3.1
POPULATION OF NORTH EAST INDIA, 1981
(in percentage)

STATE/UNION TERRITORY	MALE	FEMALE	RURAL	URBAN
Arunachal Pradesh	53.7	46.3	93.4	6.6
Assam	52.6	47.4	89.7	10.3
Manipur	50.7	49.3	73.6	26.4
Meghalaya	51.2	48.8	81.9	18.1
Mizoram	52.1	47.9	75.3	24.7
Nagaland	53.7	46.3	84.5	15.5
Tripura	51.4	48.6	89.0	11.0
All India	51.7	48.3	76.7	23.3

Source : Registrar General of India (1981 : 10-11)

3.7 URBANIZATION:

According to 1981 census (except, Assam), 23.70 per cent of the population in North East India was found in urban areas. The corresponding figure in the case of tribals was 6.20 per cent. The figures in the different states are given in table 3.2

NORTH-EAST INDIA

ST & Non-ST Component of Population (81

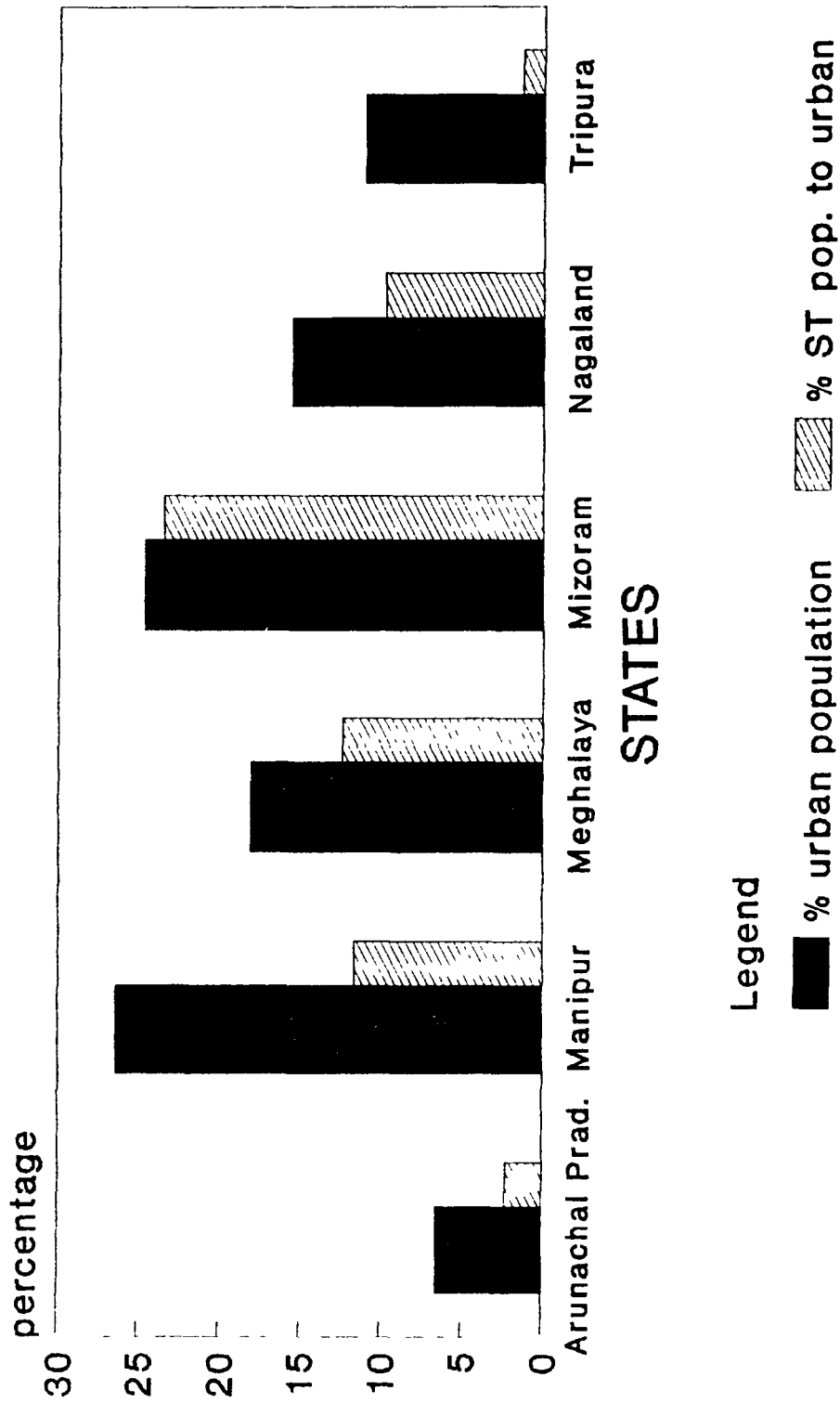


Fig. 3.2

Table 3.2
S.T. COMPONENT OF URBAN POPULATION IN NORTH EASTERN STATES

STATES/ UNION TERRITORY	URBAN POPULATION AS PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION	TRIBAL URBAN POPULATION AS PER CENT OF TOTAL URBAN POPULATION
Arunachal	6.56	2.28
Manipur	26.42	11.64
Meghalaya	18.07	12.41
Mizoram	24.67	23.48
Nagaland	15.52	9.77
Tripura	10.99	1.31

Source : Srivastava S.C (1987 : 46)

It is not the low urbanisation of tribal population, which is unexpected, but the low urbanisation of non-tribals, or, in other words, the presence of a large number of non-tribals in the rural areas. Urbanisation has taken place in a manner incapable of attracting a large number of tribal and non-tribal. In Meghalaya, in the capital city Shillong, urbanisation has taken place at a fast pace.

3.8 RELIGION AND CASTE COMPOSITION:

The religious composition of these states is marked by difference from that of the rest of the country. Only in Assam (72.5%), Manipur (59.90%) and Tripura (89%), do Hindus form the majority of the population. Muslims form a significant minority only in Assam. The tribals have their own faiths. The all India percentage for Hindus is 82.7%, Christians 2.6%. It is found that the Schedule Castes are in insignificant minority in the North Eastern States (one per cent or less), except in Tripura, where the percentage is 15%. On the other hand, the Schedule Tribes

form a significant group. A large majority of the population in Meghalaya (80.6%), Nagaland (84 %) and Mizoram (93.5%) belong to the Schedule Tribe. The all India figures for the S.T.category is 7.5 per cent.

Meghalaya has only 5,492 or 0.4 per cent as Schedule Castes, and 10,76,345 (80.6%) as Schedule Tribes of the total 13,35,819 population in 1981.

Table 3.3
CHANGING PROPORTION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES
(1971-1981)

STATES	YEAR		INCREASE/DECREASE PERCENTAGE POINTS
	1971	1981	
Arunachal Pradesh	79.02	69.82	- 9.20
Manipur	31.18	27.30	- 3.88
Meghalaya	80.48	80.58	+ 0.10
Mizoram	94.26	93.55	- 0.71
Nagaland	88.61	83.99	- 4.62
Tripura	28.95	28.44	- 0.51
	55.26	53.68	- 1.58

Source : Srivastava S.C.(1987 : 145)

The population of major religious communities (1981) in Meghalaya is 18 per cent- Hindu, 3.1 per cent- Muslims, 52.6 per cent-Christians, 0.1 per cent-Sikhs, 0.2 per cent- Buddhists, 0.04 per cent- of Jains, others constituting 25.8 per cent (largely belonging to traditional faiths).

So the tribals account for about 55 per cent of the total population in the hill districts of the North Eastern states, excluding Assam. If Assam is also included, the percentage of the tribal population is only 22 per cent. Although, ther

are varying customs and tribal tradition, the tribal groups have certain similarities in their life styles and consumption pattern, in spite of ethnic differences.

3.9 ECONOMIC REALITIES:

While, at one level, the North Eastern region remained isolated from the overall economic development of the country, it was and still continues to be the major source of raw materials for industries in other parts of the country. However, the revenue from the exploitation of these resources were hardly ploughed back into the region. Therefore, it is important to discuss the present economic scenario.

3.9.1 The situation of poverty:

The social realities in North Eastern Region are closely related to its poor economic condition. Poverty in different forms, exists in all parts of the country and the North Eastern states are no exception to this. While the all India per capita income is Rs 1,278 per annum, the total for North Eastern states ranges between Rs. 755 (lowest in Manipur) and Rs. 949, which is the highest (in Nagaland) in 1978-79.

Table 3.4 shows the conditions of poverty in the rural and urban areas of North Eastern states, estimated by using the national poverty line of Rs. 65 per capita per month at 1977-78 prices, corresponding to a minimum daily calorie requirement of Rs. 2,400 per persons per day in rural areas and Rs. 75 per capita per month, corresponding to a daily calorie requirement of 2,100 in urban areas. The extent of poverty varies from one state

NORTH-EAST INDIA

Per capita Income (1978-79)

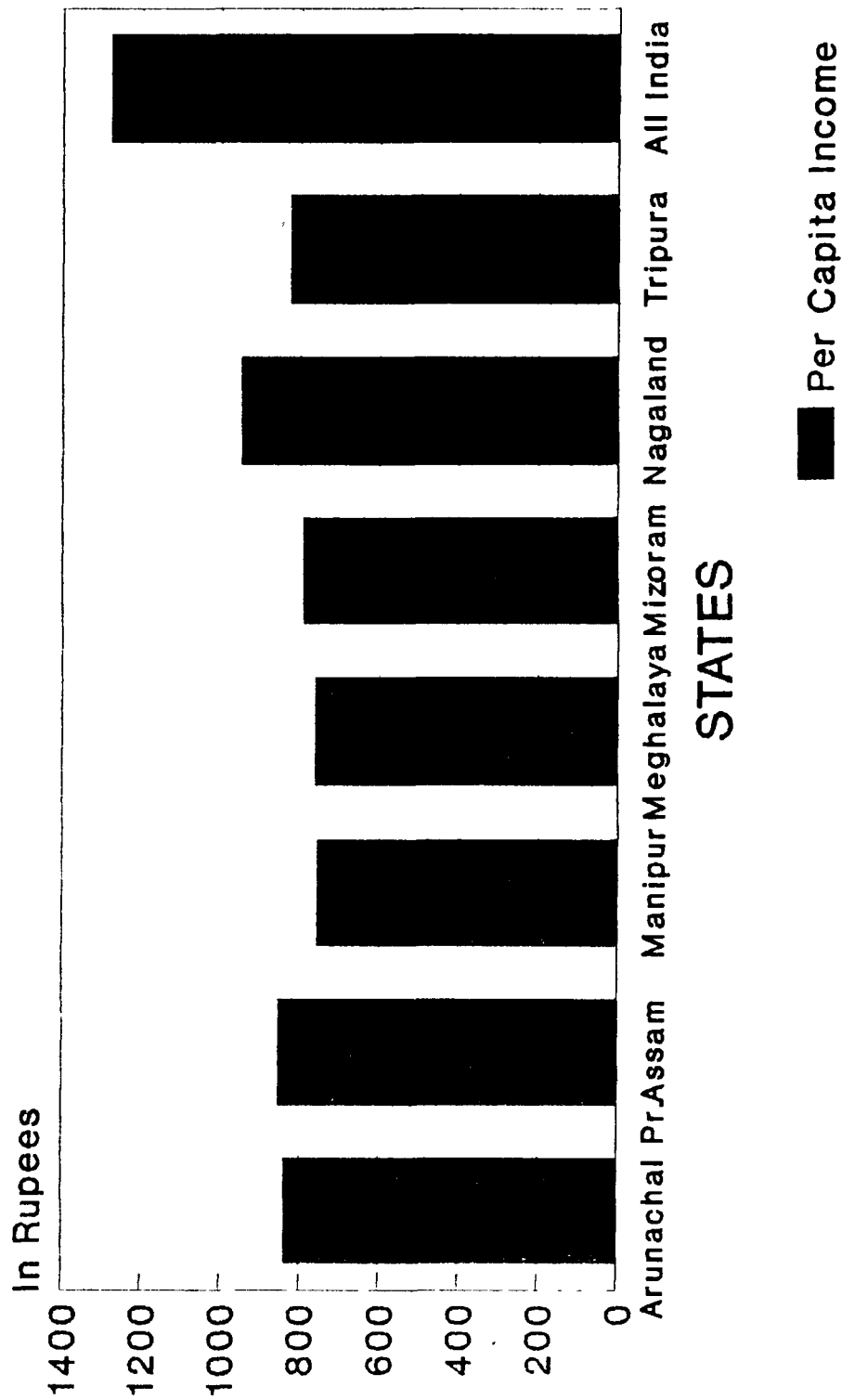


Fig.3.3

Table 3.4
DISTRIBUTION OF PER CAPITA INCOME IN STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES
OF NORTH EASTERN INDIA (1978-79)

STATE/UNION TERRITORIES	PER CAPITA INCOME (IN RUPEES)
Arunachal Pradesh	838
Assam	852
Manipur	755
Meghalaya	761
Mizoram	790
Nagaland	946
Tripura	825
All India	1,278

Source : Kamall, M.V. (1980 : 11)

to another. In Tripura (64.28%), Meghalaya (53.87%) and Assam (53.87%), a majority of the population lived below the poverty line. These levels of poverty are higher than the national poverty level (50.82%).

Manipur seems to be economically better than the other states. Only a smaller proportion of the population is living below the poverty line (30.54%). Hence, while its per capita income seems to be the least, it has less people actually living below the poverty line, possibly indicating a better income distribution. On the whole, rural poverty is greater than urban poverty. Urban poverty in Nagaland is negligible but now the rapid rate of urbanisation in these states is causing an increase in poverty in urban areas with high disparities in income levels.

The poverty conditions are quite severe in Assam as there the level of urbanisation is low and rural poverty is acute. There is also a wide gap between the rich and the poor. In

NORTH-EAST INDIA

Population below Poverty Line (77-78)

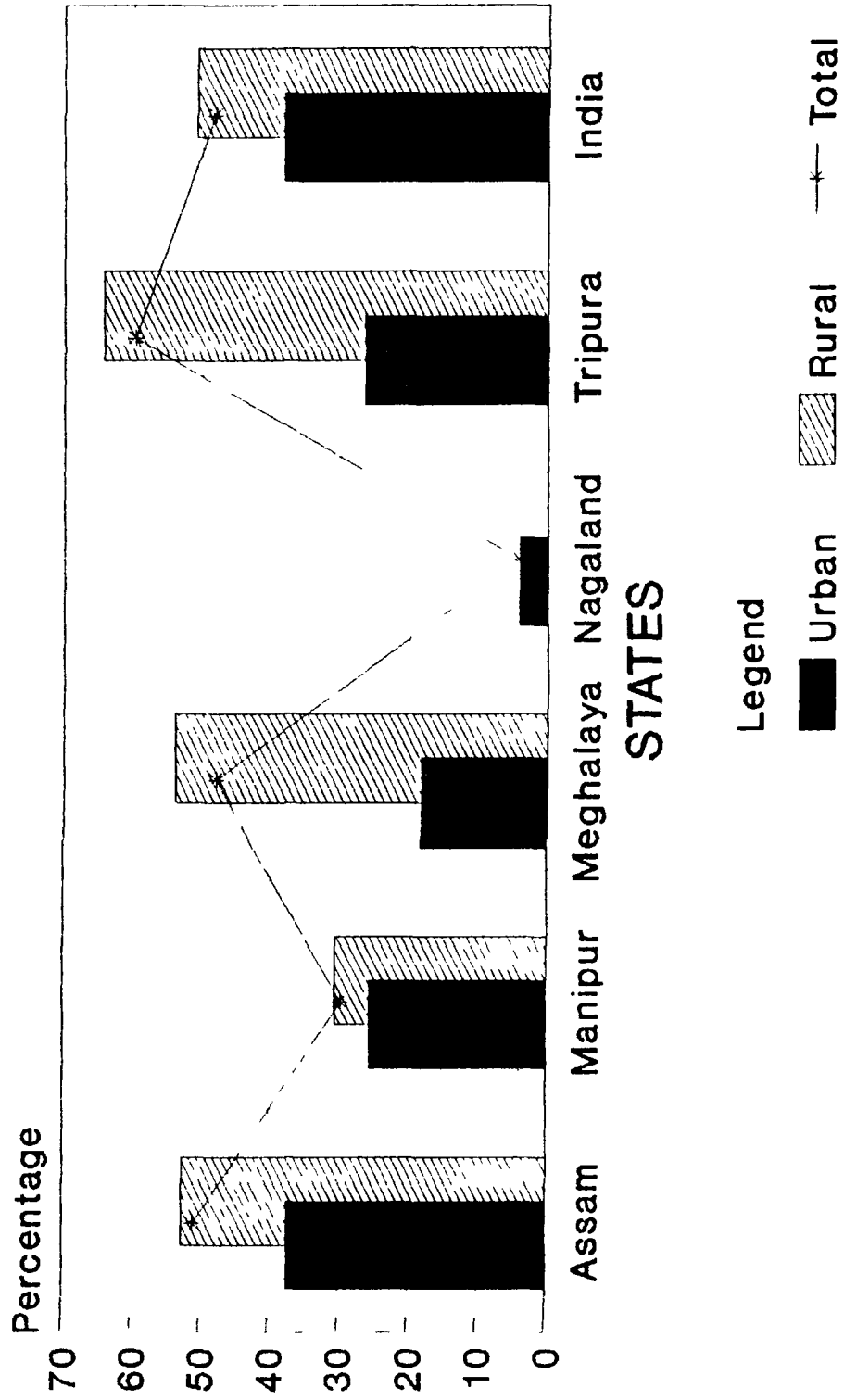


Fig.3.4

Table 3.5
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE IN N.E. STATES
(RURAL, URBAN AND TOTAL, 1977-1978)

STATE	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL
Assam	52.65	37.37	51.10
Manipur	30.54	25.48	29.70
Meghalaya	53.87	18.16	48.03
Nagaland	N.A	4.11	4.11
Tripura	64.28	26.34	59.73
India (Weighed)	50.82	38.19	48.13

Source : Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of India (1984 : 171)

Meghalaya, the impact of poverty is great. Here the poor are suffering and have very limited access to even the basic necessities of life. But on the whole, poverty scenario here is different from that of other states.

Ethnography in the North East indicates that, by tradition, the tribals had control of and access to resources, but they are not well off. They are aware of the fact that their levels of living are not satisfactory, but it is difficult to say that they perceive themselves as poor. At the cognitive level, rather than poverty, it is relative deprivation which appears to be more significant. It also needs to be reiterated that income criterion of determination of poverty for comparison, on an all India basis, is meaningful only if there is a fair degree of uniformity in respect of social, infrastructure and culturally dominated distributive mechanisms, but most of the tribal areas of the North East stand on a different footing in these matters.

3.10 WOMEN AND EDUCATION :

In all the tribal communities of the North East, there

NORTH-EAST INDIA

Literacy Rate (1981)

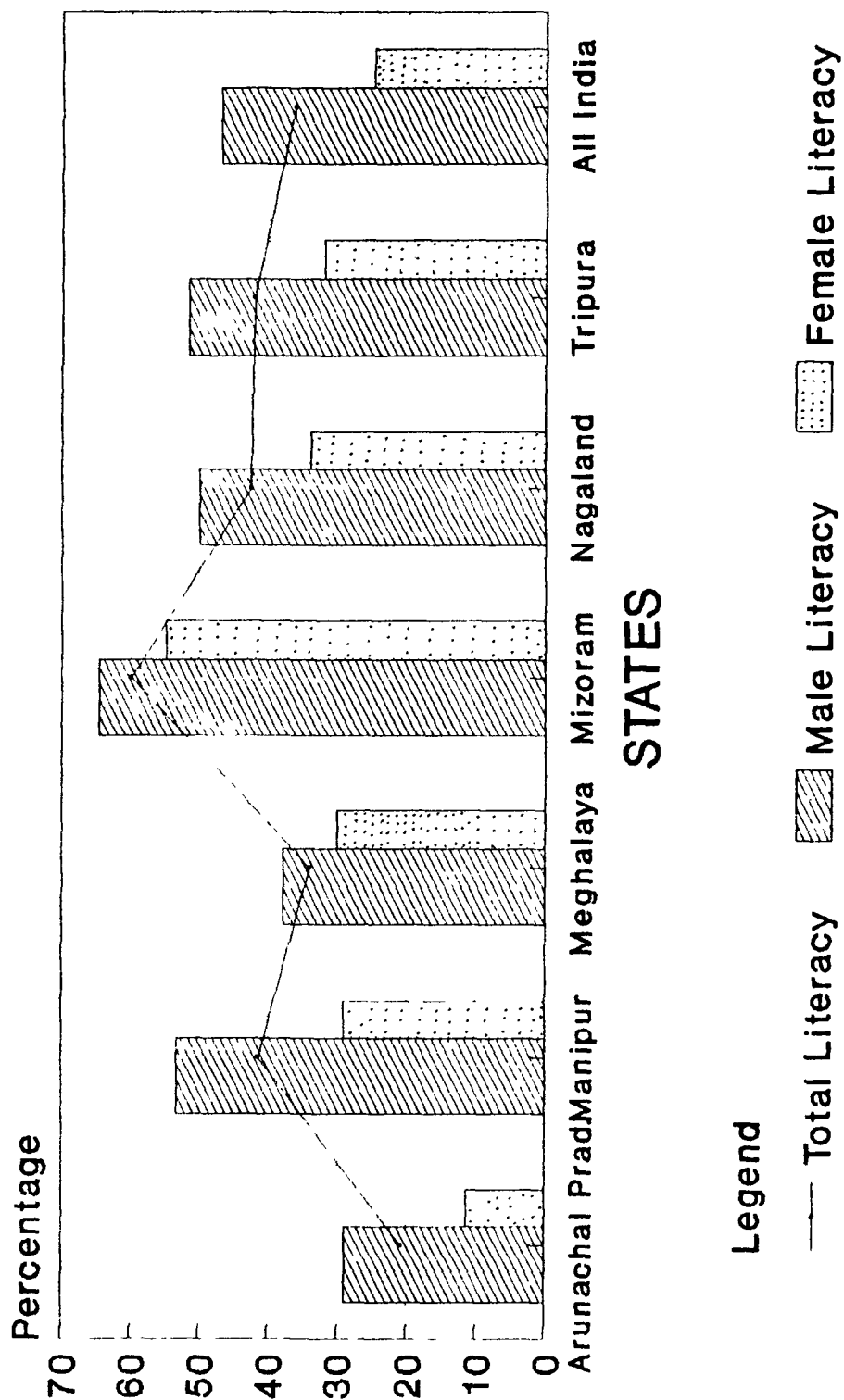


Fig.3.5

is no discrimination against girls in terms of access to education facilities. In fact, great care is taken to ensure equality of educational opportunity for women at all levels which goes a long way in improving the status of women. Equal encouragement is likewise given to both sons and daughters in matters of education. Though, sometimes in Garo society one may hear a father making a characteristic remark saying, 'what is the use of educating my sons'. After all, they will go away and feed someone elses' family". The same way we hear traditional Indian non-tribal societies talk of girls' education as wasteful. In this respect girls are encouraged to pursue their education and

Table 3.6
LITERACY RATE : 1981

(/'000)

STATE/UNION TERRITORY	NO OF LITERATES	NO OF MALE LITERATES	NO OF FEMALE LITERATES
Arunachal Pradesh	207	289	113
Assam	-	-	-
Manipur	414	533	291
Meghalaya	341	379	301
Mizoram	599	645	549
Nagaland	426	501	339
Tripura	421	517	320
All India	362	469	248

Source : Central Statistical Organisation, (1984 : 527-528)

careers. If we compare the percentage of literates to total population by sex, we find out that it is higher in the North Eastern states as compared to rest of India, especially for females with the exception of the state of Assam where the tribal population is relatively small.

In India, the percentage of literates was 36.23 in 1981

and (52 per cent in 1991), 46.89 for males and 24.82 for females, whereas in the state of Mizoram it is 59.88, 64.46 for males and 54.91 for females. So the gap due to gender bias is far less. In Meghalaya, the level of literacy in 1981 was, total 34.08 per cent, Males - 37.89, Females - 30.08. The literacy rate for 7 and above was 48.26 per cent in Meghalaya, Males - 51.5 per cent, Females - 45 per cent, not much difference. In Nagaland of 42.57 per cent of overall literacy, males had 50.06 per cent, females 33 per cent. Manipur with 41.35 per cent overall literacy level, males had 53.29 per cent, females, 29 per cent literacy. So, on the whole, total percentage of literates as well as female literate population is higher in the North East compared to rest of India. If we see the enrollment ratio for classes I-V (6-11 yr.) in Meghalaya we find it is 103.3 per cent for boys and 100 per cent for girls in 1985-86. In Manipur the figure is 133 per cent for boys and 109 per cent for girls. In Mizoram it is 140.6 for boys and 131.6 for girls. In India it is only 108.8 for boys and 77.1 for girls. On the whole, the training institutions are inadequate for the region. There is a gap between education and jobs. There is also the unsatisfactory demand and supply situation which is accentuated to a greater extent in the North Eastern states than in the rest of India. The preference for white collared jobs of highly educated women has led to low work participation rates.

From the table 3.6, it is clear that Mizoram has larger proportion of literates. Meghalaya has comparatively smaller

proportion of literates and Arunachal Pradesh has the least number of literates among the North Eastern states.

As far as female literacy vis-a-vis male literacy is concerned the position is far better than the all India level. There is not much difference between male and female literacy rates. In Meghalaya there are 379 literate males per 1000 males and 301 literate females per 1000 females. In Mizoram also the comparative figures are 649 and 549, respectively. Therefore, in the North Eastern states women enjoy far better educational status.

In order to improve the educational status of poor urban women, CSWB is financing several vocational courses for poor, adult women. In Meghalaya itself 6 such programmes have been started and the money sanctioned is Rs. 2 lacs. In Arunachal Pradesh there are 20 such programmes and amount sanctioned is Rs.6 lacs.

In Meghalaya, other voluntary agencies like Garo Union, Wahiazer Mahila Samity, Ronjeng Mahila Samity play an active role in providing vocational training for women. To enhance their economic welfare, financial assistance has been given to women. Programmes for imparting training to destitute, women also started in Meghalaya, Assam and Manipur.

Moreover, the government has recognised that women need security of stay when they move out of their homes and go to cities and towns for work so a number of for working women's hostels have been constructed and central government provides 75

Table 3.7
CONSTRUCTION OF HOSTELS FOR WORKING WOMEN IN THE
NORTH EASTERN STATES UPTO 1984-85

STATE/UNION TERRITORY	NO OF CITIES/ TOWNS	NO OF HOSTELS	CAPACITY
Arunachal Pradesh	1	1	25
Assam	3	6	425
Manipur	4	6	222
Meghalaya	1	2	134
Mizoram	1	1	40
Nagaland	1	1	126
Tripura	1	1	20

Source : Ministry of Welfare, Government of India, (1986 : 232)

per cent of the total construction cost of the hostels to the voluntary agencies. Table 3.7 reveals the position in this regard.

Table 3.8
IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMME OF FUNCTIONAL LITERACY FOR
ADULT WOMEN (FLAW) IN ICDS PROJECTS (CENTRAL SECTOR)
IN THE NORTH EASTERN STATES - 1984-85

STATES/UNION TERRITORIES	NO OF ANGANWADIS PROVIDING FUNCTIONAL LITERACY	WOMEN ATTENDING FLAW CLASSES	
		NO(000)	AVERAGE NO PER ANGANWADIS
Arunachal Pradesh	148	0.49	3.31
Assam	1334	20.42	15.31
Manipur	301	5.68	18.87
Meghalaya	229	2.34	10.22
Mizoram	216	2.38	11.02
Nagaland	531	4.70	8.85
Tripura	289	2.94	10.79

Source : Ministry of Welfare, Government of India, (1986 : 242-243)

Apart from participating in economic activities, empowerment of women can be promoted through functional literacy and ICDS has conducted these projects. Table 3.8 reveals the

position with regards to this aspect.

Functional literacy is an active programme in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland compared to other North Eastern states.

3.11A HEALTH STATUS OF WOMEN IN NORTH EASTERN REGION :

Several health indicators like sex ratio, marital status, age at marriage etc, all reveal that in the North Eastern states, women enjoy a much better health status than rest of the country, except for Assam.

Almost every C.D.block has its own primary health centre. Assam, Manipur and Tripura have an average of more than one primary health centre(PHC) per block. Each primary health centre covers a reasonable number of people as compared to other states as shown in table 3.11.

Table 3.9
NUMBER OF DISTRICTS, BLOCKS, PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES AND
SUB-CENTRES (1986)

STATE/UNION TERRITORY	NO OF DISTRICTS	NO OF BLOCKS	NO OF PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES	NO OF SUB- CENTRES FUNCTIONARY
Arunachal Pradesh	5	148	61 (a)	66
Assam	10	131	199	242
Manipur	6	26	40	322
Meghalaya	5	24	36	274
Mizoram	3	20	25	174
Nagaland	7	21	24	196
Tripura	3	17	135	239

(a) Health charts

Source : North Eastern Council Secretariat, (1987 : 91)

As regards to other indices, the position is average. There are 119 hospitals in urban areas with 12,281 beds, 106 in rural areas with 4,152 beds. Goiter is still a problem in Mizoram

Table 3.10
DOCTOR POPULATION RATIO 1985-1986

STATE UNION TERRITORY	DOCTOR POPULATION RATIO	YEAR
Arunachal Pradesh	1 : 3613	1985
Assam	1 : 4879	1985
Manipur	1 : 2750	1986
Mizoram	1 : 4718	1985
Meghalaya	1 : 5891	1985
Nagaland	1 : 3713	1985
Tripura	1 : 4543	1985
* All India	1 : 2430	1985

* All India was calculated from the estimated population of 1985 which was 74.57 crores persons and the number of doctors registered with Indian Medical Council in 1985, which was 3,06,966 doctors.

Source : North Eastern Council Secretariat (1987 : 92)

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (1985-86: 52)

Central Bureau of Health Organisation (1987 : 49)

Table 3.11
NUMBER OF HOSPITALS AND BEDS IN URBAN AREAS (1985)

STATE	RURAL		URBAN		TOTAL	
	HOSPITALS	BEDS	HOSPITALS	BEDS	HOSPITALS	BEDS
Arunachal Pradesh	15	545	8	709	23	1254
Assam	45	3229	82	9305	125	12534
Manipur	11	365	9	937	20	1302
Meghalaya	1	30	12	2035	13	2065
Mizoram	-	-	12	2239	12	2239
Nagaland	26	610	11	750	37	1169
Tripura	4	125	13	1152	17	1277
All India	1567	67300	5907	4,68,435	7474	5,35,755

Source : North Eastern Council Secretariat (1987 : 89)
comparing the hospital bed and population.

and Tripura, the doctor population ratio in the North - Eastern states (in 1985) is quite unfavourable. Arunachal Pradesh (1:3613), Manipur (1 : 2750), Nagaland (1 : 3713) seem to have a better doctor population ratio than the other states. Assam (1 :

4879) and Meghalaya (1 : 5891) shows a poor ratio, worse than the Indian average (1 : 2430). This is because of uncertainty in urban areas than the rural areas. Also there is an absence of a good number of lady doctors, gynæcologists, pediatricians which has an impact on the health of women. Though the doctor-population ratio shows availability of health services, it is important to see how these available services are distributed between the urban and rural sectors.

The above analysis shows that the distribution of hospital beds and doctor population ratio is favourable in the urban areas in these states. The urban masses including women have adequate health services to meet their health needs. The poor people in these areas also can avail these. The emphasis should be to follow hygienic procedures in attending to deliveries and providing treatment for other ailments.

As far as implementation of immunisation and family welfare programmes in the urban poor pockets is concerned, it is inadequate. In Assam, 25 per cent is the average. There is need to cover the entire population with basic health care.

Family welfare programme is the most important health programme of the government, implemented in all the states. But even this has had limited implementation in the North Eastern states as shown in table 3.12

The most actively propagated terminal methods of the government of India are not adopted by many people especially the tribes. Very few women/ men are using spacing methods like IUD

Table 3.12
FAMILY WELFARE PROGRAMME (1983-84)

(/'000)

STATE/UNION TERRITORY	NO OF STERILIZATION	NO OF IUD INSERTIONS	NO OF CON- TRACEPTIVE USERS
Arunachal Pradesh	2.6	7.9	1.7
Assam	42.6	11.4	1.0
Manipur	19.0	20.7	2.8
Meghalaya	10.7	5.9	3.1
Mizoram	26.1	10.8	2.0
Nagaland	2.5	1.1	0.2
Tripura	22.2	2.9	1.7

Source : Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (1983-84 : 597)

and contraceptives. The result is large number of children borne by women which has an adverse effect on their health. Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh has the most limited programme and, therefore, it has the highest population growth rate of 3.5 per cent per annum during the decade 1971-81.

However, family planning should not be seen in the region as simply a device for population control, but rather for the promotion of health of the mother and the infant. There is need for proper education and counseling especially for the tribal women to persuade them to adopt these methods for their own welfare.

There is need for development of more cost-effective medical care facilities in the urban centres. The main emphasis in the region should be on health education, immunisation, maternal and child health care, to promote the health status of women.

3.11B POSITION REGARDING OTHER INDICES OF HEALTH :

3.11.B.1 Marital status and age at marriage :

Marriage is a relatively less preponderant phenomena among the predominantly tribal North East. The proportion of married women is less than 20 per cent in Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, United Khasi and Jaintia Hill district of Meghalaya and most of Arunachal Pradesh.

Unlike the Hindu society, marriage among tribes is neither sacrosanct nor indissoluble. So the proportion of divorced and separated males and females is low.

The proportion of the divorces among the ever married females is highest in the North East. Between 5 to 9 per cent of the married females belong to the category of divorcees in Mizoram and Khasi and Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya, 4 to 5 per cent in Kohima and Manipur West, 3 to 4 per cent in Manipur South and Central.

Widow remarriage is generally admissible among the tribal groups of India. At the national level, the position is that every sixth woman among those who were ever married is a widow. Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya, the proportion of widows is 10 to 15 per cent. In Mizoram and Manipur 20 to 25 per cent.

3.12 WOMEN AND ECONOMIC ROLE :

Women play an important role in the economic and social development programmes as there is no discrimination against girls in terms of access to education facilities, health and employment in the typical tribal societies of the North East.

Therefore, women form a good proportion of the work force. The programmes aimed at raising the status of women, like condensed educational courses for adult women, vocational training programmes, construction of hostels for working women and functional literacy programmes, should be designed to consider the ethos and position of women in this region.

In Meghalaya, in the state secretariat alone, at present, women contribute to 83 per cent of the total employees.

Since, agriculture is the main occupation of the people, women work side by side with man in agricultural fields. They sell agricultural and horticultural products in the local markets. Weaving is very popular amongst the Garo women and it is one of the main sources of family income in most Garo households.

These women unlike their counterparts in the rest of the country as well as from the non-tribal women settled in these parts, are not confined to doing the household chores only. They engage themselves in any kind of economic activities. On account of their involvement and participation in various activities, in and outside their homes, it is obvious that their sphere of work and activities do not end within the four walls of the kitchen or their homes. In urban as well as rural areas shopping and marketing are done almost entirely by women folk. In winter season, when various kinds of fruits and vegetable are available in plenty, women are found to be busy transporting the same to the markets for sale either by bus or by headload. In respect of undertaking trade and commerce, no restriction was imposed on the

women of the society. They are free to practice such profession so as to help raise the family income. So women enjoy a far greater economic freedom here as they have the right to property, the right to make decision regarding economic matters and the right to pursue any employment avenue. Women work freely in all spheres of economic activity without any inhibition.

Women and children have found a significant mention in the Seventh Five Year Plan, for especially meeting the needs of these vulnerable sections, through programmes such as the ANP, development of organizations of women's group, community halls, facilities for women markets, mobile training institutes for women, the participation of women in self-employment.

Given this scenario of high participation of women in the work face, it is necessary to tailor make the socio-economic schemes for women to the requirements of the region.

Thus, the tribal customary laws ensure that the status of women, both social and economic, is no way inferior to those of the men. Women are not discriminated against in the labour market and conditions have been created which ensure equality of educational opportunity for women at all levels. There is nothing to stop a woman from participating in policy formulation and decision making at any level. The word 'status' of women has different connotations here than other parts of the country. Culture also plays an important part in these women's lives. The women actively participate in local festivals by dancing and singing. This boosts their self-confidence and they are in the

limelight rather than being shut within the four walls of the house. Another distinct feature of the women's role in social and family life could be seen where there is a pull between the avuncular and paternal authority. The emergence of the mother figure as a dominant personality is clearly observed in the matter. Moreover, men are totally devoted to their wives unlike in other societies.

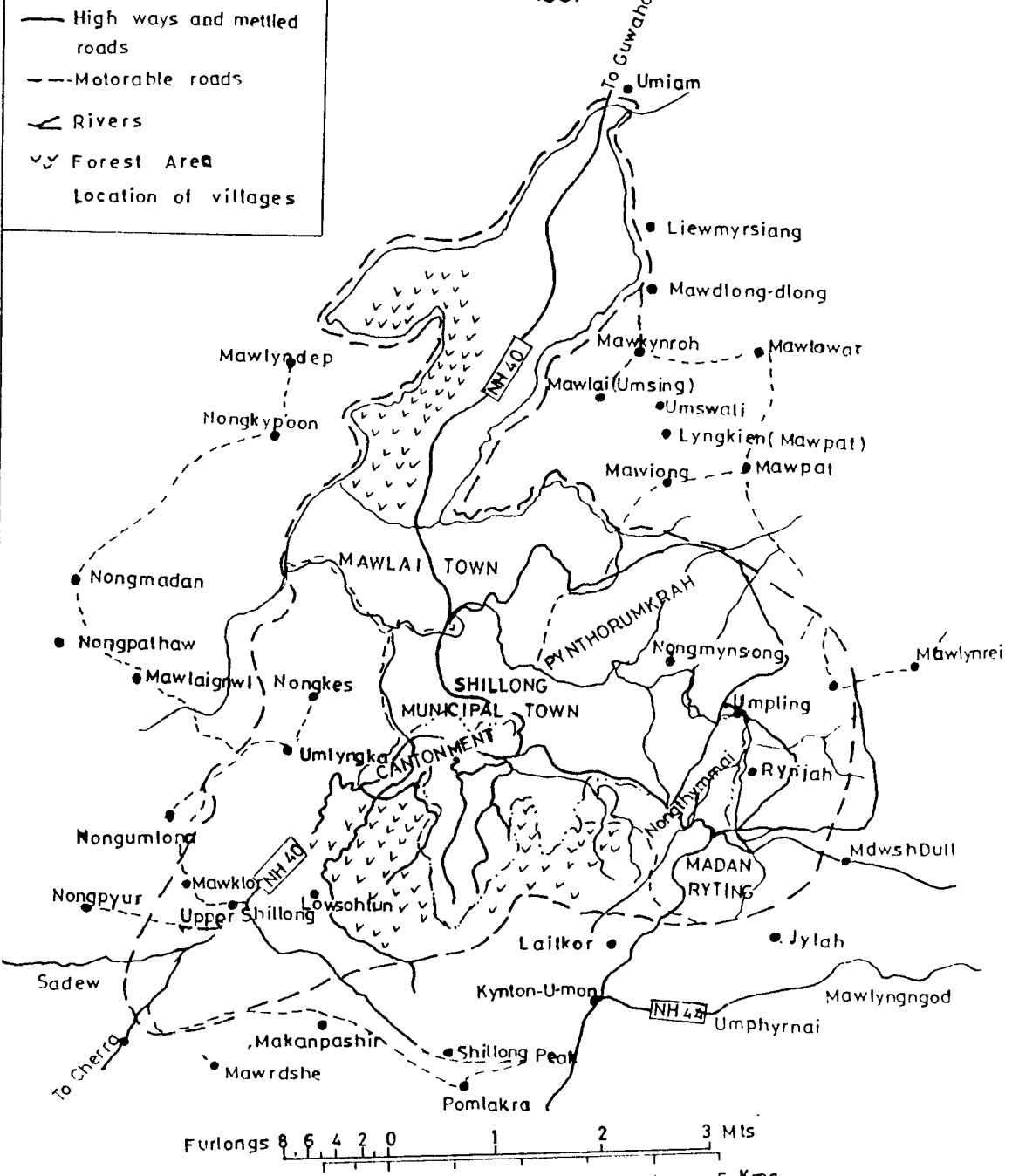
In a transitional society like the Khasi - Jaintia society, much changes have taken place. These changes have tremendous effects on the society in general and the status of women in particular. The traditional pattern of family has changed from what it used to be. There are many factors responsible for this; for example, the impart of Christianity, education, means of communication, mobility of individuals due to employment or in search of jobs, urbanisation etc. Women of the society have to adopt themselves to these changing environment. With the passage of time, the matrilineal system has undergone drastic changes. Today, the traditional system no longer exists in its pure form. Infiltration into the socio-political-economic and cultural tradition came through the contact with other communities, especially non-tribals, new religion, education, modernization of the media.

Today, the modern urban life in towns is not conducive to communal life, since people come from different background and areas and contact with them, has led to the Khasi - Jaintia society to face the forces of change both in forms of material

LEGEND

- Boundary SUA
- - - Municipal town boundary
- - - Other towns
- High ways and metalled roads
- - - Motorable roads
- ∟ Rivers
- ∇ Forest Area
- Location of villages

SHILLONG STANDARD URBAN AREA 1981



Map 31

and non-material culture.

3.13 OVERALL LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE STUDY AREA :

3.13.1 Growth of population:

The growth of population in the Shillong Urban Agglomeration has been rapid as shown in table 3.13.

Table 3.13
POPULATION OF SHILLONG URBAN AGGLOMERATION

URBAN UNITS	TOTAL POPULATION			DECADAL GROWTH	
	1961	1971	1981	1961-71	1971-81
Shillong Municipality	72439	87659	107673	+ 21.01	+ 22.85
Cantonment	2988	4730	6653	+ 58.32	+ 40.66
Mawlai	8528	14260	20280	+ 67.21	+ 42.22
Nongthymmai	10084	16103	21563	+ 59.69	+ 33.91
Pynthorumkrah	-	-	10753	-	-
Madanrting	-	3013	6160	-	-
Shillong U.A.	94039	122752	176064	+ 30.53	+ 43.43

Source : Census of India 1981 and final tables for 1961 and 1971 provisional population total, Meghalaya series - 14.

The table shows that the population of all the urban units has increased. In Shillong Municipality alone, population increased from 72,439 in 1961 to more than one lac in 1981.

The growth of population is higher in 1961-71 decade than the 1971-81 in all four constituents, except Shillong Municipality. The growth of population was 30.53 per cent in 1961-71 decade for Shillong Urban Agglomeration which has increased to 43.43 per cent during 1971-81 decade.

3.13.2 Growth of Urbanisation:

The urbanisation process of Shillong can be attributed

to the peculiar location of the city in a predominantly tribal and hill area.

Two main types of immigrants are responsible for the city growth.

(i) One is augmented by the migration stream from the immediate hinterland of Shillong

(ii) The other is augmented by the migration stream from distant places, both skilled and professionals and also labour class.

In case of Shillong, the probable fact is that the first stream is not as significant due to the traditional - agricultural and rural based economy of the area. The first type of immigrants are located at the periphery of the city and the latter is confined to the core areas of the city.

People move from rural areas to the city not because of poverty. It is lack of employment or earning opportunities in the villages but to enjoy modern way of life and open up new economic activities in the 'unorganised sector' which gives them some additional income to supplement agricultural incomes. So the type of migration from rural areas to the city is quite different from other cities.

Another stream of migrants come to acquire education who after completion of their education do not go back but settle in the city since employment opportunities for the educated in the rural areas are few and far between.

Immigration from distant places is reduced by the

constitutional safeguards provided to the Scheduled Tribes of the area in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution and in employment opportunities in white-collar jobs. However, there exist a large stream of immigration of labour into the state for unskilled or semi-skilled jobs, principally in the construction sector.

Owing to its topographic limitations, slope characteristics and the complexity of land ownership and land laws, the city expansion is not possible in all directions particularly in the establishment of housing colonies etc, the free choice is not available. Therefore, the inner city areas are already highly congested and traffic density are fairly high on the road network of the city.

The share of urban population of Meghalaya is very less, which is 18.12 per cent, as against 23.73 per cent of the national average(1981). However, Shillong Municipality has the largest share of the urban population (48.71 per cent) of the state. This has led to high density of population with around 10,500 persons per square km, causing strains and stresses to urban infrastructure and the quality of life in general.

3.14 Literacy :

The literacy rate is quite high in Shillong compared to national average. This is mainly because of the concentration of number of educational institutions at Shillong and also the efforts put forward by various missionary organisations. Table 3.24 reveals that in all the units of Shillong Urban Agglomeration, literacy rate is high. Although the overall

SHILLONG

Literacy (1981)

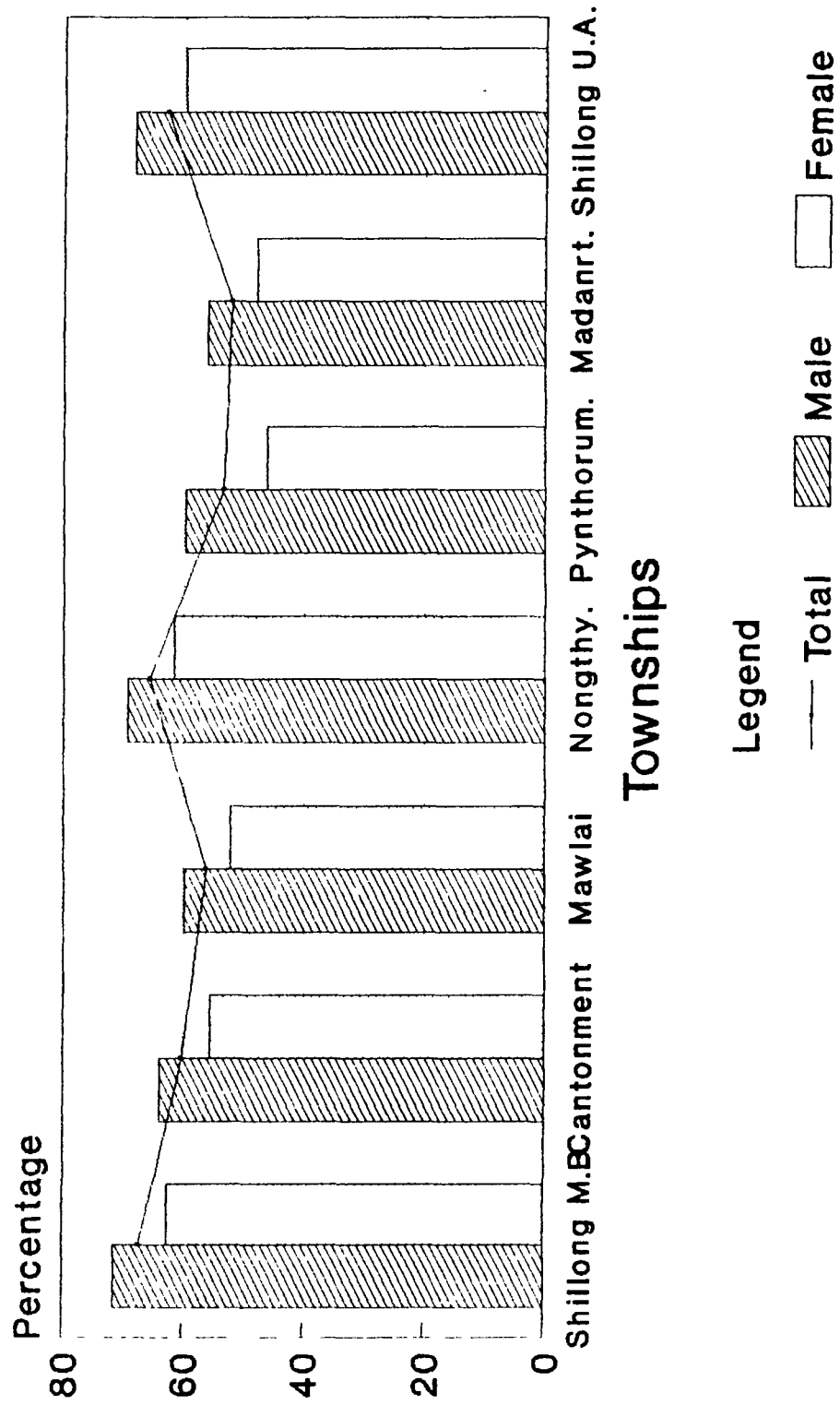


Fig.3. 6

literacy shows a slight decline from 1971 to 1981, it is because

Table 3.14
LEVEL OF LITERACY IN SHILLONG URBAN AGGLOMERATION

(in percentage)

URBAN UNITS	1971			1981		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Shillong Municipality	68.16	73.01	62.24	67.16	71.36	62.53
Cantonment	57.48	63.05	50.22	60.26	63.88	55.51
Mawlai	52.62	56.30	48.10	56.20	59.92	52.09
Nongthymmai	69.38	72.60	65.13	65.53	69.22	61.48
Pynthorumkhrach	-	-	-	53.39	59.69	46.12
Madanrting	-	-	-	57.96	55.98	47.73
Shillong Urban Agglomeration	66.11	70.80	60.62	62.92	68.18	59.39

Source : Census of India 1981, Provisional Population total, Meghalaya.

of the two new additions of townships', Pynthorumkhrach and Madanrting being traditional with low literacy figures, which disturbs the overall picture. Otherwise the percentage literates goes up to 69.77 per cent in 1981.

The table reveals that level of literacy is quite high for females in the city compared to all India level. This may be due to the cultural traditions of the matrilineal societies allowing equal access to educational facilities to women. In the Shillong Municipality the female literacy is 62.54% compared to 71 per cent for males Cantonment area - 55.5 per cent for females compared to 63.88 per cent of males. In Mawlai area - female literacy rate is 52.09 compared to 59.92 in male literacy, Nongthymmai, female literacy is 61.48 compared to 69.22 per cent for males. So there is no discrimination or prejudices against women's education. In 1981, in Shillong Urban Agglomeration the

total literacy rate was 63 per cent, males - 68.18 per cent and females - 59.39 per cent. Thus the impact of socio-cultural milieu is evident in the higher level of education of women.

3.15 Occupational structure :

An urban centre with a sound production base provides

Table 3.15
OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF SHILLONG STANDARD URBAN AREA

SL.NO	OCCUPATION	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PER-CENTAGE
A : PRIMARY					
1.	Cultivators	1153	671	1824	3.87
2.	Agricultural Labourers	1358	853	2211	4.70
3.	Livestock, Forestry, Fishery, Hunting, Plantation, Orchards.	963	77	1040	2.20
4.	Mining and Quarrying	31	25	56	0.12
	Primary sub-total	2352	1626	5131	10.89
B : SECONDARY					
5.	(a) Household Industries	714	129	843	1.79
	(b) Other than Household	3502	272	3774	8.00
6.	Construction	2200	121	2321	4.92
	Secondary sub-total	6416	522	6938	14.71
C : TERRITORY					
7.	Trade and Commerce	5595	2141	7736	16.12
8.	Transport, Storage and Communication	3186	249	3435	7.28
9.	Other Services	19109	4784	23893	50.70
	Tertiary sub-total	27890	7174	35064	74.40
	Total	37811	9322	47133	

Source : Census of Meghalaya, 1971.

more employment opportunities especially in non-primary sectors. This would help in absorption and assimilation of immigrants, particularly from neighbouring areas, creating possibility of

income generation.

Analysis of the table 3.15 reveals that the percentage share of workers according to different industrial categories. In Mawlai and Nongthymmai the decline in the primary sector and increase in the secondary sector has been significant.

Growth in tertiary sector is based on its dominance by administrative function and the development of the educational function. Shillong originated as an administrative town, so the services sector predominates.

The tertiary sector alone accounts for 74.4 per cent of the total work force. The services sector alone accounts for 50 per cent of the workers. The occupational structure of female workers reveals that majority of female workers are also working in tertiary (formal sector), i.e, 7,174 i.e. 76.95 per cent and 47.89 (67 per cent) in services sector alone out of total territory sector workers. Primary sector accounts for the next large share of female workers, i.e. 1626 out of 9,322, i.e. 17.44 per cent of workers. Secondary sector participation is the least - 522 female workers only, i.e 5.5 per cent.

Shillong accounts for higher female work participation than the rest of the country. Women equipped with higher education and having the freedom to work outside their homes play a significant role in the development pattern of the city.

Chapter 4

STATUS OF HEALTH

4.1 The city of Shillong is one of the major urban agglomerations of the North East India. The inevitable consequence of rapid urbanization has been the emergence of 32 slum areas in the city. Most of the poor people reside in these slums and the women bear the brunt of difficulties of the squalid living conditions, overcrowding, haphazard development, inadequate water supply and sanitation, insufficient basic services are the typical features of all the slum areas in Shillong. The poor women from these slum areas are the victims of exploitation and neglect in many spheres of life ranging from access to health facilities, access to education, employment etc. The situation is far worse in the case of non-tribal women than the tribal women as is revealed from the study of the two selected slums particularly Barapathar, which is mainly dominated by Non tribals (non S.T) and the Upper Lumparing slum area dominated by the Khasis (S.T).

4.2. OVERALL CONDITIONS OF LIVING OF THE STUDY AREA :

The overall living condition have a bearing on the health of the individual. The city of Shillong has a distinctive socio-economic situation which differs from the rest of the country due to its unique hilly topography, problem of communication and predominantly tribal population (50 per cent), having their own unique cultures. Many of the problems of the region, the chief being poverty, are directly related to these specific socio-economic conditions, and they have affected the development processes in the city. The poverty scenario in the city is relatively different from the cities in the other areas.

At the cognitive level, rather than poverty, it is relative deprivation which appears to be more significant because in most of the slum areas of Shillong, the typical harrowing existence of life with widespread hunger and malnutrition and high infant mortality rates are on the lower side as experienced by the slum dwellers in the cities of U.P., Bihar etc.

In order to gauge the overall living conditions of the area, information has been gathered regarding the socio-cultural variables such as (a) ethnic composition

(b) religious composition and caste

(c) duration of stay in the city etc.

(d) The cause of differentiated status of tribal and non-tribal women which has been examined with the help of variables like (i) matrilineal system (ii) percentage of female headed households etc. These indicators reveal the socio-cultural dimensions of the overall development of the area.

The economic variables such as :

(a) level of household income

(b) access to ration card facility

(c) access to electricity have also been evaluated to get a composite picture of the standard of living in these slum areas.

4.2.1. Ethnic Composition :

Population composition of these slums reveal a high degree of ethnic diversity and economic disparities among the varied ethnic segments. They are the Khasis, Bengalis, Nepalis

SLUMS OF SHILLONG

Linguistic Composition

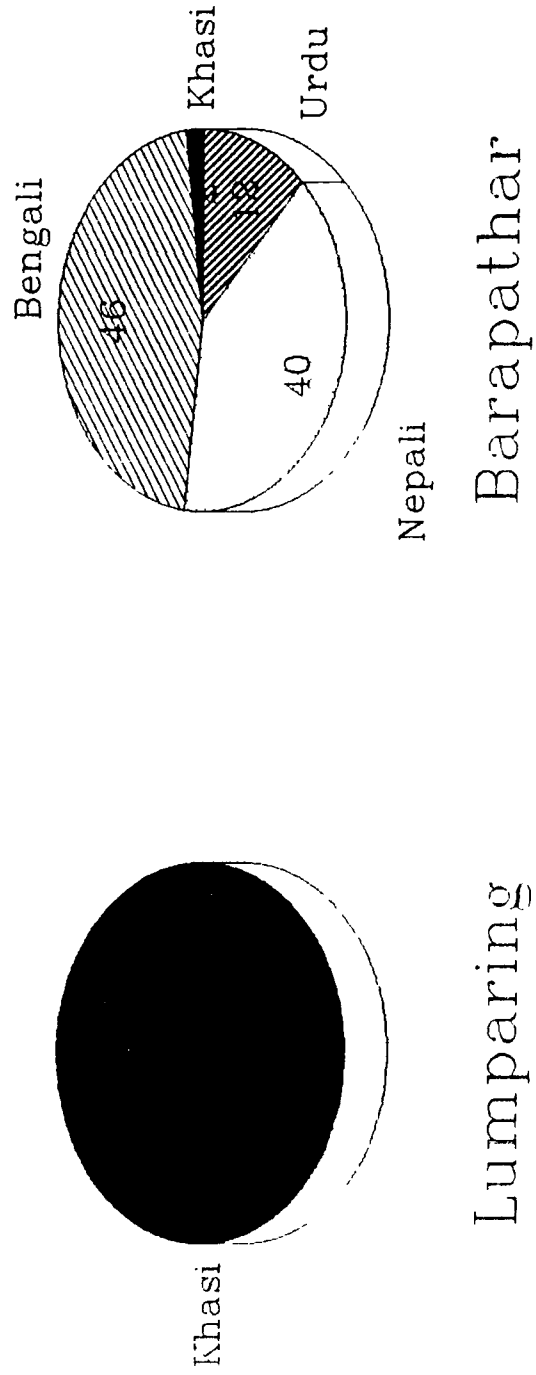


Table 4.1

**DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEYED POPULATION
BY ETHNIC COMPOSITION**

SL.NO	ETHNIC COMPOSITION	PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS IN BARAPATHAR AREA	PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS IN LUMPARING AREA
1	2	3	4
1.	Khasi speaking	0.04	100.00
2.	Bengali speaking	46.00	0.00
3.	Nepali speaking	40.00	0.00
4.	Urdu speaking	12.00	0.00
5.	Punjabi speaking	0.00	0.00
Total		100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993

and Muslims. Table 4.1 reveals the ethnic composition. It is clear that in Barapathar area the Bengali speaking - 46 per cent, Nepali speaking - 40 per cent and Urdu speaking - 12 per cent, predominate. Only 0.04 per cent are Khasi speaking.

In the Upper Lumparing area 100 per cent of the households are Khasi speaking and other ethnic groups are non-existent.

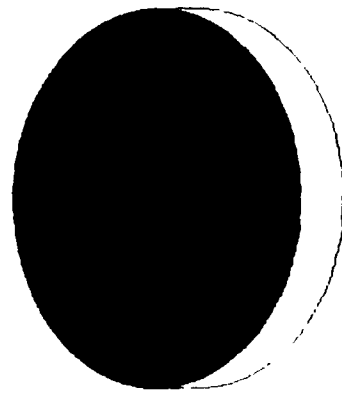
4.2.2. Religious Composition :

In the Barapathar area barring one Khasi household all the others are non-tribals. Out of the non-tribal households 86 per cent are Hindus, 12 per cent are Muslims and 1.96 per cent are Christians as shown in Table 4.2.

In Upper Lumparing area 100 per cent of the households are Tribal. They all belong to Khasis and are 100 per cent Christians. It is mainly a tribal dominated area. They all belong

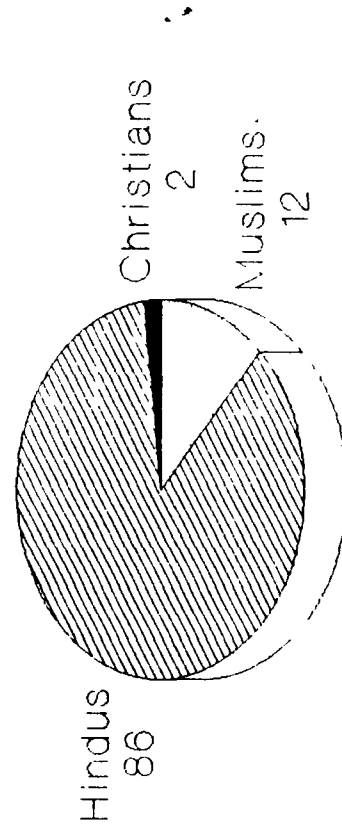
SLUMS OF SHILLONG

Religious Composition



190

Christians
100



Hindus
86

Christians
2
Muslims
12

Lumphing

Earapathar

Fig.4.2

Table 4.2
DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEYED POPULATION
BY RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION

SL.NO	RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION	TRIBALS AREA PER CENT HOUSEHOLDS	NON TRIBALS PER CENT HOUSEHOLDS
1	2	3	4
1.	Christmas	100.00	2.00
2.	Hindus	0.00	86.00
3.	Muslims	0.00	12.00
4.	Sikhs	0.00	0.00
5.	Others	0.00	0.00
Total		100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993

to Scheduled Tribe as is shown in Table 4.3. Whereas in the Barapathar area 100 per cent of the households belong to non scheduled tribes.

Table 4.3
DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEYED POPULATION BY SCHEDULED TRIBE/ NON-ST
IN LUMPARING AND BARAPATHAR AREAS

SL.NO	SCHEDULED CASTE/ TRIBE	UPPER LUMPARING PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	BARAPATHAR PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS
1	2	3	4
1.	Scheduled caste	0.00	0.00
2.	Scheduled tribe	100.00	0.00
3.	Non-Scheduled Caste/Tribe	0.00	100.00
Total		100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

4.2.3. Duration of Stay :

The duration of stay in the city reveals the migration

status of the household members, that is, whether they have migrated to the city recently or have been residing for a long period. In the Lumparing area, 96 per cent of the people have been staying in the city for over 10 years whereas only 4 per cent of the population are recent settlers in the area, i.e, for less than 5 years. The comparative figures for Barapathar area is 95 per cent for more than 10 years and 5 per cent of the population for less than 5 years.

4.2.4. Access to Ration Card:

The availability of ration card and its usage for

Table 4.4
AVAILABILITY AND USAGE OF RATION CARD

SL.NO	CATEGORY	AVAILABILITY OF RATION CARD PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	DRAWING OF RATION FROM RATION SHOP PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS
1	2	3	4
1.	Tribes	93.44 have it 6.66 don't	93.44 6.66 not using
2.	Non-tribes	66.00 have 44.00 don't	56.00 using it 54.00 not using

Source : Survey by Author, 1993.

drawing ration from the Fair Price Shop has an impact on the living conditions of the poor to some extent Table 4.4 reveals that nearly 94 per cent of the tribes have ration card and are using it. Whereas only 66 per cent of the non tribes have their own ration card.

From the table it is clear that the S.T. population are comparatively better off in this aspect than the non-tribes.

Moreover out of the 66 per cent of the non-tribes, only 56 per cent are making use of the card to draw ration from the F.P.S.

4.2.5. Access to Electricity :

In terms of electricity supply, nearly all the households in Lumparing as well as Barapathar area are connected with electric supply.

4.2.6. Income of the Household :

The socio-cultural realities of the area are closely related to its poor economic conditions. Poverty, in different

Table 4.5
INCOME OF THE HOUSEHOLD

SL.NO	LEVEL OF INCOME IN RUPEES PER MONTH	NON-TRIBALS PERCENT HOUSEHOLD	TRIBALS PERCENT HOUSEHOLD	TOTAL
1	2	3	4	5
1.	< 500	7.69	6.66	7.20
2.	501 - 1000	23.07	13.33	18.40
3.	1001 - 1500	21.53	25.00	23.20
4.	1501 - 2000	24.61	18.36	21.60
5.	2001 - 2500	1.53	10.00	5.60
6.	2501 - 3000	10.88	11.66	11.20
7.	3001 - 3500	0.00	0.00	0.00
8.	3501 - 4000	3.00	1.66	2.40
9.	Above 4000	7.69	13.33	10.40
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993

forms, exists in all parts of the area.

The criteria of urban poverty as enumerated by the government of India is 2100 calories of food equivalent of consumer expenditure per day/per head which when converted into Income works out at Rs 11,850/ per capita income per year, per

family of 5 at 1990-91 prices. This determines the people living below poverty line.

In the study area, with its unique social, infrastructural and culturally dominated distributive mechanisms, the income criterion of determination of poverty for comparison, on an All India Basis, has to be different. Thus, people having an income level of less than Rs 1500 per month have been considered to be below poverty line as compared to National Per Capita Income of Rs 987.50 per month/per family of 5 at 1990-91 prices, considering 10 per cent inflation per year and for family of 6 people in the study area.

Table 4.5 reveals that nearly half of the households in both tribal and non tribal areas i.e. 52.29 per cent in the case of non tribals and 45.00% in the case of tribes have an income less than Rs 1500 per month i.e. they are living below the poverty line.

It is evident from the Table 4.5 that in the case of non-tribal households, 7.69 per cent have income ranging from Rs 100 - 500, 23.07 per cent have income of Rs 501-1000, 21.53 per cent between Rs 1001 - 1500, 24.61 per cent between Rs 1501 - 2000. Only a few households had income more than Rs 2000 per month. 1.53 per cent between Rs 2001 - 2500, 10.88 per cent between Rs 2501 - 3000, and 10.69 per cent above Rs 3000. The corresponding figures for the tribal households are 6.66 per cent between Rs 100 - 500, 13.33 per cent between Rs 501 - 1000, 25 per cent between Rs 1001 - 1500, 18.36 per cent between Rs 1501 - 2000, 10 per cent between Rs 2001 - 2500, 11.66 per cent between

Rs 2501 - 3000, 1.66 per cent between Rs 3501 - 4000 and 13.33 per cent above Rs 4000. The tribal households comparatively had slightly higher income levels than the non-tribals that is, 36.65 per cent of the tribals had incomes above Rs 2000 per month as compared to 23 per cent of the non-tribals.

On the whole in both the areas the level of income was low. Nearly 70 per cent of the households had an income level of less than Rs 1500 per month or 24,000 per annum.

4.2.7. Matrilineal System and the Status of Women:

Due to the prevalence of matriliney, the tribal society shows less inequality in the status of the sexes as compared to the non tribes. The prevalence of matrilineal system helps women to have financial security and upper hand in household and economic matters unlike the rest of the country where women are totally dependent on males due to the prevalence of patriarchal system. The girl child is not looked down upon in the tribal society and is not discriminated against, as far as access to nutrition, education and other amenities are concerned. This allows for greater freedom and participation of women in social and economic life. This is one the main causal factor contributing to differentiated status of tribal vis-a-vis non-tribal women in the study area.

4.2.8. Female-headed Households:

A female headed household is that household where a female member is the chief provider/protector and the contribution of all others are negligible or secondary in the

Table 4.6
DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

SL.NO	CATEGORY	UPPER LUMPARING AREA	BARAPATHAR AREA
1	2	3	4
1.	Female headed	55.88	10.00
2.	Male headed	44.12	90.00
	Total	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

household situation.

From the table 4.6 it is clear that 55.88 per cent of the tribal households are female headed as compared to 10 per cent of the non-tribal households indicating the impact of matrilineal system which allows them to have much better status economically and socially. They have a far greater role to play in the family and society.

Thus, the overall conditions of the area reveal that in some respects the tribes have a far better status than the non-tribes.

4.3. HEALTH STATUS OF WOMEN :

The health status of a community is an important indicator to show its level of development. The health status of women has a bearing on the overall status of women as it is very much linked to other aspects of development. Poverty is one of the root causes of poor health status of women as it entails lack of adequate nutrition, absence of good habits of personal hygiene, ignorance and higher mortality among the females. In the

study area, the urban poor women suffered from additional health hazards because of unhygienic living conditions of the slums. The low level of income combined with illiteracy, lack of health education to enable them to safeguard their own health and that of the other family members especially children and improper housing conditions and sanitation, all have a very telling effect on their health. Health as defined by the World Health Organization (W.H.O) is "The complete well-being of an individual physically, mentally and spiritually and not merely the absence of disease". It is in the light of this definition that in order to obtain a composite picture of the health status of women in these slum pockets, a number of indicators relating to demographic variables, nutritional and social variables have been used.

In order to evaluate the health status of women, information has been collected regarding (a) a number of demographic variables such as size of the family, age composition of women; sex ratio etc.

Women would enjoy a far better health if they have fewer children and at an appropriate time gap. So information

regarding (a) marital status

(b) age at marriage

(c) age of first pregnancy and

(d) the number of children women has, have been collected.

Social variables such as (a) water supply

(b) status of sanitation

(c) housing conditions

(d) educational level of women have been studied for the S.T's and non-tribes separately.

Data has been collected regarding a number of health and nutritional indicators such as a) choice of foods

(b) accessibility to medical facilities

(c) expenditure on food items

(d) status of pregnant and lactating women

(e) awareness and the adoption of family planning methods.

All these indicators together have helped to obtain an overall, composite picture of the health status of women.

4.3.1. Water Supply :

The access to safe water supply is very crucial to health as many endemic diseases like cholera and parasites like

Table 4.7
STATUS OF WATER SUPPLY

SL.NO	INDICATOR	KHASIS PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	NON-KHASIS PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	TOTAL
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Access to water supply			
	(i) within the house	23.52	20.00	21.76
	(ii) outside the house	76.48	80.00	78.24
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Census survey by the author, 1993.

guinea worm are caused by unsafe, polluted water supply. But in the slum areas, not only is there a scarcity of good quality

SLUMS OF SHILLONG

Status of Water Supply

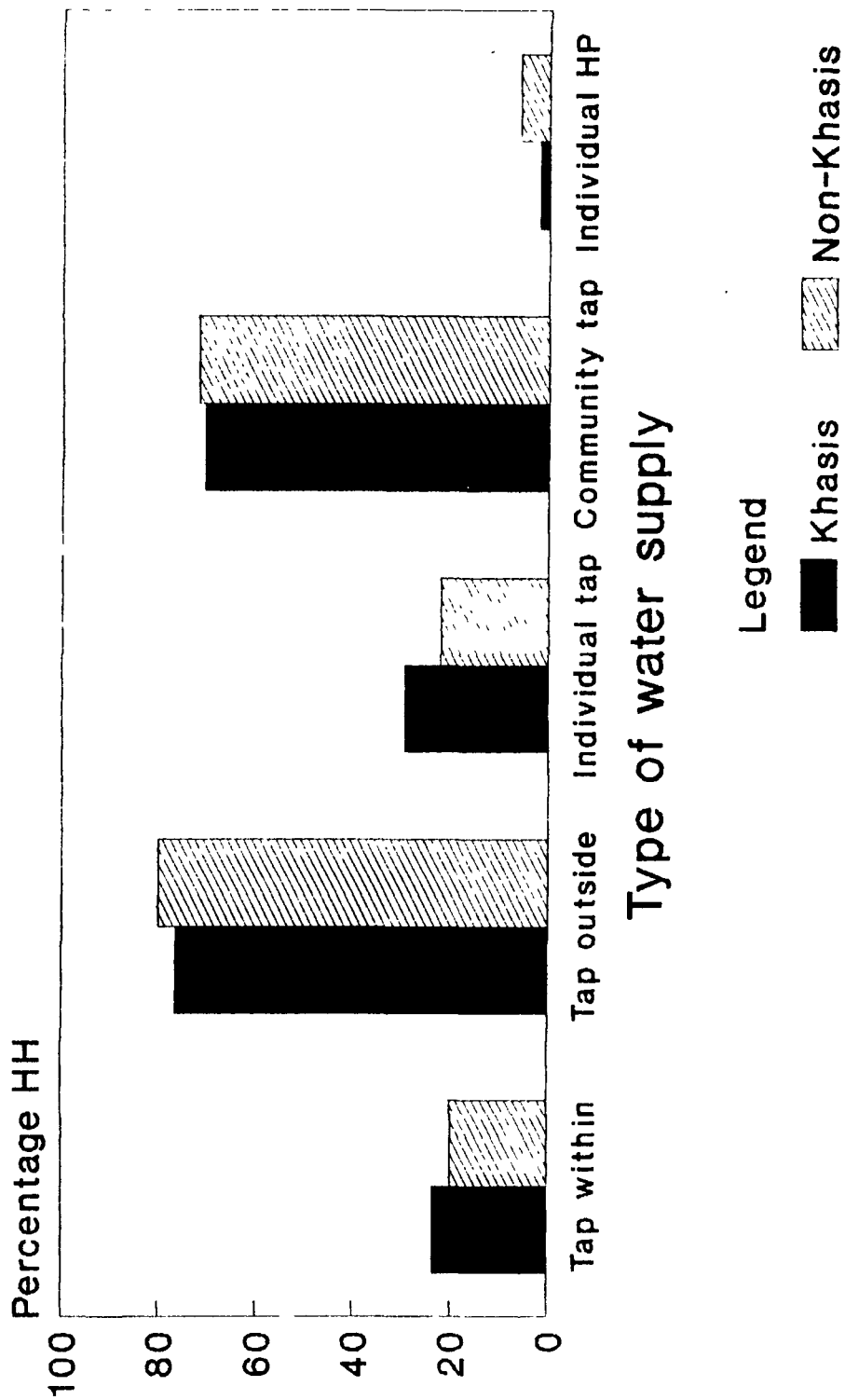


Fig.4.3

drinking water but also profusion of occurrence of gastro intestinal disorders. Table 4.7 reveals that as far as water availability is concerned, majority of both tribal (76.48 per cent) as well as non-tribal (80 per cent) women have to go out of house to fetch water.

Table 4.7 also shows that on the whole only 21.76 per cent of the households have access to water within the house whereas 78.24 per cent do not have access to water within the house.

Regarding the source of water supply, information has

Table 4.8
SOURCE OF WATER SUPPLY

SL.NO	SOURCES OF WATER	TRIBALS PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	NON-TRIBALS PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	TOTAL
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Individual tap	27.42	22.00	20.20
2.	Individual well	0.00	0.00	0.00
3.	Community tap	70.58	72.00	75.00
4.	Community handpump	0.00	0.00	0.00
5.	Community well/ Tube well	0.00	0.00	0.00
6.	Individual handpump	2.00	6.00	4.80
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Census Survey by the author, 1993.

been gathered for both S.T's as well as non tribes, Table 4.7 reveals that on the whole nearly 75 per cent of women drew water from community tap whereas only 20 per cent of them had individual taps in their houses and nearly 5 per cent obtained water from individual handpumps.

4.3.2.Housing Condition :

In order to get an idea of the living conditions, questions were asked regarding the type of house according to the material of wall, material of roof and the material of floor. If the material used was cements, concrete burnt bricks, stone, reed, timber, tiles etc, house was classified as pucca and if the material used was bamboo, mud, grass leaves etc, the house was considered as kutchra. Houses lying in between these two were classified as semi-pucca.

Table 4.9
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY TYPE OF HOUSING

SL.NO	TYPE OF HOUSING	KHASIS	NON KHASIS	TOTAL
1.	Pucca	47.00	18.00	29.76
2.	Semi pucca	53.00	26.00	36.91
3.	Kutchra	0.00	56.00	33.33
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Table 4.9 reveals the type of housing of these slums. The housing conditions are better for the tribes than the non-tribes. 47 per cent of the Khasis stay in pucca houses as compared to 18 per cent of the non-Khasis. 53 per cent of them live in semi-pucca houses as compared to 26 per cent of the non-tribes, 56 per cent lived in kutchra houses whereas none of the tribals stayed in kutchra houses. The non-tribal women had to suffer along with their families the vagaries of the climate.

From the table it is clear that on the whole, 29.76 per cent of the women stayed in pucca houses, 36.91 per cent in semi-

SLUMS OF SHILLONG

Housing Condition

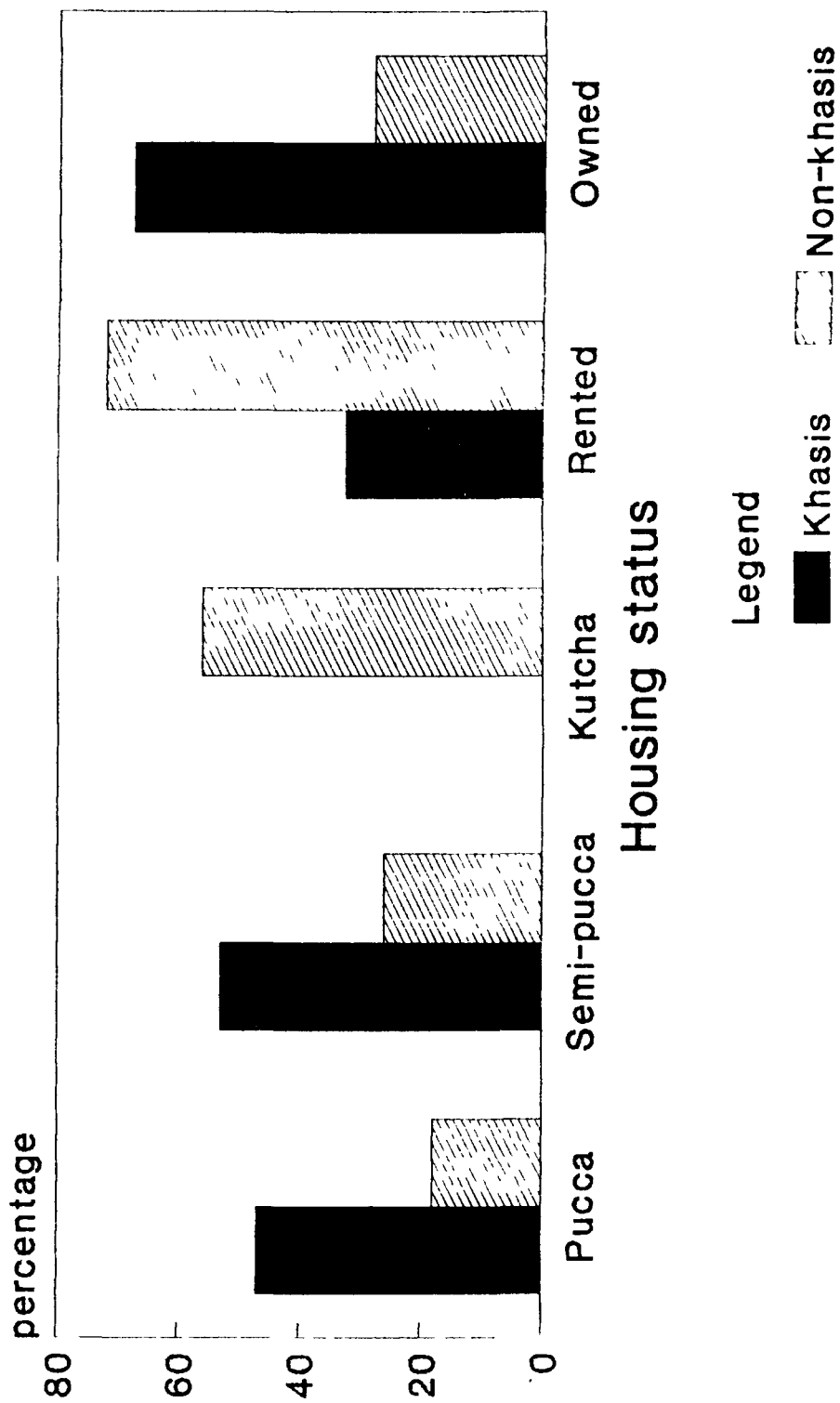


Fig.4.4

pucca and 33.33 per cent in kutcha houses.

Table 4.10
STATUS OF HOUSING

SL.NO	STATUS OF OWNERSHIP	TRIBES PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	NON TRIBES PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	TOTAL PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Rented	32.35	72.00	55.94
2.	Owned	67.65	28.00	44.06
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Table 4.10 shows that only 28 per cent of the non-tribes have their own houses as compared to 67.65 per cent of the scheduled tribes. Only 32.35 per cent of the tribes are staying in rented houses as compared to the great majority of the non-tribes (72 per cent). The non-tribal women comparatively suffer more from the abject poverty conditions.

On the whole, a large segment of the households (56 per cent) are staying in rented houses which are mostly semi-pucca.

4.3.3. Status of Sanitation :

The status of sanitation has a direct bearing on the health status of women. Sanitary means of excreta disposal are available only in a few households. A great majority of the population (77.38 per cent) have to go out of the house to use the public toilet facilities as shown in Table 4.11. Only 21.42 per cent women and other people have access to private toilet facility within the house.

Table 4.11 also reveals that the tribal families (Upper

SLUMS OF SHILLONG

Status of Sanitation

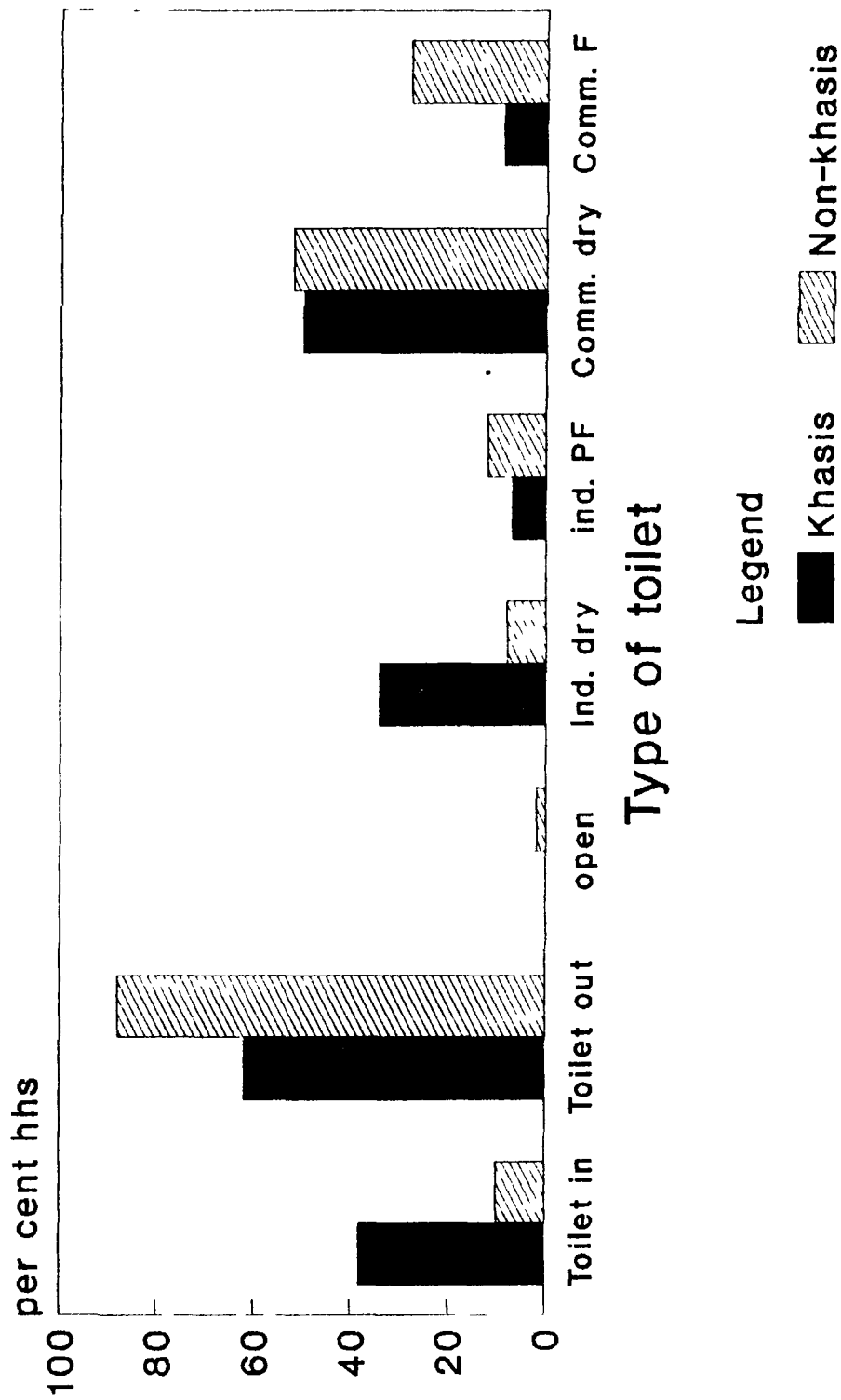


Fig.4.5

Table 4.11
AVAILABILITY OF TOILET FACILITY

SL.NO	ACCESS TO TOILET FACILITY	TRIBAL PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	NON-TRIBAL PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	TOTAL PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Within House	38.23	10.00	21.42
2.	Outside House	61.77	88.00	77.38
3.	Open	0.00	2.00	1.20
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Lumparing) are slightly better off as far as availability of toilet facility within the house is concerned; 28.23 per cent of the tribals as compared to only 10 per cent had access within the house; whereas 88 per cent of the non tribals had to go out of the house as compared to 61.77 per cent of the S.T's to use the public toilets. There is a need for better sanitation facility to improve the environment of the slums.

Table 4.12
DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE OF TOILETS BEING USED

SL.NO	TYPE OF TOILETS	TRIBALS	NON-TRIBALS	TOTAL
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Individual Dry	34.30	8.00	17.85
2.	Individual Pourflush	6.88	12.00	9.72
3.	Community Dry	50.00	52.00	51.20
4.	Community Pourflush	8.82	28.00	20.28
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Moreover, Table 4.12 reveals the type of toilet

facilities being used by the residents. Nearly 73 per cent of the women have to use the community dry and community pourflush, type of toilet. Only 17.85 per cent use the individual dry and 9.72 per cent are using the individual pourflush latrines. Thus, half the population is using the community dry type of toilet for excreta disposal.

From Table 4.12 it is also clear that only 8 per cent of the non-tribals are using individual dry type of toilets, 12 per cent are using individual pourflush, 52 per cent are using the community dry and 28 per cent are using the community pourflush. The comparative figures for the tribals are 34.30 per cent, 6.88 per cent, 50 per cent, 8.82 per cent, respectively. Therefore, the majority are using the community dry type of toilets which leads to poor sanitation of the area and raises the question about the cleaning of these toilets which is done by a scavenging community. The removal of night soil having been a constitutional obligation, a lot needs to be done in this regard. Living conditions, that is, housing in the case of non-tribes is far worse than tribal households as most of the non-tribal women are staying in semi-pucca and kutcha houses which are rented. Majority of them are staying in two room houses having no facility for drinking water and toilets. The tribal households are staying mostly in three room houses which are owned.

On the whole, lack of sanitation and safe water supply, in view of the rapidly expanding population of these slums where shelter itself is a problem, is assuming crisis proportions.

In the context of extreme poverty combined with high illiteracy of these women, results in poor sanitation and personal hygiene. These problems of poor housing and sanitation are further aggravated causing a high incidence of diseases like diarrhoeal local disorders and sometimes viral infections, skin diseases and gastro-intestinal disorders. The environmental improvement of these slums will help to ameliorate and improve the health status in the areas, specifically the vulnerable segments like the women and children.

4.3.4. Nutritional Status of Women :

Health is an important function of nutrition. Malnutrition in the family especially among the woman emerges as one of the underlying causes of ill health in these poor areas. The factors are economic, environmental and load of degenerative diseases. In these slums, food must be the first concern for health, because, though good health depends on many other things, but above all it depends on getting enough to eat without which the body becomes weak and prone to various types of diseases. It has been found from the survey that the non-tribal women suffer more in this respect as compared to tribals because cultural traditions of intra-family distribution of food compel these women to eat last and often the least both in quantity and quality. Often these poor women remain hungry after they have served the senior male members who being the principal earning members in these households, receive preference in terms of food quantity.

Table 4.13
PATTERN OF FOOD CHOICE

SL.NO	TYPE OF FOOD	TRIBALS PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	NON-TRIBALS PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS
1	2	3	4
1.	Cereals		
	only Rice	100.00	95.00
	only Wheat		
	both rice & wheat		5.00
2.	Leafy Vegetables & Fruits		
	Once a week	0.00	10.00
	Twice a week	10.00	80.00
	Thrice a week	35.00	10.00
	More than three times	55.00	0.00
3.	Intake of Pulses .	100.00	100.00
4.	Meat/Fish/Eggs		
	Once a month	0.00	28.57
	Once a week	20.00	14.28
	Twice a week	40.00	14.28
	Thrice a week	40.00	28.57
	None	0.00	14.30
5.	Milk based Diet	45.21	17.90

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Therefore, an attempt was made to ascertain the nutritional status of non tribal women vis-a-vis tribal women by collecting data on the type of food choices. The data collected on the type of food choices as shown in Table 4.13 reveals that cereals constituted the staple food in most cases especially rice, vegetable (green, leafy and others) and fruits. Pulses were also taken by 100 per cent of the households. Intake of meat and fish was on an average for once a week for all women. Majority of the tribal families (55 per cent) consumed leafy

Table 4.14
NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN

SL.NO	NUMBER OF TIMES MEALS COOKED AND TAKEN PER DAY	TRIBALS PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS	NON-TRIBALS PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS
1.	Once	0.00	4.00
2.	Twice	42.85	53.15
3.	Thrice	57.14	42.85
4.	Any other	0.00	0.00
	Total	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

vegetables and food more than three times a week and 35 per cent consumed it thrice a week as compared to only 10 per cent of the non-tribal pockets who could afford to have leafy vegetables etc. thrice a week. A great majority of these women (80 per cent) consumed them for only two times a week and ten per cent had it only once a week

Table 4.13 also reveals that even with regards to intake of proteins as meat/eggs/fish are concerned, tribal women had an advantage over non-tribal women. 40 per cent of the tribal women consumed meat/fish etc. twice a week as compared to only 28.51 per cent of the non-tribals. 40 per cent had it thrice a week as compared to only 14.28 per cent. 14.28 per cent of the non-tribal women consumed it once a month and 14.28 per cent never look it. In this respect, the diet of tribals was better than the non-tribals.

The cereals are considered energy giving, vegetables, fruits as protective foods, pulses meat and fish as body building

Table 4.15
DIET OF CHILDREN IN THE SLUMS

SL.NO	TYPE OF DIET	TRIBALS PERCENT		NON-TRIBALS PERCENT	
		BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS
1.	Milk, milk based diet	51.00	49.00	76.00	24.00
2.	Protein food	50.00	50.00	80.20	19.80
3.	Vegetables/ Fruits	49.00	51.00	92.80	7.20

Survey by the author, 1993

as they are the main source of proteins. Based on these concepts the cases which chose cereals (one or more) vegetables and protein foods - were classified as "good". At the other end of spectrum, women having cereals (only rice), vegetables-hardly any or once or twice, fish/meat (rarely) were classified and expressed as having poor nutritional status. Others falling in the intermediate category were classified as having moderately good nutrition. In the case of tribal women, 60 per cent that is, a majority of them (60 per cent) had a good nutritional status, 30 per cent had moderately good nutrition and only 10 per cent had poor nutritional status. The comparative figures for non-tribal women are "good" 30 per cent, "moderate" 20 per cent and half of the total female population (50 per cent) had a poor nutritional status.

Information gathered about the number of times meals are cooked and consumed in these poor households further sheds light on the nutritional status of women as shown in Table 4.14.

The table reveals that in this respect also tribal women enjoyed a better status than non-tribal women as more than 50 per cent of them had three meals a day as compared to 42.85 per cent of the non-tribes. 42.88 per cent of the tribal women cooked and consumed meals twice a day as compared to 53.15 per cent in the case of non-tribals. Moreover, 4 per cent of the non Khasi women had meals and cooked them only once a day.

Thus, the nutritional status of the tribal women is better than that of the non-tribal women due to non existence of discrimination against women regarding dietary habits and pattern of food consumption. Therefore, they have a comparatively better health status. The poor nutritional intake of non tribal women reflects the influence of cultural traditions, such as reserving the best food for men or boys, feeding them first as the poverty factor is common in both the cases. These findings are in keeping with the findings of S. Chatterjee, National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau and S Batliwala.

In the non tribal households, discrimination against the girl child is manifested in the better diet being given to boys consisting of milk, eggs etc. than the girls. Moreover, 75 per cent of the women devoted more time on child care for boys than girls. This finding is in line with the finding of Horowitz 1980, Schultz 1989, Pilt 1988, M. Lipton, C. Gopatan 1982. Even in the households having small number of children the discrimination or bias is evident in the tribal households where both male and female children are given equal care and same diet

AGE STRUCTURE OF WOMEN

Slums of Shillong

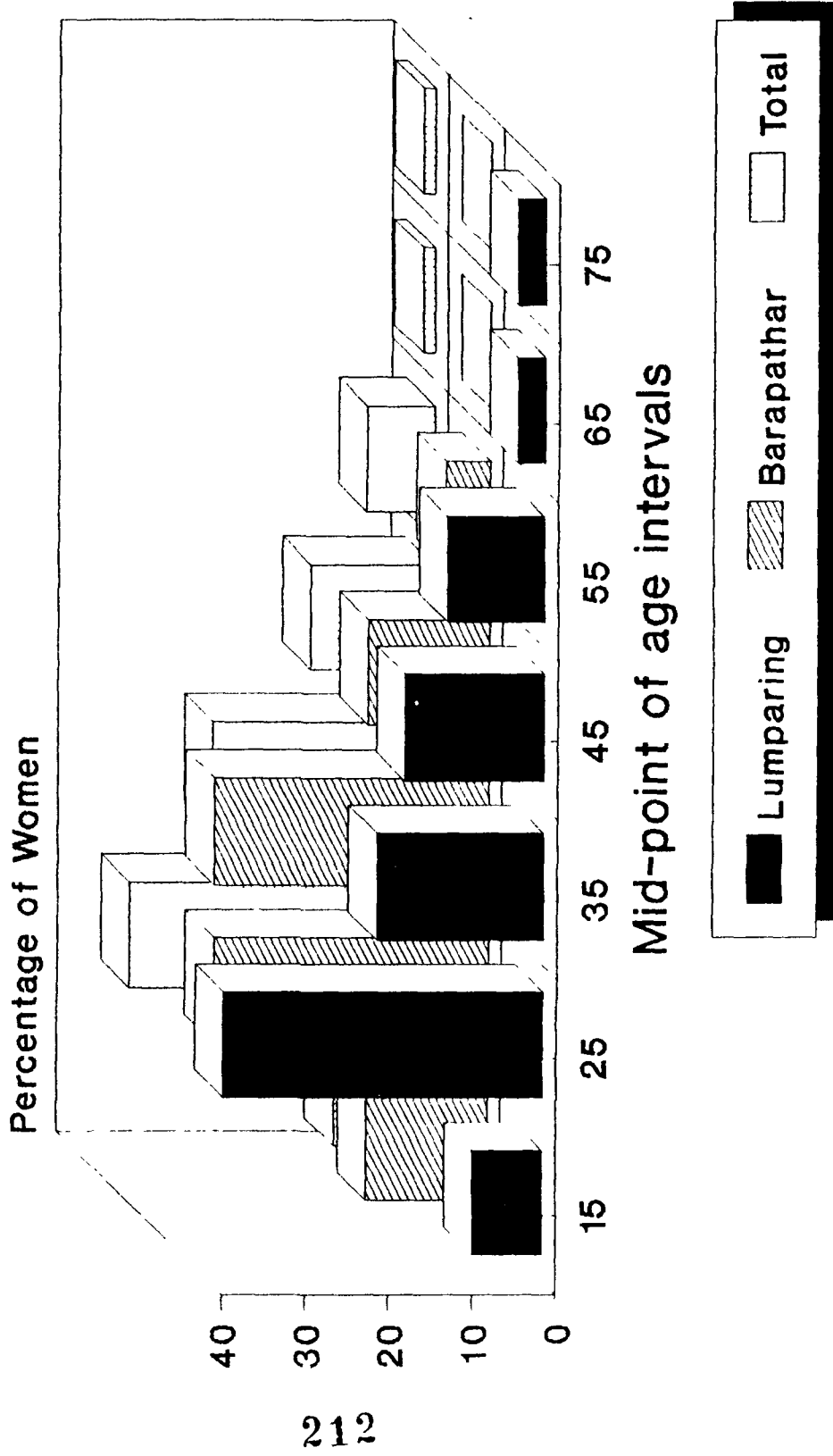


Fig.4.6

as shown in Table 4.15.

Thus, the shorter period of feeding and low quality of food among female starts even from their childhood as is revealed by Table 4.15 in the case of non-tribals. The prejudiced attitude of patriarchal society seems to be responsible for this. These poor girls enter into marriage and motherhood from their pre-existing poor health which further impairs their health.

About 67 per cent of women spend Rs 30 to Rs 50 on food per day. About 33 per cent of women incur expenditures between Rs 40 to Rs 59 on food daily in both the cases.

4.3.5. Age Structure of Women :

An analysis of the age structure of the women reveals that only 3 per cent of the women are above the age of 60 years. Moreover, in both the cases, 76 per cent of the women are in the child bearing age group as shown by Table 4.16.

Table 4.16
AGE STRUCTURE OF WOMEN

SL.NO	VARIATION OF AGE OF WOMEN IN YEARS	TRIBALS PERCENTAGE	NON-TRIBALS PERCENT	TOTAL PERCENTAGE
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Below 15	0.00	1.31	.71
2.	15 - 19	8.34	13.15	11.02
3.	20 - 29	38.33	32.89	35.29
4.	30 - 39	20.00	32.89	26.40
5.	40 - 49	16.66	14.49	14.70
6.	50 - 59	11.66	5.27	8.08
7.	60 - 69	3.33	0.00	1.40
8.	70 - 79	3.33	0.00	1.40
9.	80 and above	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN

Lumparing & Barapathar

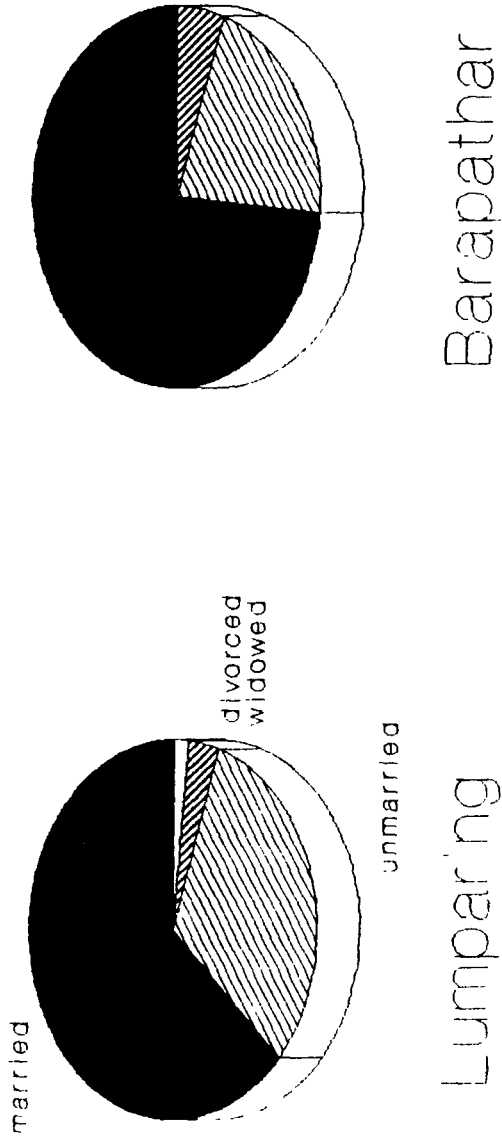


Table 4.16 reveals that majority of the tribal as well as non-tribal women lie in the age group 20-39 years that is nearly 67 per cent whereas 11 per cent in the age group 40-49 years and 8.08 in 50-59 years. Only 3 per cent of the women cross 60 years.

The mean age of women was found to be 38.67 years, as shown in graph of age and number of respondents.

4.3.6. Marital Status of Women :

An analysis of the marital status of the women reveals that majority (75 per cent) of the women are married as compared to 25 per cent of unmarried females. Majority of them, that is,

Table 4.17
MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN

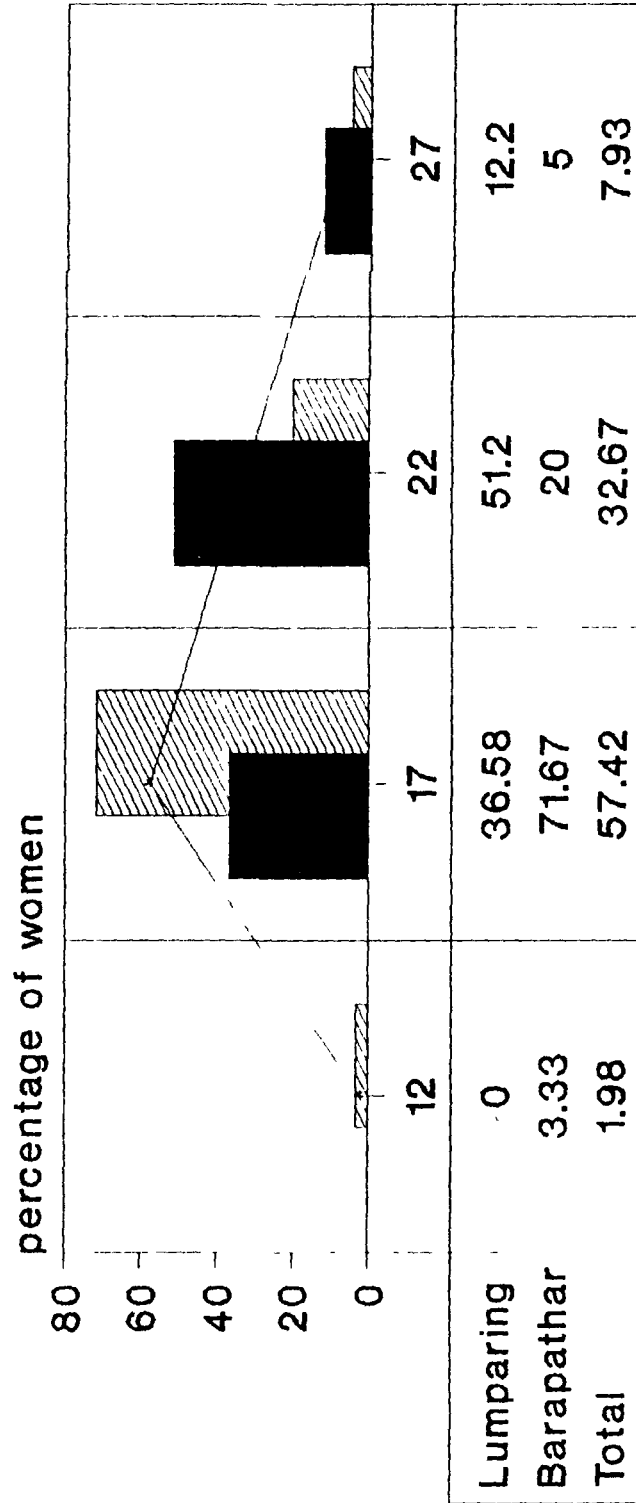
SL.NO	MARITAL STATUS	TRIBALS PERCENTAGE	NON-TRIBALS PERCENTAGE	TOTAL PERCENTAGE
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Married	63.33	73.68	69.11
2.	Unmarried	31.66	21.05	25.73
3.	Divorced	1.68	0.00	1.73
4.	Widowed	3.33	5.27	4.43
5.	Married again	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

57.42 per cent were married between the age of 15-19 years. Marital status of tribal and non-tribal women is shown in the Table 3.17. 63.33 per cent of the tribal women are married compared to 73.68 per cent of non-tribal women. 31.66 are unmarried in the case of tribal women, 1.68 per cent are divorced and 3.33 per cent are widows. The comparative figures for non

AGE AT MARRIAGE

Women in slums of Shillong



Mid-point of time interval

Legend

Lumparing
 Barapathar
 Total

tribal women are 21.05 per cent for unmarried, 5.27 per cent are widows and none are divorced as the customs do not favour divorces. On the whole, 69.11 per cent are married 25.73 per cent are unmarried, 1.73 per cent are divorced and 4.43 per cent women are married.

4.3.7. Age at Marriage :

The age at marriage of the married women further sheds light on the marital status and the implications for health status. Table 3.18 reveals the age at marriage of the tribals well as non-tribal women. The table shows that a great majority (90 per cent) of the women married between the age of 15 to 25 years in both the cases. Only 8 per cent of them got married after 25 years of age.

Table 4.18
AGE AT MARRIAGE

SL.NO	AGE AT MARRIAGE RANGE (YEARS)	TRIBAL (PERCENTAGE)	NON-TRIBAL (PERCENTAGE)	TOTAL (PERCENTAGE)
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Below 15	0.00	3.33	1.98
2.	15-19	36.58	71.67	57.42
3.	20-24	51.22	20.00	32.67
4.	25-29	12.20	5.00	7.93
5.	30 & above	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

From the Table 4.18 it is clear that none of the tribal women married below the age of 15 years whereas 3.33 per cent of the non-tribal women married at the tender age of below 15 years 71.67 per cent of the non tribal women married at an early age of

15-19 years as compared to only 36.58 per cent of the tribal women who married between the age of 20-24 years. Therefore, the tribal women enjoyed better health as the full development of the body took place before marriage whereas only 20 per cent of the non-tribal women married between 25-29 years as compared to only 5 per cent in the case of non-tribals. None of them married after the age of 30 years.

The trait of early marriages in the case of non-tribal women was due to cultural traditions which has a bearing on their health.

The significance of age at marriage is very great as it marks the beginning of the reproductive span of a women's' life and any shift in the age at marriage, that is, late marriage, can postpone the start of reproductive span. Women who get married early are likely to be more fertile as they are young. Thus age at marriage influences age at first pregnancy which in turn influence the fertility performance and all there have an impact on the health status of women.

4.3.8. Women and number of children :

The number of children a women has and the time gap between pregnancies is one of the major factors affecting the health of women. Table 4.19 shows that nearly 6 per cent of the women in both cases had 1 or no children, 45.54 per cent had 1 to 3 children, 37.62 per cent between 4 to 6 children. Nearly 10 per cent had 7 to 9 children and 1 per cent 10 to 12 children.

Table 4.19
NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER MARRIED WOMEN

SL.NO	NUMBER OF CHILDREN (RANGE)	TRIBALS PERCENTAGE	NON-TRIBALS PERCENTAGE	TOTAL PERCENTAGE
1	2	3	4	5
1.	0 to 1	4.88	6.66	5.95
2.	1 - 3	46.34	45.00	45.54
3.	4 - 6	36.58	38.33	37.62
4.	7 - 9	12.20	8.33	9.90
5.	10 - 12	0.00	1.66	.99
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Table 4.19 reveals that 4.88 per cent of the tribals had no children, 46.34 per cent had 1 to 3 children 36.58 per cent 4 to 6 children and 12.20 per cent had 7 to 9 children. The comparative figures for the non-tribal women are 6.66 per cent had no children, 45 per cent 1 to 3, 38.33 per cent 4 to 6, 8.33 per cent 7 to 9 and 1.66 per cent had 10 to 12 children.

The average number of children borne by both tribal and non-tribal women were 4.

Poor nutrition, repeated pregnancies in quick succession and early marriages affects the health status of these poor women.

Correlation between the age at marriage and number of children borne was taken out using the correlation coefficient method. It was found that $r = + 0.5068671$ showing that the correlation is significant as the sample size is small which is in keeping with the findings of other authors like Karkal Maline, C. Gopalan and K.P. Singh who emphasized that earlier the age of

marriage of a woman, the more are the children borne by her.

4.3.9. Age at first pregnancy:

The earlier a woman conceives, the poorer her health is - women who have children before the age of 18 years have poorer health because the demands on the body during pregnancy and lactation drastically depletes their already scarce reserves due to poor nutrient intake leading to entrenched deficiencies and ill health. The findings reveal that the non-tribal women comparatively married early, conceived their first child at an

Table 4.20
AGE OF WOMEN AT THE TIME OF FIRST PREGNANCY

SL.NO	AGE OF FIRST PREGNANCY IN YEARS	TRIBALS PERCENTAGE	NON-TRIBALS PERCENTAGE	TOTAL PERCENTAGE
1.	Less than 20	17.95	60.00	41.57
2.	20 - 25	71.80	36.00	51.68
3.	Above 25	10.25	4.00	6.74
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

earlier age and with their already poor nutritional status became more prone to diseases. Table 3.20 reveals the position of tribal vis-a-vis non-tribal women. Table 4.20 shows that half of the women had their first child between 20-25 years of age. 41.57 per cent had their first before the age of twenty years.

The comparison of tribal and non tribal women from the table reveals that majority (60 per cent) of the non-tribal women conceived their first child before the age of 20 years. Only 36 per cent had their first child between 20-25 years and 4 per cent had their first child after the age of 25 years. In the case

of tribal women only 18 per cent conceived their first child before 20 years of age. Majority of them (82 per cent) had their first child after the age of 20 years. Therefore, in this respect also the health status of tribal women is better than non-tribal women as they got married mostly after 20 years of age and had children also later. This reveals the impact of matrilineal system where girls are not considered a burden in the family and are not married off as soon as possible, as is the case in the case of patriarchal society of the non-tribals.

4.3.10. Awareness of family planning methods:

Adoption and awareness of family planning methods goes a long way in helping women to safeguard their health. These women could enjoy a far better health status if they have fewer children and at an appropriate time interval in between programmes. By adopting these methods voluntarily can women escape the stigma of just being cradle rockers and homebirds.

The findings of the survey brings to light the fact that many women in the slum areas are not aware of the family planning measures due to illiteracy and ignorance. That is why only a few women had adopted some or the other family planning measure as shown in Table 4.21.

From the Table 4.21 it is clear that majority of the tribal women had not adopted any family planning measures. Only 2.50 per cent of the women were using some family planning method. The main reason is the religious taboo associated Christianity. Children are considered god's gift in tribal

Table 4.21
ADOPTION OF FAMILY PLANNING METHODS
(In % hhs)

SL.NO.	CATEGORY	TRIBALS	NON-TRIBALS
1.	Only women using	18.42	2.50
2.	Only men using	0.00	0.00
3.	Both husband and wife using	2.63	0.00
4.	None adopted	79.00	97.50
Total		100.00	100.00

Source: Survey by the author, '93

societies. So poverty, ignorance and religious teachings all combined, led to non adoption of any family planning measure by the women.

In the case of non-tribal women, 18.42 per cent of women had adopted some family planning measure. In 2.63 per cent cases both husband and wife were using family planning measures and 79 per cent of women did not adopt it. The main reason is the lack of awareness regarding F.P.M. There is need to impart family planning teaching to these women in order to improve their health status.

4.4. HEALTH STATUS OF PREGNANT AND LACTATING WOMEN :

The nutritional status during pregnancy and lactation further sheds light on the health status of women. Because in the case of these women, the low nutrient intake might help them to maintain their health before pregnancy but during pregnancy and lactation there is need for additional calorie intake of around 1000 calories. But these women can not take the required extra -

nutrition and therefore, suffer from illnesses especially anemia. Thus, the effect of poverty in these areas is manifested in the maternal malnutrition.

Table 4.22
HEALTH OF PREGNANT WOMEN
(in per cent)

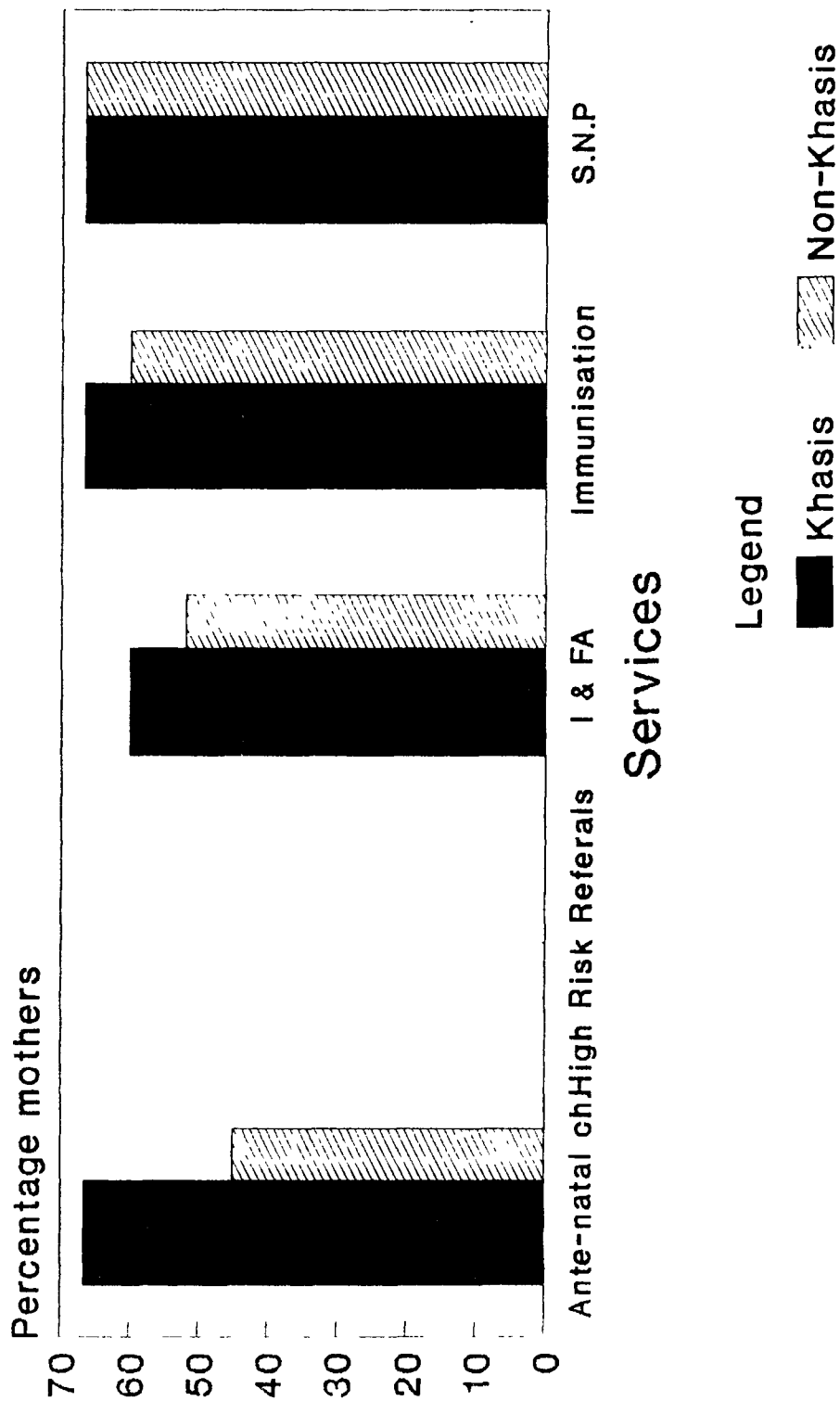
SL.NO.	INDICATOR	TRIBALS	NON-TRIBALS
1.	Whether availing ante-natal chechups	66.67	50.00
2.	Identified as high risk	0.00	0.00
3.	Whether consuming I&FA	60.00	52.00
4.	Immunization (Tetanus & IB)	66.67	60.00
5.	Whteter receiving SNP	66.67	66.67

Source: Survey by the author, '93

Table 4.22 reveals the status of pregnant women in these slums. Out of the total (83 per cent) women in child bearing age group, 12 per cent were pregnant in the case of tribal women at the time of survey whereas 10 per cent of the total (79 per cent) in the case of non-tribal women were pregnant. Table 4.22 shows that on the whole the tribal women enjoyed slightly better health status than non-tribals as is revealed by the indicators. This is attributed to the better awareness about health. In the case of tribal women 66.66 per cent were availing ante natal check ups as compared to 50 per cent of the non-tribal women. 60 per cent were consuming Iron &

SLUM WOMEN OF SHILLONG

Maternal Services & Access



Legend

■ Khasis
▨ Non-Khasis

Fig.4.9

Folic Acid and 66.66 per cent were receiving supplementary nutrition. In the case of non tribal women, 52 per cent were consuming Iron & Folic Acid, 60 per cent were immunized against Tetanus and 66.66 per cent were receiving supplementary nutrition.

But in this respect, these women are better off than women in other slum areas and poor pockets because of the role played by the Urban Basic Services for the Poor run by Govt. of Meghalaya. The women are receiving supplementary nutrition from them and also receiving immunization against Tetanus during pregnancy.

4.4.1. Health status of lactating women:

The health status of lactating women reveals the effect of poverty on maternal malnutrition. In the study area, various indicators used to gauge the status of lactating women which reveals that the status is average. Of the total 28 per cent are lactating women in the case of tribal and 40 per cent in the case of non-tribal women. Majority of them (57.60 per cent) had babies weighing more than 2.5 kg as shown in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23 reveals that 27 per cent of both tribal and non-tribal women had babies below the birth weight of 2.5 kg revealing that the weight gain during pregnancy due to deficient calorie intake, was low. 28.57 per cent of the tribal and 2.5 per cent of the non-tribal women had children weighing less than 25 kg. 57.14 per cent in the case of tribals and 58 per cent in the case of non-tribal had children weighing more than 2.5 Kg at

Table 4.23
STATUS OF LACTATING MOTHERS
(in percentage)

SL.NO.	INDICATOR	TRIBALS	NON-TRIBALS	TOTAL
1.	Birth of the new-born			
	(i) <2.5 k.g.	28.57	25.00	27.00
	(ii) >2.5 k.g	57.14	58.00	57.60
	(iii) Not weighed	14.28	16.66	15.40
2.	Duration of breastfeeding			
	(i) <4 months	33.33	33.33	33.33
	(ii) 4-6 months	35.00	30.13	32.56
	(iii) 6-12 months	8.34	6.11	7.23
	(iv) >1 year	33.33	30.43	31.88

Source: Survey by the author, '93

birth. 14.28 per cent in the case of tribals and 16.55 per cent of non-tribal women did not get their children weighed at birth. On the whole 15.40 per cent women did not get their children weighed at birth due to ignorance.

The duration for which the child is breast fed further has an impact on the health of the women and the off-spring. 33.33 per cent of tribal as well as non tribal women could not breast feed their child for more than 3 months because of inadequate weight gain during pregnancy resulting in low fat stored in their bodies which were not sufficient to meet the energy demands of breast feeding. 35 per cent in the case of tribals and 30.13 per cent in the case of non-tribals breast fed their children for four to six months. 8.34 per cent tribal women and 6.11 per cent in the case of non tribal women fed their children for 6 to 12 months 33.33 per cent of the tribal women and 30.43 per cent of non-tribal women fed their children for

Table 4.24
HEALTH STATUS OF LACTATING MOTHERS
(in percentage)

SL.NO.	INDICATOR	TRIBAL	NON-TRIBAL
1.	Whether delivery was assisted by trained personnel		
	(i)Yes	85.72	66.67
	(ii)No	14.28	33.33
2.	Whether availing post-natal care		
	(i)Yes	57.15	55.00
	(ii)No	42.85	45.00
Total		100.00	100.00

Source: Survey by the author, '93

over one year. On the whole, 33.33 per cent of the women could not feed their children for more than three months due to lack of sufficient nutritional intake, 32.56 per cent fed their children for 4 to 6 months, 7.23 per cent for 6 to 12 months and 31.88 per cent fed their children for more than one year. This led to further depletion of their body reserves of nutrients. Low nutritional intake after pregnancy combined with long duration of breast feeding in the case of these women led to many deficiencies in their bodies.

Table 4.24 reveals the status of the lactating mothers further. Table 4.24 shows that in the case of tribal women majority (85.72 per cent) of the deliveries were assisted by trained personnel as compared to 66.66 per cent in the case of non tribal women. Thus, the non tribal women had a greater risk of dying at the time of deliveries in the hands of untrained

people. 57.15 per cent of the tribal women were availing the Post Natal check-ups and 42.85 were not, whereas 55 per cent of the non-tribal women were availing the post-natal check ups and 45 per cent were not availing these checks-ups either due to ignorance or due to poverty.

On the whole the health of the lactating mothers is poor but not quite desperate as is the case in the slums of other regions. This can be attributed to the different urban poverty scenario in the city of Shillong cities and also due to the work done by the U.B.S.P in these slums.

This reveals that with proper health care guidance, these women became more conscious about their health. A supplementary nutrition of even 150-200 K.cal per day caused a significant increase in the birth weight of their children as the nutritional well being of the pregnant women is a very important factor in preventing low birth weight of infants and also the feeding pattern.

4.4.2. Access to medical services :

Regarding the access to poly-clinics and hospitals for treatment during illness, it was found that 90 per cent of both tribal as well as non-tribal women visited the civil hospital for treatment and only 8 per cent of the women got treated either by private doctors or in private hospitals. 2 per cent did not avail the health facilities.

4.5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

All these findings reveal that the health status of poor women is low in these slum areas. But the tribal women have

comparatively better health status than the non tribal women. The main findings can be summarized as below :

1) In Upper Lumphing area, the main ethnic group is Khasi speaking. 100 per cent are Christians and 100 per cent belong to Scheduled Tribes populations.

2) Barapathar area has diverse ethnic groups namely Nepali speaking, Bengali and Urdu speaking (Muslims). They do not belong to Schedule Caste or Scheduled Tribes. 86 per cent of them are Hindus, 12 per cent are Muslims and 2 per cent are Christians.

3) Over 95 per cent of cases both the tribes and non-tribes have been found to stay for over 10 years and only 5 per cent are reported to be recent settlers in the area, i.e., for less than 5 years.

4) Among the Scheduled Tribes, nearly 93 per cent have ration cards and are using it whereas only 66 per cent of the non-tribals have ration card and only 56 per cent are availing the facilities.

5) 63 per cent of the Khasi households have income-levels below Rs 24,000 per annum compared to 77 per cent of the non-tribal households. 26 per cent of the households in both cases have annual income less than Rs 10,800.

6) 55.88 per cent of the tribal households are female headed as compared to the non-tribal households indicating impact of matri lineal system.

7) The housing conditions are better in the case of Khasi households. Majority of them, 67.65 per cent have their own houses whereas 72 per cent of the non-tribals are staying in rented houses.

8) Majority of the non-tribes, (56 per cent) are living in the kutchra and semi-pucca (26 per cent) houses, only 18 per cent are staying in pucca houses whereas, 47 per cent of the Khasis are staying in pucca houses and 53 per cent are staying in semi-pucca houses.

9) In terms of electricity supply, nearly all the houses are connected by electricity in tribal as well as non-tribal households.

10) As far as water availability is concerned, majority of both tribal (76.48 per cent) as well as non-tribal women have to go out of the house to fetch water.

11) The main source of water in both the localities is the

community tap (71 per cent), only 2 per cent of the Khasi women and 6 per cent of the non-Khasi women drew water from individual handpumps. 27 per cent of the tribal women have individual taps in their houses compared to 23 per cent of the non-tribal women.

12) The status of sanitation in the area reveals that majority of the Khasi (62 per cent) and non-Khasi women (88 per cent) have to go out of the house to use the toilet facilities 2 per cent of the non-tribes have to go out in the open.

13) Regarding the type of sanitation facilities available, half of the population are using the community dry type of toilet 34.3 per cent of the Khasi women have individual dry type of toilet within the house, 7 per cent individual pourflush and 8.8 per cent are using the community pourflush. The corresponding figures for non-Khasis are 8 per cent are using individual dry, 12 per cent individual pourflush and 28 per cent are using community pourflush. So sanitary means of excreta disposal are poor for both segments of poor population. Thus, on the whole, sanitation facilities and living conditions are better for Khasi women.

14) Poverty is one of the root causes of poor health status of women as it entails poor nutrition and ignorance. Moreover, during illness, only 8 per cent of the poor women get treated either by private doctors or in private hospitals. 90 per cent of them have access to civil hospital and go there for treatment and 2 per cent do not avail any public health facility.

15) About 67 per cent of women spent between Rs 30 to 59 on food per day in both the cases.

16) The nutritional status of Khasi women is better than non-Khasi women, 60 per cent of the Khasi women had a good nutritional status comprising of one or more cereals, leafy vegetables and protein food like fish, meat and eggs 30 per cent had moderately good and 10 per cent had poor nutritional status. The comparative figures for non-khasi women and 'good' 30 per cent, 'moderate' 20 per cent and 'poor' 50 per cent. So half of them have poor nutritional status.

17) 57.14 per cent of the Khasi women had three meals a day and 42.88 per cent two meals a day, whereas majority of the non-khasi women, 53.15 per cent ate twice and 43 per cent had three meals a day and 4 per cent had only one meal a day.

18) No differentiation was made in the diet given to male and female children in the tribal areas, whereas 75 per cent of the non-tribal women gave better diet and more attention to boys than girls revealing the impact of cultural traditions.

19) In both the cases, 65 per cent of the women are in the

child bearing age group. Only 3 per cent of the women are above the age of 60 years.

20) The marital status of the Khasi women reveals that 63.33 per cent are married, 31.66 per cent are unmarried and 3.33 per cent are widowed and 1.68 per cent are divorced, whereas in the case of non-khasi women 73.68 per cent are married, 21.05 per cent unmarried and there is not a single case of divorce.

21) Majority of the non-tribal women married early, i.e. 71.67 per cent between 15-19 years whereas only 36.58 per cent of the Khasi women married early. Nearly half the Khasi women married between 20-24 years whereas only 20 per cent of the non-khasi women married after 20 years of age. None of the tribal women married below the age of 15 years whereas the percentage for non-tribal women's 3.63 per cent. This has important bearing on their health.

22) 76 per cent of the women in both cases had 2 to 6 children, 10 per cent 7-9, 7 per cent more than 10 children and 7 per cent had none.

23) The average number of children borne by both tribal and non-tribal women are 4.

24) The age of first pregnancy in case of non-Khasi women was between 15-19 years for 60 per cent of the women. So they had children quite early which impaired their health further, whereas only 18 per cent of the Khasi women had their first baby before the age of 20 years. Majority of them, i.e. 72 per cent had their first child between 20-25 years compared to 36 per cent non-Khasi women. In this respect also tribal women enjoyed better health status as they got married later and had children later.

25) The nutritional status during pregnancy was better for Khasi women revealing the better awareness about maternal health. 66.66 per cent were availing the ante-natal check-ups, 60 per cent were consuming Iron & Folic Acid, 66.66 per cent were immunized against Tetanus and 66.66 per cent were receiving supplementary nutrition. Whereas only 50 per cent of the non-khasi women were of availing ante-natal check-ups, 52 per cent were consuming Iron and Folic Acid, 60 per cent were immunized and 66.66 per cent were receiving supplementary nutrition.

26) The effect of poverty is revealed by the status of lactating women who seem to be suffering from maternal malnutrition. 27 per cent of both tribal as well as non-tribal women had babies below the birth weight of 2.5 kg revealing that the weight gain during pregnancy was inadequate due to deficient calorie intake. 57.60 per cent women had children weighing more than 2.5 kg and 15 per cent did not get their children weighed due to ignorance.

27) 33 per cent of the poor women could breastfeed their children for less than 4 months due to low fat stores in the body.

28) 85.71 per cent of the total pregnant khasi women delivery was assisted by trained personnel as compared to 66.66 per cent of the non-khasi women, increasing the risk of maternal deaths.

29) 56 per cent of women in both segments availing the post-natal check-ups and 43.5 per cent did not avail these due to their ignorance poverty.

30) Majority of the women were not aware of the family planning measures in these slum areas. Only 18.42 per cent of the non-tribal women had adopted some family planning measure as compared to 2.5 per cent of the Khasi women.

Thus these women of the slum areas because of a number of reasons namely poor environmental sanitation, unhygienic, squalid living conditions, lack of proper diets and rest, early marriages, repeated child bearing in quick succession. Moreover, inadequate availing of the ante-natal and post-natal check-ups and lack of supplementary nutrition further aggravates the problem and increases their being prone to illness which takes a toll on their health further. Inadequate access to health facilities of these deprived sections of poor women complicates the problem further.

These women seem to be caught in a cycle of malnutrition, poverty and ill health which they find difficult to break. These findings are in keeping with the findings of Gopalan, A.K.Chakraborty, R.G.Whitehead and Kusum Pshah .

Chapter 5

STATUS OF EDUCATION

"Woman has a right to education and further, that education should not be restricted to three Rs only. "Education, he remarked, " develops and sharpens one's intellect and it increases women's capacity of decision making. Being enlightened themselves, they can bring up a generation of enlightened citizens."

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

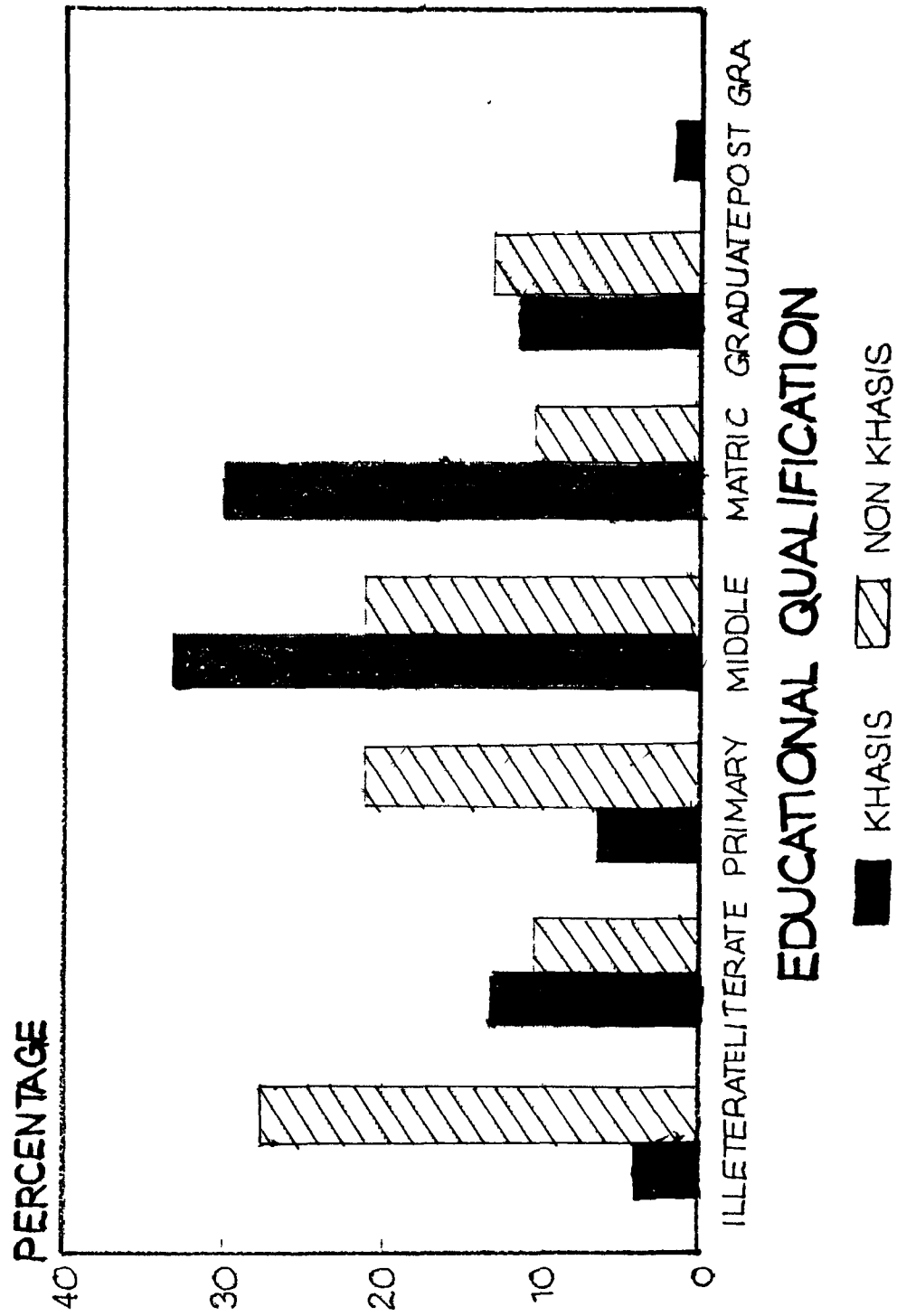
(Quoted in Roopa Vohra, *et al* ,**Status of Education and Problems of Women In India**, p.32)

5.1 IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON WOMEN'S STATUS:

A litmus test of women's status is the measurement of their access to education. Education, particularly formal education has a very significant role to play in accordance with the social and economic status of women. Women's access to education has a bearing on their economic power which further determines their position in the hierarchy of prestige. It plays a significant role in changing the general societal attitude towards women and helps remove inequality of sexes. It is in fact the finest weapon to pierce through, in the long run, the darkness of superstition, narrowness and wrong notions regarding the position of women in the society. With education both men and women can develop their personalities, thus enabling them to fulfill their economic, political and cultural functions efficiently.

This issue assumes significance in the study area because education is a double edged instrument which can on one hand eliminate the effects of socio-economic inequalities whereas on the other hand introduces a new kind of inequality between those who have it and those who do not. Apart from the sharp increase in the number of illiterate women in the slum areas, there are severe imbalances in educational development between rich and poor areas and also between advanced and backward classes. The findings reveal marked disparity in the educational attainment of tribal vis-a-vis non-tribal women. The lack of uniform development of education among women in different regions as well as in different classes has serious implications for the

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN SLUMS OF SHILLONG



EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

■ KHASIS ▨ NON KHASIS

BASED ON SURVEY 1993

Fig 5.1

upliftment of the position of women in all sectors of society.

The process of economic development of these poor women in the slums cannot be pursued independently of other support systems. Education is one such support system. Therefore these women need to be supported with opportunities to learn how to read and write and also the necessary vocation skills to enable them for additional earning opportunities.

As literacy is a major contributor to development, female literacy in these slums, in particular, needs to be improved to achieve good results from planned development programmes because better education will make these poor women more aware about themselves as well as their surroundings.

5.2 EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN:

In the study area quite interesting results come to light showing marked differences in the access to education of tribal vis-a-vis non tribal women as shown in table 5.1

Table 5.1
EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN
(in percentage)

Sl.No.	EDUCATIONAL STATUS	TRIBALS	NON TRIBALS	TOTAL
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Illiterates	5.00	27.74	17.65
2.	Literates	95.00	72.26	82.35
	TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993

The table 5.1 reveals that 27.74 per cent of the non-tribal women were illiterate as compared to only 5 per cent of

the tribal women 95 per cent of the tribal women were literate as compared to 72.36 per cent of the non tribal women.

The reason for better educational status of the tribal women is that the socio-cultural milieu allows them to enjoy equal rights with men as far as access to education is concerned. No discrimination is made between boys and girls whereas among the non-tribal women, the relatively poorer educational status reflects the unequal opportunities provided for girls for education and preference being given to boys' education.

The higher literacy rate of tribal women has raised the overall educational status of the area as is revealed by table 5.2.

Table 5.2
EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE OVERALL POPULATION
(in percentage)

Sl.No	EDUCATIONAL STATUS	TRIBALS	NON-TRIBALS
1	2	3	4
1.	Illiterates	2.40	16.66
2.	Literates	97.60	83.34
	TOTAL	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

5.3 EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF OVERALL POPULATION:

Table 5.2 shows that only 2.4 percent of the tribal population is illiterate as compared to 16.66 percent of the non-tribal segment. 97.60 per cent of the tribals are literates as compared to 83.34 per cent of the non-tribals. This disparity is due to poor educational status of the non-tribal women especially the higher number of illiterate women.

Table 5.3 reveals the overall educational status of literate population in tribal vis-a-vis non-tribal segments. A higher proportion of tribal population who are matriculates and graduates again reflects the lower educational status of non-tribals due to discrimination against the education of girls.

Table 5.3
OVERALL EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF LITERATE POPULATION
(in percentage)

SL.NO	EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	TRIBALS	NON-TRIBALS
1	2	3	4
1.	Literate but below primary	8.80	10.89
2.	Primary	6.40	16.66
3.	Middle	26.40	27.56
4.	Matriculate	36.80	19.87
5.	Graduate	16.80	7.69
6.	Post Graduate	2.40	.67
TOTAL		97.60	83.34

Source : Survey by the author, 1993

Table 5.3 shows that 8.8 per cent of the tribal population has acquired literacy by non-formal methods. 6.4 per cent have done primary 26.40 per cent have studied till middle level, 36.80 per cent are matriculates, 16.80 per cent are graduates and 2.40 have done post graduation. The total literate population is 97.60 per cent. Whereas the comparative figures for the non-tribal population is 10.89 per cent are literate but below primary, 16.66 per cent have studied till primary, 27.56 per cent have done middle, 19.87 percent are matriculates, 7.69 per cent are graduates and 0.67 per cent have done

postgraduation. The total literate population is 83.34 per cent.

On the whole, literacy rate is better for tribal than non-tribal population.

5.4. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION STATUS (2-5 YEARS):

An analysis of the pre primary school education status of boys and girls in tribal and non-tribal dominated areas reveal that in the non tribal area girls do not have equal access to education. Out of the total boys of pre-primary school going age (2-5 years) 50 per cent of them went to school for one year. 25 per cent of them dropped out after one year. None of the girls of this age group were sent to school revealing the bias against girls' education.

In the Upper Lumparing, tribal dominated area, 50 per cent of the boys went to pre primary school of the total boys of that age group. Similarly 50 per cent of the girls, also went to pre-primary school for one year. Thus girls had equal access to education facilities in the tribal dominated segment of population. The drop out rate is 20 per cent for both boys and girls. The drop out rate of enrolled children is still fairly high considering the overall satisfactory performance in the field of literacy.

5.5. PRIMARY EDUCATION STATUS (6-11 YEARS):

The primary school education status for boys in tribal as well as non-tribal areas is more or less same whereas there is great disparity in the education status of girls at this level too.

In the tribal dominated area 66.67 per cent of the boys of this age group went to school and drop out rate was 10 per cent. 62.66 per cent of the girls also went to primary school and the drop out rate was 9.66 per cent.

Whereas in the non-tribal dominated area out of total boys in this age group, 64.11 per cent went to school and 9 per cent of them dropped out. Only 29.4 per cent of the girls in this age group were sent to school. The rest did not attend primary or any school at all. 17 per cent of the girls dropped out later. The position in middle school enrollment regarding girls is even worse only 6 to 8 per cent of the girls study beyond the middle level.

This reveals the entrenched prejudices against girls education who are mainly perceived as home makers and therefore education is considered unnecessary for girls. These girls are required to look after younger siblings and help mothers in their domestic chores. These findings are in keeping with the studies of R.C.Sharma, C.L.Sapre, J.C.Agarwal, Victor D. Souza and Juliet Borne.

Moreover in these poor areas, one of the major problem is the massive stagnation and wastage of educational facilities, generally known as 'drop-out' children from families of with socio-economic disadvantages are who prone to drop out as soon as they enter the schools. It is evident from the findings of pre-

1.R.C.Sharma, Op.Cit., Victor D'souza, Op.Cit., C.L.Sapre & J.C.Agarwal, Op.Cit.

primary school enrollment and primary school enrollment in both the areas. This is in keeping with the findings of Indian Council of Social Science Research and A.B. Bose and the National Committee report on the status of women.²

Moreover, in the case of non-tribal area, the enrollment rate of girls is very low and drop out rate is quite high as compared to boys. This has resulted in the failure to impart education to girls. Majority of the population were willing to make sacrifices for the boys' education than girls'. This bias attitude has led to a large majority of girls being illiterate or literate only up to primary level. Similar results are revealed in various studies by R.K. Bhandari, N.I.U.A Report.³

5.6 COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF MEN AND WOMEN:

On the whole, from both sections of population tribal as well as non-tribal 3.45 per cent of males were illiterate as compared to 17.64 per cent of females as shown in table 5.4

Table 5.4
COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF MEN AND WOMEN IN GENERAL

(In percentage)

SL.NO.	EDUCATION STATUS	MALES	FEMALES
1	2	3	4
1.	Illiterate	3.45	17.64
2.	Literate	96.55	82.35
	TOTAL	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993

2. A.B. Bose, Op.Cit.; National Committee Report, Op.Cit.; ICSSR, Op.Cit..

3. NIUA, Op.Cit.; R.K. Bhandari, Op.Cit..

96.55 per cent of the males were literate as compared to 82.35 per cent females so the literacy rate on the whole is higher for males than females.

Table 5.5
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE LITERATES
(in percentage)

SL.NO	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	MALES	FEMALES
1	2	3	4
1.	Literates only	4.61	14.70
2.	Primary	8.41	16.28
3.	Middle	30.71	24.26
4.	Metric	37.04	18.38
5.	Graduate	15.61	8.00
6.	Post Graduate	2.17	.73
TOTAL		96.55	82.35

Table 5.5 reveals that 4.61 per cent of males were literate but through non-formal methods as compared to 14.70 per cent of the females. 8.41 per cent had done primary as compared to 16.28 per cent of females. 30.71 per cent of males had studied till the middle level and 24.26 per cent of females had studied till middle class. 37.04 per cent of males had done matriculation as compared only 18.38 per cent females. 15.61 per cent of the males were graduates as compared to 8 per cent of females. 2.17 per cent of males had done post graduation as compared to 0.73 per cent of females.

A detailed analysis of the male and female literacy rates for tribal as well as non tribal areas reveals marked disparity between the educational levels of non-tribal males and non tribal females and also the tribal female literacy rate is

much higher than non tribal women as revealed by tables 5.6 and 5.7.

Table 5.6
COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL LEVELS IN BARAPATHAR AREA
(in percentage)

SL.NO	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	MALES	FEMALES
1	2	3	4
1.	Illiterate	4.00	27.71
2.	Below Primary	6.40	15.78
3.	Primary	10.25	21.68
4.	Middle	37.14	18.42
5.	Metric	30.76	9.21
6.	Graduate	10.25	5.25
7.	Post-Graduate	1.28	0.00
TOTAL		100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Table 5.6 reveals that only 4 percent of the males are illiterate as compared to 27.71 per cent of females showing the unequal access of women to education facilities. 6.40 per cent of males are literate through non-formal methods, 10.25 per cent have studied up to primary, 37.14 per cent have done middle, 30.76 per cent have done matriculations, 10.25 per cent are graduates and 1.28 per cent have done postgraduation. The comparative figures for females in this non-tribal area is 15.78, 21.68, 18.42, 9.21, 5.26 per cent respectively and none, post-graduation.

This clearly reveals the discriminatory attitude to women's education compared to males. Nearly 38 per cent of the total 72 per cent literate females had studied up to primary levels whereas 68 per cent of males out of the total 96 per cent

literate males had studied up to middle and matriculation. Majority of the girls drop out after primary due to early marriages and poverty of the parents and also the inherent cultural prejudices against female's education.

Table 5.7 reveals the comparative educational status of males and females of Upper Lumping area which is predominately a tribal area.

Table 5.7
COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL LEVEL IN LUMPARING AREA
(in percentage)

SL.NO	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	MALES	FEMALES
1	2	3	4
1.	Illiterate	0.00	5.00
2.	Below Primary	4.61	13.33
3.	Primary	6.15	6.66
4.	Middle	21.70	31.69
5.	Metric	43.00	30.00
6.	Graduate	21.54	11.66
7.	Post-Graduate	3.00	1.66
TOTAL		100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Table 5.7 reveals that there is not much disparity between the level of literacy of males and females. There are only 5 per cent illiterate females as compared to none from the males. 13.33 per cent were literate through non-formal means compared to only 4.6 per cent males. 6.66 per cent females had done primary compared to 6.1 per cent males. 31.66 per cent females had studied till middle compared to 21.10 per cent males. 30 per cent of females were matriculates compared to 43 per cent of males 11.66 per cent had done graduation compared to 21.54 per

SLUM WOMEN OF SHILLONG

Level of Literacy & Education

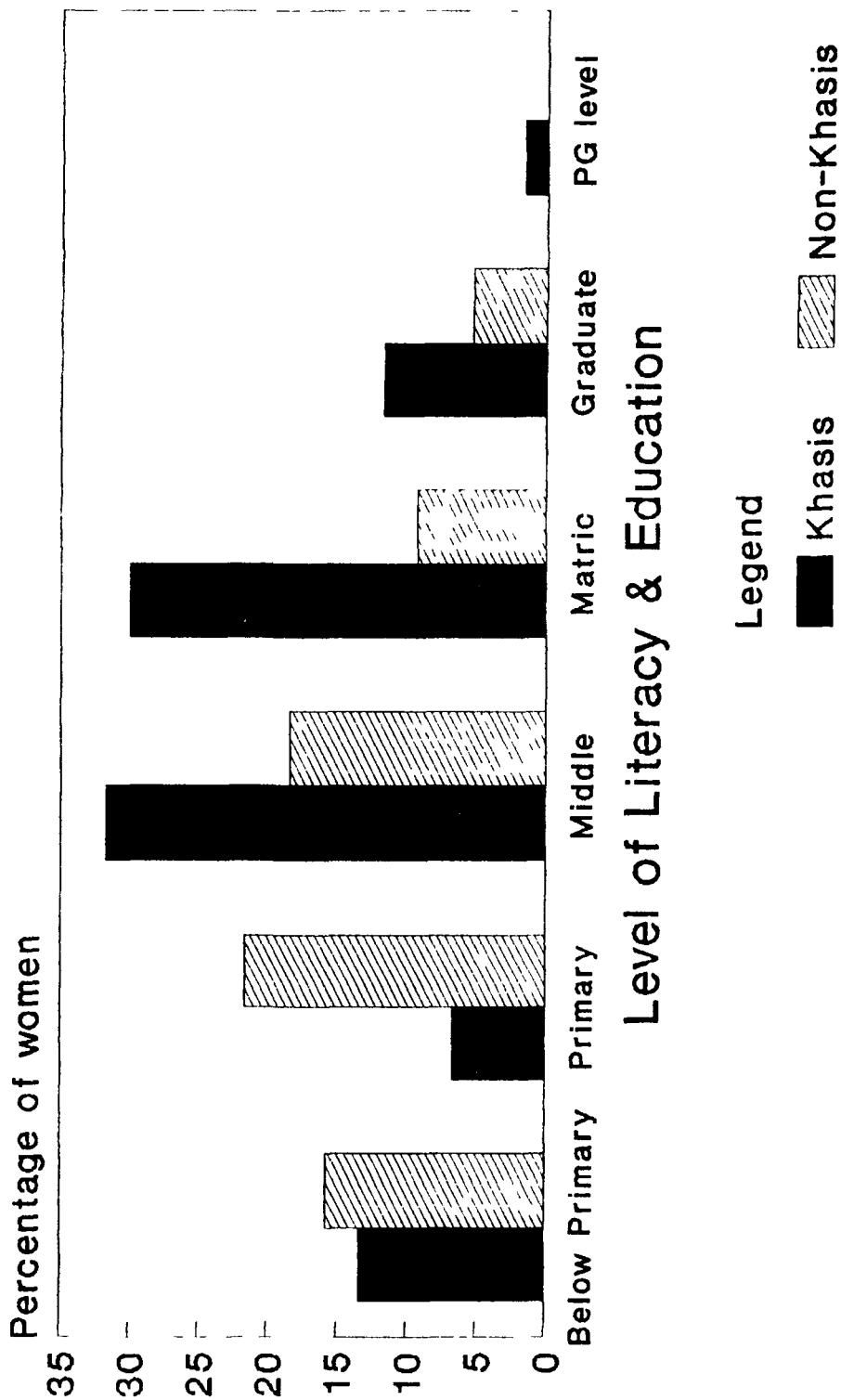


Fig.5.2

cent males 1.70 per cent females were post-graduates compared to 3 per cent of males.

On the whole, male literacy rates are better than female literacy rates. But there are no hindrances for females acquiring higher education. Their cultural traditions provides both boys and girls with equal access to educational facilities.

Table 5.8
COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF
TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL WOMEN
(in percentage)

SL.NO	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	TRIBALS	NON-TRIBALS
1	2	3	4
1.	Literate but below primary	13.33	15.78
2.	Primary	6.66	21.68
3.	Middle	31.69	18.42
4.	Metric	31.00	9.22
5.	Graduate	11.66	5.26
6.	Post-Graduate	1.66	0.00
TOTAL		95.00	72.36

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

From the table 5.8 it is clear that the educational qualifications of tribal women are far better than non-tribal women. 13.33 per cent were below primary compared to 15.78 per cent of non-tribal females. 6.66 per cent had done primary compared to 21.68 per cent of non-tribal women. The number of tribal women who had studied till middle was almost two times the number of tribal women. 31 per cent of the tribal women were matriculates compared only 9 per cent of the non-tribal women revealing that very few non tribal women have attained higher

educational qualification. 11.66 per cent of the tribal women were graduates compared to only 5.26 per cent of non-tribal females. 1.66 per cent were post graduates compared to none in the case of non tribal women. The tribals due to matrilineal society enjoy equal rights with men in respect of access to educational opportunities and literacy. It appears that none of the women in the study area were availing of any non-formal education and adult literacy programmes.

5.7 RELATIONSHIP OF LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH :

The level of education of a woman has a strong correlation with health status. Integrated education and health programmes can go a long way to raise the status of these poor women.

5.7.1. Age at marriage:

Female education has a positive correlation with the age at marriage. Higher the educational level of women higher is the age at marriage as revealed by table 5.9

Table 5.9
AVERAGE AGE AT MARRIAGE OF WOMEN BY EDUCATIONAL STATUS

SL.NO	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	AVERAGE AGE OF MARRIAGE IN YEARS	
		TRIBAL	NON-TRIBAL
1	2	3	
1.	Illiterate	16.00	20.00
2.	Below Primary	16.75	20.30
3.	Primary	17.22	21.00
4.	Middle	18.63	21.90
5.	Metric	20.28	22.10
6.	Graduate	21.25	23.20
7.	Post graduate	-	26.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

From the table 5.9 it is clear that illiterate women married at an earlier age than the educated . The average age at marriage is 16 years for illiterate women, 16.75 years for literate but below primary, 17.22 years for those who have studied till primary, 18.63 years for those who have done middle, 20.28 years for matriculates and 21.25 years for graduates in the non-tribal area.

The comparative figures for tribal women are illiterates marry at an average age of 20 years, below primary - 20.3 years, primary - 21 years, middle - 21.9 years, metric - 22.1 years, graduates - 22.2 years and post-graduates at 26 years of age.

Thus, higher the educational status of women, later is the age at which they marry. This is because education moulds their opinion and behaviour and they no longer consider marriage an obligation to be fulfilled as soon as possible. Moreover, 20 per cent of the graduates in the case of tribal women and 10 per cent in the case of non-tribals did not marry.

This finding is in keeping with the findings of other research scholars like Sukhatme 1974, K.P.Singh 1979.⁴

5.7.2. Fertility and the level of education:

The level of education attained by women has a positive impact in moulding their opinion regarding the family size. Higher is the educational level of women, the lower is the fertility of women. Table 5.10 shows the figures.

4.K.P.Singh,1979, Op.Cit.

Table 5.10
AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER WOMEN BY EDUCATION STATUS

SL.NO	EDUCATION STATUS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN	
		TRIBALS	NON-TRIBALS
1.	Illiterate	6.6	5.5
2.	Below Primary	5	4.5
3.	Primary	4.6	4
4.	Middle	3.1	3
5.	Metric	2.8	2.8
6.	Graduate	2.5	2.25
7.	Postgraduate	2	-

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

From the table it is clear that lower the educational level of women, higher is the number of children borne by them.

In the case of khasi women, illiterate women had on an average 6.6 children, below primary - 5, primary - 4.6, middle - 3.1, metric - 2.8, graduate - 2.5 and post-graduates - 2. The corresponding figures for non-tribal women are 5.5, 4.5, 4, 3, 2.85 and 2.25, respectively.

This clearly indicates the positive correlation between level of education and number of children borne by a women.

5.7.3. Level of education and adoption of family planning methods:

Related to this aspect is the finding that higher the educational level of women, greater is the knowledge of family planning methods and greater is the adoption of family planning which further results in lower fertility. Table 5.11 reveals the findings.

Table 5.11 reveals a positive correlation between the education status and the adoption of family planning methods.

Table 5.11
ADOPTION OF FAMILY PLANNING METHODS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

SL.NO	EDUCATION STATUS	ADOPTION OF FAMILY PLANNING IN PERCENTAGE
1	2	3
1.	Illiterate	10.00
2.	Below Primary	25.00
3.	Primary	27.77
4.	Middle	35.71
5.	Metric	57.14
6.	Graduate	75.00
7.	Postgraduate	75.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Only 10 per cent of the illiterate females had adopted any family planning measure 25 percent of females who were below primary had adopted family planning measures. 27.77 per cent in the case of primary, 35.71 per cent in the case of females who had studied till middle, 57.14 per cent in the case of matriculates and 75 per cent in the case of graduates and post-graduates. Thus higher the level of education, greater is the knowledge of family planning methods, greater is the adoption of these at a relatively earlier period and lower is the fertility. Lower is the fertility better is the health status. Thus, there is a strong linkage between the education status of women and their health status.

Moreover, education of women has a positive impact on the health of children. Health consciousness among the illiterates is lower than literates. Many women in the study area did not know about oral rehydration therapy (ORT), did not

understand the importance of immunization. Moreover, with higher education women stopped giving preference to boy's education over girls. Thus the more educated women were more aware of the advantage of delayed marriage, delayed motherhood and personal hygiene and dietary habits.

5.8. EDUCATION AND EARNING ABILITY:

The level of income of households is significant in respect of overall socio-economic status of overall socio-economic status of poor women. By using the correlation matrix, educational status of women was correlated with the level of income.

In the case of non-tribal segment, i.e., Barapathar area, the correlation (r) was (-) 0.5049 indicating a negative correlation of level of income with level of education. This belies the proven fact of many findings that higher the level of education, higher is the income.

These results can be attributed to the fact that the organized sector, which is associated with higher incomes, is practically non-existent in the Barapathar slum area. Moreover work participation rate of women is low that is only 13.15 per cent. Not only is the work participation rate of these poor women low, but also the number of women employed in salaried jobs is low. Both these factors, i.e low work participation rate and only one-seventh of the working women constituting the salaried class lead to the negative correlation between level of income and educational status. Also in the case of tribal women, due to the

reservation policies of the government, job protection is there. Khasi women, who have higher level of education have more chances of getting employment than non-khasi women with high level of education.

In the case of Upper Lumphing area, dominated by Scheduled Tribes, the correlation between level of income and educational status is positive and significant, i.e $r = + .7015$. So women having higher level of education had higher incomes than illiterate and women with lower level of education.

The reasons are: higher work participation rate, i.e 34 per cent of these Khasi women, existence of organized sector in the Upper Lumphing area. Moreover, a very high proportion of women are working in the formal sector, one-third of the total working women constituted the salaried component leading to higher level of income. Moreover, job protection under the reservation policy, increased the chances of higher educated women to get employment sooner than non-tribal women.

As a consequence of the interplay of all the aforesaid factors, there is a positive correlation between the educational qualification of women and the level of income in the case of tribes.

Higher educational status is positively linked with

1. Individual freedom
2. Better hygiene and immunization
3. Better upbringing of their children
4. Late marriages and fewer children

5. Adoption of family planning methods
6. Better nutritional status

Thus, education status i.e. better education has a positive bearing on the health status of women as education helps to develop the personality and rationality of individuals.

5.9. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The main findings are

1. Tribal women enjoy equal rights with men as far as access to education is concerned whereas non-tribal women are discriminated in this regard.
2. 2.4 percent of the overall tribal population is illiterate as compared to 16.66 percent of the non-tribals.
3. 97.60 percent of the tribal population is literate compared to 83.34 percent of the non-tribal section.
4. The pre-primary school education status reveals that in the case of tribals 50 percent of boys as well as girls went to school and the drop out rate is 20 percent. Whereas in the case of non-tribals 50 percent of the boys are enrolled in school compared to 25 percent of girls and the drop out rate is 25 percent.
5. The primary school education status also reveals bias against the education of girls in the non-tribal society 66.11 percent of the boys enrolled for education and 9 percent dropped out whereas only 29.4 percent of the girls enrolled for primary school and 17 percent dropped out. The comparative figures for tribal boys is 66.66 percent and 62.66 percent of the girls also enrolled. Therefore indicating the equal accessibility to education facilities by both. The drop out rate was nearly 10 percent in both the cases.
6. The comparative education status of men and women in general reveals 3.45 percent of the males are illiterate compared to 17.64 percent of females. 96.55 percent of the males are literate compared to 82.35 percent of the females.

7. The comparative education status of males and females in Barapathar (non-tribal) area reveals that only 4 percent of the males compared to 27.71 percent of the females are illiterate 3.95 percent of the males are literate compared to 72 percent of the females. 37 percent of the males had studied till middle compared to only 18 percent of females. 30 percent were matriculates compared to only 9 percent of females and 10 percent had done graduation compared to 5 percent of females revealing the prejudiced attitude towards women's education.
8. The comparative educational status of males and females in Lumparing (tribal) area reveals that only 5 percent of the females are illiterate and 95 percent are literate compared to 100 percent literate males. So they have equal access to education facilities.
9. A comparison of the level of education of tribal vis-a-vis non-tribal women reveals the much higher status enjoyed by tribal women in this respect. Nearly 30 percent of the non-tribal women are illiterate compared to 5 percent of the tribal women and 70 percent are literate compared to 95 percent in the case of tribals. A higher proportion had received higher education in the case of tribal women.
10. The level of education of women has a positive impact on the health status of women.
 - (a) leading to late marriages with higher level of education. On an average 20 + after matriculation.
 - (b) smaller family size with higher level of education on an average 2 children borne by graduates.
 - (c) Greater health consciousness and personal hygiene with higher level of education.
 - (d) Better nutritional status with better education.
 - (e) Better health status of children with higher level of education of women.
 - (f) Greater adoption of family planning measures with higher level of education. 75 percent in the case of graduates and postgraduates.

11. The level of education of a woman has a positive correlation with the level of income earned by them in Lumparing (Tribal dominated) area and negative in the case of Barapathar (non-tribal dominated) area. This can be attributed to the fact that the organized sector, associated with higher incomes, is practically non-existent in Barapathar area. Moreover the work participation rate of poor women is low and also the number of women employed in salaried jobs is low. The reservation policies of the Government for ST's has resulted in Khasi women with higher level of education getting white collar jobs sooner.

Thus education of women has a positive bearing on their health status as well as that of the family. If we educate a man in these areas, he alone is educated, but if a woman is educated the whole family is educated as with higher level of education, the health consciousness of women increases. Moreover it leads to a change in their attitude regarding a number of things in life. Thus better education enhances the socio-economic status of women.

Chapter 6

STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT & EARNING

".....the habit of looking upon marriage as a profession almost and as the sole economic refuge for women will have to go before women can have any freedom. Freedom depends on economic conditions even more than political and if a woman is not economically free and self-earning, she will have to depend on her husband or some one else and dependents are never free. The association of man and woman should be perfect freedom and perfect comradeship with no dependence of one on other..."

Jawaharlal Nehru

(Quoted in Roopa Vohra, *et al* ,**Status of Education and Problems of Women In India**, p.60)

6.1 IMPORTANCE OF BEING EMPLOYED:

The employment status of women has an important bearing on their economic as well as social status. Women's economic role is very important for the all round development of the society and there is need for equality of rights and opportunities for economic participation.

The question "why a man works ?" is not as significant as the question "why a woman works ?" The role of man as natural bread-earners has got recognition in almost all societies, whereas "home" and "family" have been seen as the "appropriate" domain for women. But in the city of Shillong, dominated by (55%) S.T. population, due to prevalence of matriarchy, there is less inequality of sexes as far as access to employment opportunities is concerned. On the other hand, due to the presence of a large number of non tribal women, influences of patriarchy are also visible. Tribal women traditionally enjoy a far greater freedom in economic participation than the non-tribal women. But socio-economic and political changes have created a need to extend the spheres of knowledge and activity of all poor women, the tribal as well as the non-tribal. Modern trends in demographic and social changes call for a redefinition of women's role in the family and the society especially for non-tribal women.

Social attitude towards women's work reflect to a great extent the current needs being faced by the society. In the slum areas under study, economic pressure has precipitated withdrawal of traditional prejudices against women working outside the home.

Though it is normally considered that the man bears the

economic burden of the family, in many of the poor families of the study area, the women have to either bear the total economic burden of the family or to supplement the family incomes especially in the case of female-headed households, i.e. 56 per cent in the case of tribals and 10 per cent in the case of non-tribal women.

6.2 MOTIVATION FOR WORK:

The most basic struggle of the poor women at work revolves around trying to earn enough to meet their family deficits and possessing the most basic necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter.

On interviewing the working women it was found that most important factor attracting them to employment is the hard economic necessity. For poor men, struggle does not take the same implication as to the women. For men, struggle is generally confined to the work place, while home and leisure offer a contrast, whereas for the women there is no clear division in their work and leisure, in 'paid' and 'unpaid' work, in work and non-work relations. They have to slog at home as well as outside which to a great extent has an impact on their health. The long hours of work in unhygienic conditions takes a heavy toll of their health.

Moreover, the findings reveal that the main motivation for work for the tribal as well as non-tribal women, can be broadly classified under three categories :

- (a) Monetary or economic

(b) Social role and

(c) Personality

Many of the women, like men see their level of earnings as some kind of measure of personal worth in the world. Some of these women who have experienced early economic deprivation want to continue to work as a measure of economic security. By taking up a job, they are able to shake off the feeling of subordination. Moreover, being employed gave them more self-esteem. Thus, working women in the study area have a comparatively higher status than non-working women.

6.3 TREND OF WOMEN'S WORK PARTICIPATION

Women's work participation in the study area presents various trends which are reflections of the structural features of the economy and society of Shillong.

6.3.1 Low rates of work participation:

As is evident from the findings, the number of women who are working is low both in the case of tribal as well as non-tribal areas. On the whole, nearly 22 per cent of women are employed. 33.33 per cent in the case of tribals and only 13.15 per cent in the case of non-tribal area. The comparatively lower work participation in the case of non-tribal women reflects the unequal access of these women to employment opportunities due to the prevalent patriarchal norms which emphasize women's role as home-makers. In case of the tribal women the advantage of having greater freedom and equality with men is discernible.

SLUM WOMEN OF SHILLONG

Employment Status

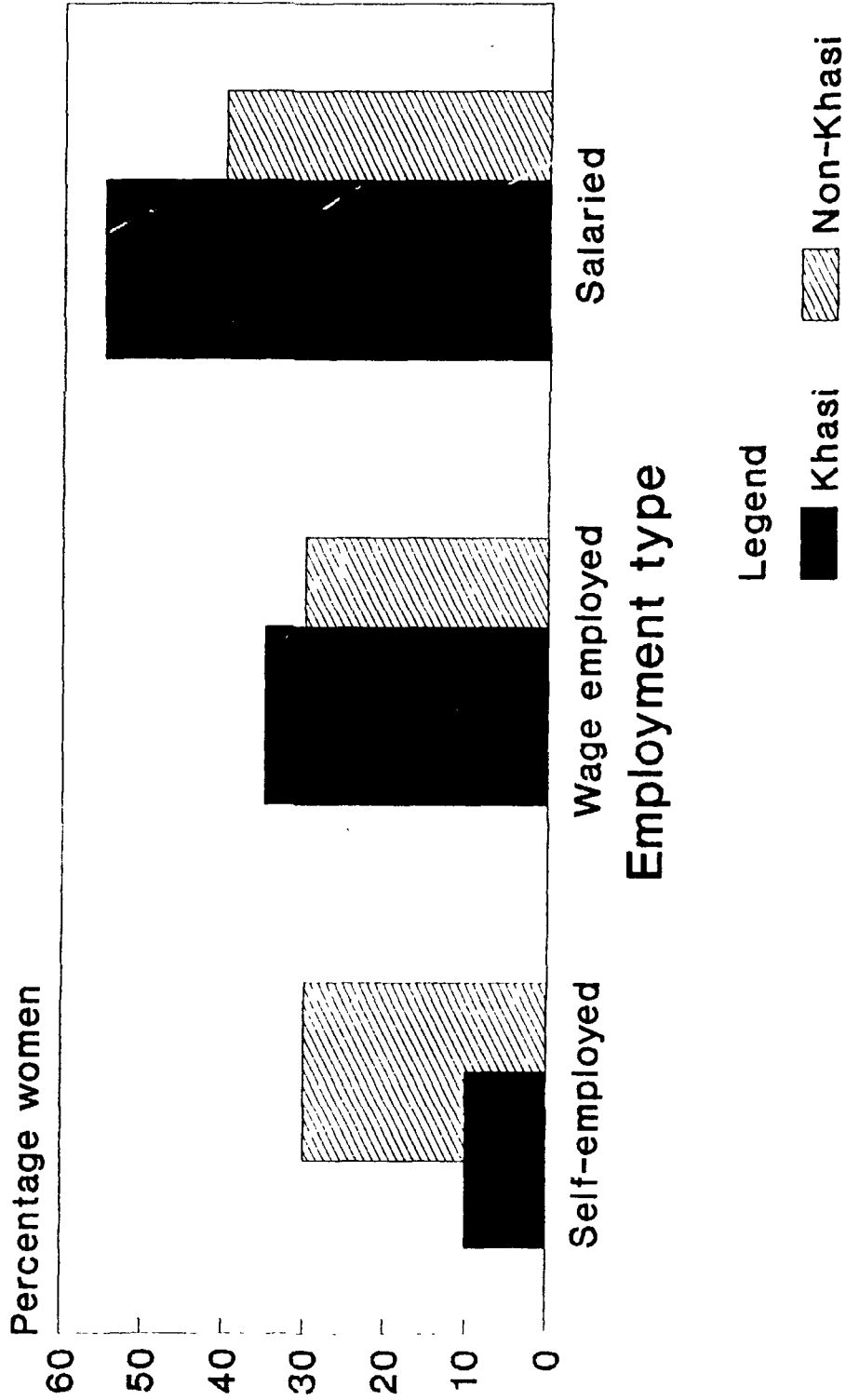


Fig.6.1

6.3.2 Concentration in low skilled jobs:

Besides the low participation of women in economic activity, other features of the employment pattern came to light in the study area. Nearly 60 per cent of the total employed women are concentrated in low skilled and low productivity jobs. The greater the illiteracy among them, their lack of training results in the squeezing of them into low menial jobs and low grade self-employment ventures with low returns.

6.3.3 Employment in formal vis-a-vis informal sectors:

Table 6.1 reveals the employment status of tribal as well as non-tribal women.

Table 6.1
TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN
(in percentage)

SL.NO	SECTOR	TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	TRIBALS	NON-TRIBALS	TOTAL
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Informal sector	(i) Self-employed	10.00	30.00	16.67
		(ii) Wage earner	35.00	30.00	33.33
2.	Formal sector	Salaried	55.00	40.00	50.00
TOTAL			100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993

From the table it is clear that majority of the non-tribal women are engaged in the informal sector, that is, 60 per cent compared to 45 per cent in the case of tribal women. Moreover, 30 per cent of the non-tribal women are self employed compared to only 10 per cent of the tribal women. 35 per cent of tribal women are wage earners as compared to 30 percent in the

case of non-tribal women.

A greater proportion of tribal women are working in formal sector in salaried jobs that is 55 per cent as compared to 40 per cent in the case of non-tribals. Thus, salaried component is higher in case of tribal women due to equal opportunities of work participation and higher level of education among them. On the whole, 50 per cent are working in nonformal sector and 50 per cent in the formal sector (salaried jobs).

6.3.4 The occupational structure of working women:

The available material on occupational structure of female work participation in the study area reveals that there is not much diversification in the occupational structure.

An analysis of the three major types of employments indicate interesting patterns. The occupational types are:

- (a) Salaried earners
- (b) Wage earners
- (c) Self-employed

Table 6.2
OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN
(in percentage)

SL.NO	TYPE OF OCCUPATION	TRIBALS	NON-TRIBALS	TOTAL
1	2	3	4	5
1.	<u>Pan-bidi</u> shop	50.00	0.00	20.00
2.	Tailoring	50.00	33.33	40.00
3.	Vending	0.00	33.33	30.00
4.	Knitting	0.00	33.34	20.00
	TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993

Table 6.2 reveals the occupational structure of self-employed women.

From the table it is clear that out of the 10 per cent women who are self-employed, 50 per cent are working in pan-bidi shops and 50 per cent are in tailoring. Out of the total 30 per cent of the self-employed non-tribal women, approximately one-third each are working as tailor, vendors or are in knitting, respectively. This implies that nearly half of the self-employed women are employed in petty trades as pan-bidi shops or in small time vending activities. Economic pressures have pushed them into these in order to earn a livelihood. 40 percent of women on the whole are employed as tailors which means that this has become as one of the most important avenue for self-employment. Moreover, 20 per cent are doing knitting work on order. This means that as these can be carried on easily at home along with the house work, without going out of the house, tailoring and knitting etc are given preference. Moreover it implies some sort of skill acquisition to carry on with the work.

Table 6.3
OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF WAGE EARNER

(in percentage)

Sr.No.	Type of occupation	Tribal Women	Non-Tribal Women	TOTAL
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Domestic Servants	14.28	66.67	30.00
2.	Archery Shop	57.14	0.00	40.00
3.	Vegetable Shops	28.57	33.33	30.00
	TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Table 6.3 reveals the occupational structure of women who are wage earners. In the case of tribal women 14.28 per cent of the total wage earners are domestic servants compared to 36.67 per cent of the non-tribal women. On the whole, 30 per cent of the women are engaged in this activity. Domestic service that is cooking, cleaning, sweeping, washing and looking after children is a major avenue for wage employment of women in the study area. The income level of these women are low ranging from Rs 300 - 600 per month. Malnutrition, work in several houses for long hours, insufficient diet leads to their generally poor health.

57.14 per cent of the tribal women are working in teer shops (Small kiosks selling betting tickets on the daily archery contests in the city which is a legal gambling activity in Meghalaya. It accounts for majority of wage earners being employed in this category of work whereas none of the non-tribal women were engaged in this type of work. Income level ranges from Rs 800 to Rs 1500 per month.

28.57 per cent of tribal and 33.33 per cent of non-tribal women are earning wages by selling vegetables. They earn Rs 35 per day on an average (Rs.1000.00 per month).

On the whole, 30 per cent of the women who are wage earners work as domestic help, 40 per cent in betting shops which is a novel kind of work specific to this region and 30 per cent are engaged in vegetable selling. The wage earners are mostly employed in low skilled, low grade jobs in both the cases, working for long hours and earning on an average Rs 30 to Rs 40

per day. They are mostly women with low level of education.

An analysis of the occupational structure of the salaried women working in the formal sector is shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 reveals that out of the total of 55 per cent in the salaried women workers, 27.27 per cent are working as

Table 6.4
OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF FORMAL SECTOR WORKERS

(in percentage)

Sl.No.	Type of Occupation	Tribal Women	Non-Tribal women	TOTAL
1	2	3	4	5
	1. Sweepers	27.29	40.00	31.25
	2. Telephone Operator	9.00	0.00	6.25
	3. Construction Supervisor	9.00	0.00	6.25
	4. Clerks	18.18	40.00	25.00
	5. Teacher	27.27	20.00	25.00
	6. Computer operator	9.00	0.00	6.35
		100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

sweeperesses, 9 per cent as telephone operators, 9 per cent as clerks, 27.27 per cent as teachers and 9 per cent as computer operators (high skilled professions). So the women working in formal sector have a comparatively higher level of education and higher pay scales.

Of the total 40 per cent salaried workers in the case of non-tribal women 40 per cent are working in low grade jobs like sweeperesses, 40 per cent as clerks and 20 per cent as teachers. Occupational structure of Non-tribals is not as

diversified as that of the tribal women.

On the whole, 31.25 per cent of the women are working as sweeperesses, 6.25 per cent as telephone operators, 6.25 per cent as construction supervisors 25 per cent as clerks, 25 per cent as teachers and 6.35 per cent are working in skilled professions.

Thus the three main avenues of employment are : Teaching jobs, clerical jobs and low grade jobs like sweeping etc. Nearly 82 per cent of the tribal as well as non-tribal segments of women are working in these three fields. More and more women are getting opportunities to enter services and professions especially teaching and clerical jobs. This can be attributed to expansion of women's education.

Table 6.5
COMPARATIVE PATTERN OF SALARIED WOMEN WORKERS

(in percentage)				
Sr.No.	Type of Employment	Tribal Women	Non-Tribal Women	TOTAL
1	2	3	4	5
	1. White-collar employment	63.63	60.00	62.50
	2. Others	36.67	40.00	37.50
	TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Table 6.5 reveals that proportion of women employed in white-collar jobs is higher (62.50 per cent) than those engaged in semi-skilled or unskilled (blue collar) jobs that is 37.50 per cent. 63.63 per cent of the tribal and 60 per cent of total

salaried employees are working in white collar jobs as compared to 36.67 per cent in case of tribal and 40 per cent of non-tribal women who are working in miscellaneous low grade jobs.

6.4 IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT ON STATUS OF WOMEN:

But if the total women employed in white collar jobs of the total working women is worked out, only 33.33 per cent are working in white collar jobs as shown in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 reveals that a larger section of women

Table 6.6
EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN

(in percentage)

Sl.No	Type of Employment	Tribals	Non Tribals	Total
1	2	3	4	5
	1. White Collar Jobs	35.00	30.00	33.33
	2. Other Jobs	65.00	70.00	66.37
	TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

workers, i.e. 66.37 per cent are employed in various other jobs, i.e. being self-employed or working in small scale enterprises, or semi-skilled jobs not requiring an advanced level of education. 70 per cent of the women in case of non-tribals and 65 per cent in the case of tribal women are working in these type of low grade jobs. 35 per cent of the tribal and 30 per cent of the non-tribal women are working in white collar, office based jobs requiring a higher level of education and other professions like teaching, finance and service sector needing lesser skills.

The women employed in white-collar jobs have a relatively higher status in the society than others employed or

even the unemployed counterparts. This is because women engaged in these jobs have a higher level of education which itself is a major factor for raising their status. Moreover, these women have greater freedom in spending their incomes, they have greater decision making power with regards to economic matters and children centred decisions. The new roles outside the home leads to a change in attitude which leads to a more egalitarian relationship with their husbands. Moreover sharing of household responsibility at times also results from their being employed in higher jobs leading to greater income. All these factors in combination help the women employed in white collar jobs to have better status and freedom than those employed in many low-grade activities.

On the whole, women who are working, as expressed while interviewing them and the type of employment they are engaged in has a great impact on their status within the family and in the wider society. Working women have their own incomes which gives them security and also leads to change in attitude and change in life styles leading to a change in their status. This depends on the type of employment they are engaged in. Many other studies have also shown that women employed in white-collar occupations have higher status than their blue-collar counterparts as it enables them to engage in many ancillary activities. Greater income received by them also helps to attain economic independence to some extent. U.Lalitha Devi,¹ Sushila Agarwal,²

1. U.Lalitha Devi, Op.Cit. 2.Sushila Agarwal, Op.Cit.

Madhu Shastri have obtained similar results from their studies.

Thus, the pattern of employment in the low-income households is different from their male counterparts as well as the general population. The occupational structure of the male counterparts is more diversified. As compared to the general population of women, as there is greater concentration in sub sectors like domestic services, street vending, tailoring, and all the low-end jobs like sweepers, in knitting and domestic servants. A majority of them are engaged in the informal labour market which does not enhance their status, also because of the factor that their jobs are unsecured and they are likely to be rendered jobless at a short notice.

6.5 LEVEL OF INCOME :

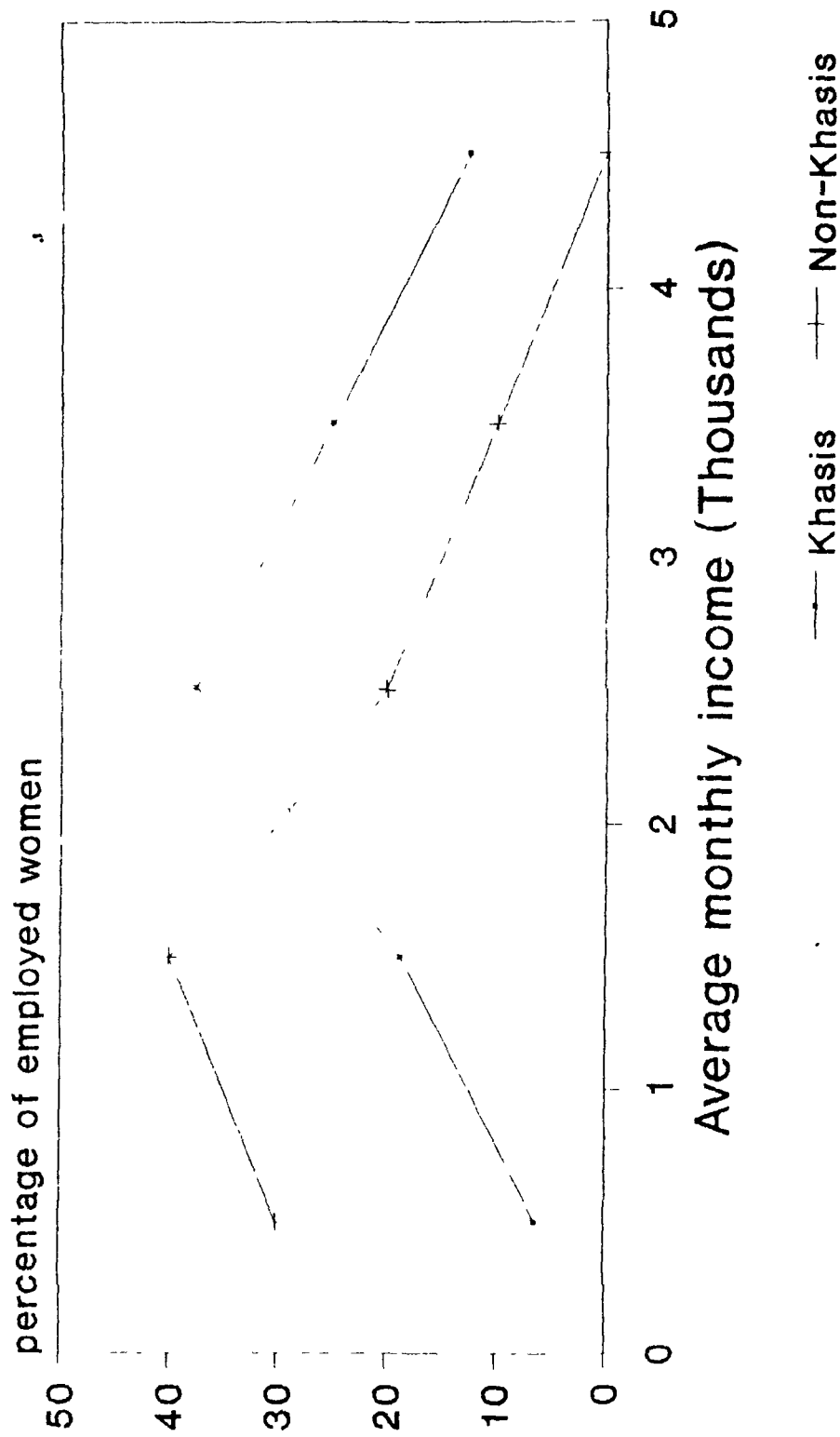
An extremely important feature of the low income households is that the activities in which females are engaged are essentially low paying requiring low skills and amounts to extensions of domestic work. Higher level, urban oriented activities seem to be the preserve of women in higher and middle income groups. These women, especially the non-tribal women have to suffer from a double brunt of highly-segmented urban labour market dominated by men as well as women of higher income groups. The analysis also shows that a large scale illiteracy among the non-tribal women keeps them in low paying and low-end jobs.

Table 6.7 reveals the level of income of employed tribal as well as non-tribal women. This has been done because

3.Madhu Shastri, Op.Cit.

SLUM WOMEN OF SHILLONG

Level of Income



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Fig.6.2

any appraisal of women's economic roles to be meaningful must take into account the socio-economic status of working women.

Table 6.7
LEVEL OF INCOME OF EMPLOYED WOMEN

(in percentage)

Sl.No.	Income Group In Rupees per month	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Total
1	2	3	4	5
	1. Less than 1000	6.25	30.00	15.38
	2. 1000-2000	18.75	40.00	26.92
	3. 2000-3000	37.50	20.00	30.77
	4. 3000-4000	25.00	10.00	19.24
	5. Above 4000	12.50	0.00	7.69
	TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Table 6.7 reveals that tribal employed women have comparatively higher income levels than that of non-tribal working women. This is due to a comparatively higher proportion of women being employed in the service sector. Only 6.25 per cent of women have income level below Rs.1000 per month compared to 30 per cent in the case of non-tribals. 18.75 per cent have income between Rs 1000-2000 compared to 40 per cent of the non-tribal women; 37.50 per cent of the tribal women have income ranging from Rs. 2000-3000 compared to 20 per cent in the case of non tribals. 25 per cent have income between Rs 3000 to 4000 compared to only 10 per cent in the case of non-tribal women and 12.50 per cent had income levels above Rs 4000 as compared to none in the case of non-tribal women in this category.

75 per cent of the tribal women have income level above

Rs.2000 as compared to only 30 per cent in the case of non-tribal women. This reveals the comparatively better economic status of tribal vis-a vis non-tribal women as majority (70 per cent of the working women have incomes below Rs 2000 per month).

On the whole, 15 per cent have income below Rs.1000, 27 per cent between Rs.1000-2000, 30.77 per cent between Rs. 2000-3000, 19.24 per cent Rs.3000-4000 and only 7.69 per cent above Rs 4000. This implies that these women have some independent source of income which helps them to have a measure of economic security and self esteem. Being employed and having their own earnings contributes to certain amount of economic and social independence.

6.6 CONTRIBUTION OF POOR WORKING WOMEN TO FAMILY INCOME:

The status of the working women in low income household, and the bearing upon survival and poverty reduction is related to their contribution to the family and household income.

Majority of the working women among tribals (68.75 per cent) were the sole contributors to the family/ household income; 31.25 per cent of the working women are supplementing the family incomes.

In the case of non-tribal women 25 per cent of women's earnings was the only source of survival of the family and 75 per cent of the working women were sharing the economic burden of running households indicating a very high degree of dependence of these families on women's earnings and work.

Majority of the women who are the sole earners in the family belonging to female headed households. The percentage is more in the case of tribal women due to impact of the matrilineal tradition. Thus, employment is one of the major factors contributing to status of women.

6.7 RELATIONSHIP OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND ITS IMPACT:

Education and employment are the two most important factors which helps to enhance women's status and power. Women having a higher level of education are mostly employed in the service sector and have a better status. Table 6.8 shows the correlation of educational level and employment status.

Table 6.8 clearly reveals the positive correlation of educational level and the type of employment in which women are engaged. Of the 10 per cent illiterate females who are working,

Table 6.8
EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN BY EDUCATION STATUS

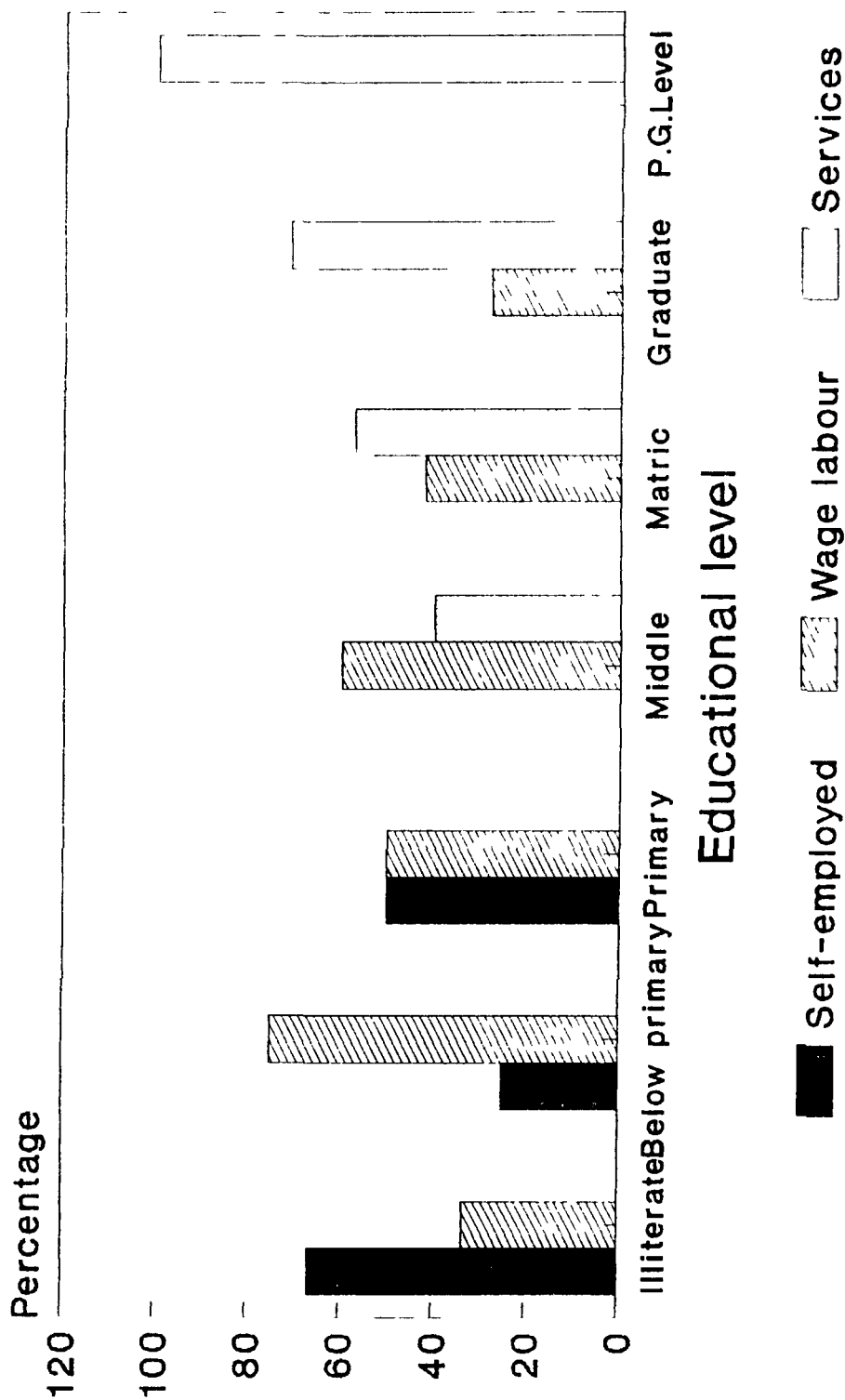
(in percentage)

Sl.No.	Educational Status	Number of working Females	Type of Employment		
			Self-Employed	Wage Earner	Salary earner
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Illiterate	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2. Below Primary	13.33	25.00	75.00	0.00	0.00
3. Primary	6.66	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00
4. Middle	20.00	0.00	80.00	20.00	0.00
5. Matric	23.33	0.00	20.00	80.00	0.00
6. Graduate	23.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
7. Post Graduate	3.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00

Source : Survey by the author.

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Fig.6.3

100 per cent of them are self-employed. 13.33 per cent women who are below primary and are working, 25 per cent are self employed and 75 per cent are wage earners. None of them are employed in salaried jobs.

6.66 per cent of women had studied up to primary. 50 per cent of these were employed in their own ventures and 50 per cent were working as wage earners. Women with educational qualification higher than primary to some extent are employed in salaried jobs. Out of the 20 per cent women who had studied till eighth standard, none was self employed, 80 per cent were wage earners and 20 per cent were working in jobs. Of the 23.33 per cent of women who were matriculates, none of them was self-employed, 20 per cent were working as wage earners and 80 per cent in services . With higher level of education, that is graduation, post-graduation, professional employment in white-collar jobs in the formal sector increases. Of the 23.33 per cent of the graduates, all were (100 per cent) working in services . Similarly, of the 3.33 per cent of postgraduates, 100 per cent were working in services . None of them were self-employed or wage earners. Thus, the correlation between level of education and type of employment is quite significant ($r = +0.7815$). With higher education, the type of work a woman is engaged in, is influenced. With low level of education up to primary or below it, women were employed in low-grade jobs or are self-employed. Highly educated women, working in formal sector or in white collar jobs command a higher status than women with low level of

education and working in the informal sector. They have more decision making power, have more freedom in economic matters and also better life style, all of which enhances their status in the family and in the wider society.

6.8 FERTILITY PERFORMANCE BY NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT:

The nature of employment to some extent influences the number of children borne by a woman. Women belonging to different social and economic classes, having different life styles, have different pattern of fertility. In the study area, findings reveal that women employed in white collar jobs had fewer children than women engaged in low-grade jobs. Another factor associated with it is the comparatively higher level of education of those employed in services. Majority of the women doing menial jobs had low level of education. Type of occupation along with other social indicators like education, income and residence has influenced the fertility performance of these women as shown in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9
MEAN NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORNE BY WOMEN'S NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT

Sl.No.	Nature of Employment	Mean Fertility
1.	Computer Programmes	1.8
2.	Teacher	2
3.	Clerk & Telephone operator	2.2
4.	Construction Supervisor	2.5
5.	Shop worker	3
6.	Tailoring/Knitting	3.5
7.	Vendors	4.5
8.	Domestic servant	5.5
9.	sweeperess	5.5

Source : Survey by the author, 1993

SLUM WOMEN OF SHILLONG

Age at Marriage & Number of Children

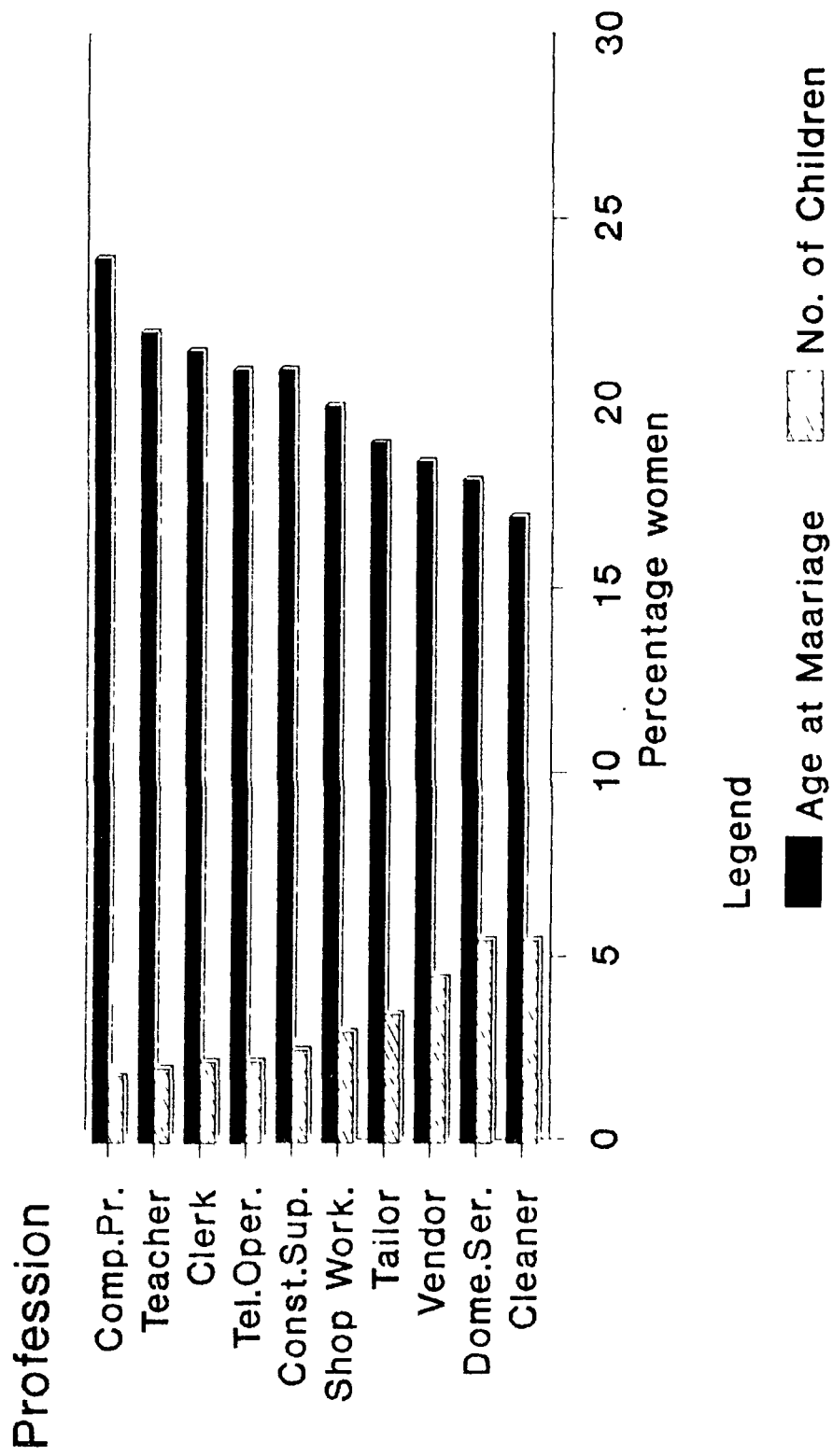


Fig.6.4

Table 6.9 reveals that women employed in low menial jobs like sweeperess, domestic servants, had higher number of children, i.e. 5.5 Vendors - 4.5, women who are in semi-skilled jobs (knitting) 3.5, shop workers - 3, clerks and telephone operators - 2.2 children. Teachers had on an average 2 children like other skilled professionals.

Thus, mean fertility is lower in high skilled jobs. It is not only employment as such which affects fertility performance but it is the particular type of employment, i.e. employment in white collar jobs, which bears positive correlation with fertility. The findings are in keeping with the findings of W.S. Thompson, D.T.Lewis 1965, E.D. Driver and Gokhale Institute (Pune).

6.9 FAMILY PLANNING METHODS AND NATURE OF WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT :

There is significant variation in the use of family planning practices in relation to occupational prestige as revealed by the findings in Table 6.10.

The Table shows that percentage of women using family planning devices is the highest in the case of professionals, 75 per cent, 67 per cent among teachers and 60 per cent in case of clerks. These women are engaged in high prestige jobs, have more knowledge of family planning methods and therefore a higher proportion have adopted family planning measures. Women engaged

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4. W.S. Thompson, Op.Cit.
 5. D.T.Lewis 1965, Op.Cit.
 6. E.D. Driver Op.Cit.
 7. Gokhale Institute Op.Cit.

Table 6.10
ADOPTION OF FAMILY PLANNING BY NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT

(in percentage)

SL.NO	TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	ADOPTION OF FAMILY PLANNING DEVICES
1	2	3
1.	Professionals	75.00
2.	Teacher	67.00
3.	Clerk/Telephone Operator	60.00
4.	Construction Supervisor	55.00
5.	Shop Workers	25.00
6.	Vendors	22.00
7.	Domestic help	15.00
8.	Sweepers	10.00

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

in low grade jobs have lesser knowledge of family planning measures due to their lower level of education and therefore lesser level of acceptance, i.e. 25 per cent among shop workers, 22 per cent among vendors, 15 per cent among domestic servants and only 10 per cent of sweeperesses had adopted some family planning methods. But this is also closely related to the age and number of children in the family. Use of these methods is the highest when women already have 3, 4 children and women with one or two children comparatively adopt it later. So type of employment has a bearing on the adoption of family planning devices.

Women engaged in higher jobs get married late, have fewer children and adopt family planning measures sooner and have a better health status than those engaged in lower jobs who get married at an early age, have more children and do not adopt

family planning measures and thus, have a poor health status.

6.10 LEVEL OF INCOME BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS :

Type of employment has a bearing on the income level. Women employed in white collar jobs had a comparatively higher level of income than those engaged in low grade, low skilled jobs as shown in Table 6.11. The table reveals that women having salaried jobs of both higher as well as low-end jobs, had higher income than that of wage earners and self-employed women.

Table 6.11
LEVEL OF INCOME BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

SL.NO	TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	TYPE OF OCCUPATION	ANNUAL AVERAGE INCOME IN RUPEES
1	2	3	4
1.	Self-employed	(a) Vendor	7,200
		(b) Pan/coy selling	9,600
		(c) Tailoring/Knitting	10,200
2.	Wage earner	(a) Domestic Servant	9,600
		(b) Archery shop	12,000
		(c) Vegetable shop	13,200
3.	Salaried	(a) Sweepers	18,000
		(b) Telephone Operator	24,000
		(c) Construction Supervisor	33,600
		(d) Teacher/Clerks	36,000
		(e) Computer Programmer	38,400

Source : Survey by the author, 1993.

Women who are self-employed, comparatively earn less than wage-earners and also the salaried women. Vendors have an average income of Rs. 600 per month, i.e., Rs.7200 per annum. Women who are selling pan/kwai earn Rs. 9600 per annum and women who are doing knitting and tailoring at home, on order, earn Rs.

10,200 on an average per annum.

Among the wage earners, domestic servants have an annual average income of Rs. 9600. Women working in betting kiosks receive around Rs. 12,000 per annum and women working in vegetable shops, receive around Rs. 13,200 on an average per annum. So the wage earners have higher income levels than that of the self-employed women.

Women who working in the formal sector, that is, the salaried jobs in organised sectors have much higher income than those working in the informal sector. Even among the salary earners, women engaged in comparatively low skilled jobs like sweepers (charwomen) have lower income levels than those employed in offices and teaching jobs. Average annual income of sweepers is Rs. 18,000. Women working as telephone operators earn Rs. 24,000 per annum. Teachers and clerks have an annual average income of Rs. 36,000 and computer programmers, Rs. 38,400 per annum.

Thus, there is a positive correlation between level of income and type of employment women are engaged in. Women with higher educational levels, work in the offices or as teachers and earn a higher salaries and this in turn results in having a much higher status in the family and the society at large than women who are illiterate or have lower level of education and are either not employed or are working in lower-end jobs. They earn far less than women in high jobs and consequently, have a lower socio-economic status.

Thus the nature of employment has a positive relationship with level of education and the level of income which in turn has a bearing on the health status of women in these poor areas.

6.11. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The main findings are :

1. The work participation rate of women in the study area is low, that is, around 22 per cent. Tribal women have a higher work participation rate 33.33 per cent as compared to poor non-tribal women only 13.15 per cent of the non-tribal women are working revealing the unequal access to employment opportunities.
2. Nearly 60 per cent of the tribal as well as non-tribal women are concentrated in low skilled, low grade jobs.
3. 45 per cent of the tribal women are working in non-formal sector - self employed 10 per cent - wage earners - 35 per cent as compared to 60 per cent in the case of non-tribal women. 8.30 per cent are self-employed and 30 per cent wage earners.
4. Nearly one-third of the tribal women constitute the salaried component as compared to one-seventh in the case of non-tribal women.
5. The occupational structure of these women on the whole does not have much diversification.
6. Majority of the self-employed women i.e, 60 per cent are doing tailoring and knitting on orders at home. 20 per cent work as vendors and 20 per cent are selling pan and coy in the markets.
7. The occupational structure of the wage earners reveal that 30 per cent of the women are working as domestic servants, and 70 per cent are working in archery (Teer, unique area of work in the city) and vegetables shops.
8. Occupational structure of the salaried component or formal sector workers reveal that majority of the women (57 per cent) in both segments are working as teachers, clerks and computer programmer 13.00 per cent are working as construction supervisor and telephone operators and nearly 30 per cent as sweeperesses.

9. White collar employed in the formal sector account for 62.50 per cent of women, on the whole.
10. On the whole, employment status of these women is low as 33.33 per cent are working in white collar jobs compared to 66.67 per cent in low grade jobs. The tribal women are slightly in a better position than the non-tribal women.
11. The level of income of the employed women reveals that tribal women have higher income levels than non-tribal women 70 per cent of the non-tribal women earn less than Rs. 2000 per month compared to only 25 per cent in the case of tribal women. On the whole, nearly 27 per cent women have incomes above Rs. 3000 per month or Rs. 36,000 per annum.
12. Majority of the tribal working women (68.75 per cent) were the sole contributors to the family income and belonged to female headed households. 25 per cent women in the case of non-tribal women workers were the sole contributors to the family income and the rest were supplementing the family incomes.
13. There exists a positive correlation between the level of education of these women and the type of employment they are engaged in women with higher level of education are working mostly in the formal sector whereas women who were illiterate; below primary or upto primary were concentrated in low-skilled, low prestige jobs.
14. The employment status of women, that is, the nature of employment has a positive correlation with many of the health inducers namely mean age at marriage, age of first pregnancy, mean fertility and adoption of family planning devices. Women engaged in high prestige jobs like the white collar jobs marry at a later age, have fewer children and adopt family planning measures earlier. This has a bearing on the health status of women. These women have better health status than women working as wage earners and other low-grade jobs.
15. Type of employment has a positive correlation with level of income. Women employed in white collar jobs have higher income levels than women working in other menial jobs.
16. Apart from education, the most important force behind the entry of these women in the field of wage employment is emancipation born out of necessity. Majority of women in the study area have taken to work

for economic reasons.

Women working in low-skilled, low-grade jobs have low level of education, lower incomes, marry at an early age, have more children and have comparatively poorer health status than women working in high-end jobs. The question raised is the reason behind their concentration in low-paying, petty jobs. Whether it is the illiteracy among the women which confines them to low-end jobs or that there exists a vicious circle that binds women of these attributes together.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

Women's problems manifest themselves differently in different countries, but there are certain commonality of the problems and issues, particularly related to the male domination everywhere in the world. The world is changing, so also men and women, but the discrepancy between what women have become and what they used to be, has become too large. Women now in the changing world, feel like people who have lived below their possibilities and potentialities. Very slowly but surely an 'identity consciousness' about their own reality is emerging. More and more they are questioning the situation in which they are put, the more and more they are contesting the impediments to liberty and equality, which they encounter from being subject to a stereotype image. So, feminist problems have become more stratified and more obdurate.

In the fascinating world of Shillong with its distinct tribal but cosmopolitan ethos, the domestic, social, political, legal, economic position of women manifest in a variety of manner.

However, inspite of the difficulties and limitations involved in analysing the status of women in poverty pockets of Shillong, certain broad conclusions and generalizations have been arrived at through the present study which may be stated as follows:

(1) Women from the poor urban slum pockets are caught in a vicious cycle of abject poverty and underdevelopment as is revealed by the analysis of the tribal vis-a-vis non-tribal

women. Changing socio-economic environment and changes in life styles, social institutions and support systems in Shillong have created a hiatus in meeting the needs of these underprivileged women. Most of these women are facing the double oppression of being poor as well as being women, the double burden of working at home and working outside, to make both ends meet. Women, especially are exploited because of their ignorance, poverty, large family size and other factors and are caught in the vicious cycle of poverty.

If one analyses the current status of women in different parts of the world, we realise that feminist issues and gender discrimination in particular, are inexorably connected with political, economic, social and cultural structures. Both men and women are involved in the process of discrimination and we all are to be blamed equally for the existing gender inequalities.

There is a lot of emphasis given to the structural approach to the women's issues, implying that whatever legislations that are made for women in any country; the laws can be framed, a lot of organizations can be formed, but so long as the structures remain the same, the position of women would remain the same. When the political, economic and social structures change, the position of women changes.

In case of Shillong, it is remarkable that the tribal women enjoy equal rights with men due to the existence of necessary political, economic and social structures. There is no

discrimination against girls. They have the right of inheritance and succession but the inherited property passes only to the youngest girl. They have equal opportunities in work, access to education, nutrition and in all other walks of life. Due to these distinctive features, the tribal women in Shillong are free from some of the problems like dowry deaths, child marriage etc. Another root cause besides the structural changes of female subservience is patriarchy. As is clear from the history of nations like Russia, China which went through the radical economic and social transformations, giving women the equal rights in all walks of life, there is dominance of the man because of the patriarchy concept. In this respect also, the Khasi-Jaintia tribal women of Shillong are very lucky to have a matrilineal and matrilocal society which enhances their status as compared to the non-khasi women.

The egalitarian nature of tribal society has resulted in the women from the Khasi and Jaintia societies being quite active and purposeful in social as well as economic spheres of life. The prevalence of matrilineal system helps them to have financial security household and economic matters unlike the non-tribal segment of female population. The birth of a female child is a matter of great joy in these societies. Nearly 56 per cent of the tribal households are female headed as compared to only 10 per cent of the non-tribal women indicating that they have a much higher status and role to play in all walks of life. Majority of the working women among ST's i.e., 68.75 per cent were the sole

contributors to the family income and 31.25 per cent are supplementing the family incomes without which the low income households would plunge deep into the state of poverty. On the other hand, only 25 per cent of the non-tribal working women were the sole contributors and 75 per cent of them were sharing the economic burden of running the household. The percentage is more in the case of tribal women due to the impact of matrilineal tradition which indicates a very high degree of dependence of poor families on women's earnings and work, which results in the differentiated socio-economic status of tribal vis-a-vis non-tribal women .

(2) Although the slum areas selected for study are notified slum areas in which poverty in different forms exists in all parts of area, yet there seems to be a coexistence of the very poor and not so poor families. The findings on overall living conditions of the area reveal (chapter IV) that only 15 per cent of the households are below the poverty line in tribal segment of population and 52 per cent in the case of non-tribal population. By and large the overall conditions of housing, electricity, water supply and sanitation facilities are relatively better than the deplorable living conditions of the typical slum areas of metro cities. Nearly 30 per cent of the households have income level above Rs 24,000, per annum. Nearly 75 per cent of the households have their own ration card and are availing of the facilities. Twenty-one per cent of people have access to water supply within the house from individual taps and 75 per cent are

using the community tap. Thirty per cent of the houses are pucca and 37 per cent semi-pucca in the study area and 44 per cent of the population have their own houses, twenty-one per cent of the households have access to sanitation within the house. Another important finding which has come to light is that there are important differences between the scheduled tribe women and non-tribal women with regard to overall status indicators as well as various health indicators (chapter IV).

The housing conditions were far better for the tribal households than non-tribals. Fortyseven per cent of women were staying in pucca, 53 per cent in semipucca houses and none in kutcha houses, whereas only 18 per cent of the non-tribal women were staying in pucca, 26 per cent in semi-pucca and as many as 56 per cent in kutcha houses. Seventytwo per cent of them were staying in rented houses as compared to only 32 per cent in the case of STs. The status of sanitation was also better for STs as 38 access to toilet facilities within the house compared to only 10 per cent in case of non-tribals. Only 20 per cent of the non-tribal women were using individual dry and pourflush type of toilets compared to 41 per cent of the case of STs. Ninetyfour per cent of the tribes had their own ration card compared to 66 per cent of the non-tribes. Also the level of income was higher in the case of tribal women. Nearly 37 per cent had incomes above Rs. 24,000 p.a. compared to 22 per cent in the case of non-tribal women. The tribal households are staying mostly in three room houses, which are owned. In all these respects, the tribal women

enjoy better living conditions. Both segments of women faced problems regarding water supply and safe drinking water. Nearly 79 per cent had to go outside their houses to fetch water.

(3) The nutritional status of the poor non-tribal women is far worse than the tribal women due to the prevalence of cultural traditions of intra-family distributions of food which compel these women to eat last and often, the least, in both quality and quantity. Majority of the tribal women i.e., 60 per cent, had good nutritional status having one or more cereals, vegetables and protein foods compared to only 30 per cent in the case of non-tribal women. Fiftyseven per cent had three meals a day compared to 42 per cent non-tribal women. This reveals that there is no discrimination against tribal women as far as food consumption and dietary habits are concerned.

Another very important fact which came to light is that 75 per cent of the non-tribal women devoted more time in child care for boys than girls and they were given better diets. No such discrimination is evident in the tribal households. So right from childhood, the girl child has poor nutrition, poor health care and are mostly malnourished in the non-tribal societies.

(4) Majority of the tribal women marry later than non-tribal women, as marriage is not compulsory for them. Seventyfive per cent of the non-tribal women married before 20 years of age, which impaired their health further as they entered into early marriages from their pre-existing malnutrition and the full development of their bodies had not taken place. Only 36 per cent

of the tribal women married before 20 years of age and majority of them, i.e, 64 per cent married between 20-29 years of age. The significance of age at marriage is great, as it marks the beginning of the reproductive span of the woman's life. Tribal women, because of the matrilineal tradition, enjoy far greater freedom in pursuing education and their careers and married late.

(5) The age at the time of first pregnancy was also between 20-25 years for a majority of tribal women, i.e., 72 per cent, whereas 60 per cent of the non-tribal women had their first child, before 20 years of age which led to depletion of their body reserves resulting in entrenched deficiencies and ill health. Therefore, tribal women, on the whole enjoyed a far better health status than non-tribal women.

(6) Both segments of women had high fertility rates. Large family size in the case of tribal women is not only due to poverty and ignorance, but also due to prevalence of cultural taboos as catholic religion does not permit the adoption of family planning methods. In the case of non-tribals, only 20 per cent women had adopted some family planning measure. This is attributed to their poverty, ignorance and higher illiteracy rates.

(7) The average number of children borne by both tribal and non-tribal women is 4. Repeated pregnancies at inappropriate time gap has led to poorer health. The status of lactating and pregnant women is again better in the case of tribal than non-tribal women. Only around 50-55 per cent of the non-tribal women

were availing the ante-natal and post-natal check-ups. Only 52 per cent were consuming iron & folic acid and 60 per cent were immunised against tetanus. The low nutrient intake, combined with early marriages, early pregnancies, repeated child birth without adequate supplementary nutrition and poverty, all led to maternal malnutrition and poorer health status. Moreover, only 66 per cent of the deliveries were assisted by trained medical/ para-medical personnel compared to 86 per cent in the case of tribal women who faced a lesser risk at the time of deliveries. Majority of the women in both segments (90 per cent) went to civil hospital for treatment.

Thus, on the whole the tribal women had far better living conditions and health status than the non-tribal women. The status of pregnant and lactating women is better in these slum areas due to the work done by UBSP project staff. This reveals that proper health care and guidance will go a long way in improving their health. A supplementary nutrition of even 150-200 kcal per day caused a significant increase in the birth weight of their children and better breast feeding pattern. The nutritional well-being of pregnant and lactating women is a very important factor for good health. These women, if guided properly regarding the advantages of good diets, good personal hygiene, late marriages, fewer children with proper spacing and adoption of some family planning measures, will go a long way in improving the health status of these poor women as they seem to be caught in a cycle of malnutrition, poverty and ill health which they

find difficult to break.

(8) Another very crucial fact corroborated by the findings in the study area is that tribal women have equal access to educational facilities as men, which further enhances their economic power and has a positive bearing on their status. Only 5 per cent of the women are illiterate compared to nearly 28 per cent in the case of non-tribals, majority of them (56 per cent) have attained only lower level of education, i.e. upto middle level, whereas in the case of tribal women a higher proportion have attained high level of education, matriculates - 31 per cent, graduates and post-graduates - 13 per cent. This is because of the socio-cultural milieu, in the case of non-tribal women which does not allow them to enjoy equal rights with men as far as access to education is concerned.

This discrimination between boys and girls starts right from the pre-primary and primary levels, as is evident from the findings of chapter V. None of the girls of the age group (2-5 years) were sent to school whereas 50 per cent boys were sent to school. No such discrimination is evident in the case of tribal households as equal number of boys and girls (50 per cent) went to pre-primary school.

The primary school education status further proves the existence of bias against girls' education in patriarchal societies. Only 29 per cent girls were sent to primary schools compared to 64 per cent boys. The drop out rate was 17 per cent as they were required to look after younger siblings and help

their mothers in domestic chores. This reveals the entrenched prejudices against the girls' education who are mainly perceived as home makers and therefore, education is considered unnecessary for them. In the case of tribals, the drop out rate is only due to poverty related and illiteracy related factors than due to any bias. Sixtythree per cent of the girls went to primary school and drop out rate was only 9.6 per cent compared to 66 per cent of boys who went to primary school and an equal number of them dropped out.

Thus, right from the very beginning of the schooling period, girls in non-tribal segment of population are denied the basic right of access to education. The higher literacy rates for tribals can also be attributed to the role played by missionary schools in encouraging education among them.

A comparison of the educational status of males and females in the tribal dominated area does not reveal any marked differences whereas, significant disparities exist between the male and female education in the non-tribal dominated area. Only 4 per cent of the males are illiterate compared to 28 per cent of the females. Even among the literate females, the access to higher education is minimal i.e., only 14 per cent have studied upto matriculation and graduation, compared to nearly 42 per cent in the case of males. Majority of the girls dropped out after primary school levels due to early marriages, poverty of parents and mainly due to inherent cultural prejudices against their education.

(9) Moreover, tribal women equipped with the necessary educational support system, played a far greater role in the economic development and enjoyed a higher status. They had the freedom to pursue their careers if they so desired and also freedom in economic participation compared to the non-tribal women who were mainly cast in the role of cradle rockers. This accounts for the very low work participation rates, i.e. only 13 per cent in the case of non-tribal women. These women are mainly working because of the economic pressures being faced by the family, on the other hand, 33.33 per cent of the tribal women are gainfully employed.

(10) Moreover, the lack of higher education in the case of non-tribal women has resulted in squeezing a greater proportion of these women into low grade jobs. Majority of them (60 per cent) are engaged in the informal sector, being wage earners and self-employed compared to only 45 per cent of tribal women. These tribal women equipped with higher education and due to no cultural hindrance in the way of seeking employment, constituted a significant proportion of the formal sector workers, i.e. the salaried component which is 55 per cent. The occupational structure of various types of employment, self-employed, wage earners and salaried is not as diversified as that of the tribal women, especially the salaried component as is evident from the findings of chapter VI. Nearly 35 per cent of the tribal women are employed in white collar jobs, compared to only half that percentage in case of the non-tribals. Thus, on the whole, tribal

women have a much higher status regarding all three aspects : health, education and employment than the non-tribal women. This adequately corroborates the first research question indicating that there does exist significant differences between the urban tribal women vis-a-vis non-tribal women, with regard to the socio-economic status enjoyed by them, because higher level of education, higher level of work participation rate, higher incomes earned by them and the nature of employment, all help them to possess a higher status within and outside the families. Nearly 75 per cent of the tribal women who are employed are earning more than Rs 24,000 p.a. compared to only 30 per cent of the non-tribal women. This results in a great deal of economic independence and self-confidence.

(11) The second research question raised was whether better education has a bearing on health status and vice versa. A detailed investigation in the study area indicates that the higher is the level of education of women, better is the health status. The correlation between various indices of health like age at marriage, fertility rate, adoption of family planning methods etc. and the level of education is positive. Higher is the educational qualification of these women, later they marry. Graduates and post-graduates married after 21 years compared to illiterates marrying as early as 16 years. Moreover, the average number of children borne by women in the study area were higher (4-6) in the case of below primary than graduates and post-graduates (2 children). Highly educated women had greater

knowledge of family planning methods and adopted them earlier. Seventyfive per cent of the graduates and post-graduates had adopted some family planning measures compared to only 10 per cent in the case of illiterates and 25 per cent of women who had studied upto primary level. Thus greater is the adoption of family planning methods, lower is the fertility rate and better is the health status. There is a strong linkage between the educational status of women and their health status as educated women realise the importance and are more aware of the advantages of better nutrition, personal hygiene and immunisation, delayed marriage, delayed motherhood and fewer children at proper time gap or spacing. Thus, if a women in these poor areas is educated, the whole family is educated, as with higher level of education, the health consciousness of women increases.

(12) There exists a positive correlation between educational status and employment status of women, as well, which further has a positive bearing on the health status. Cent per cent of the graduates and post-graduates were employed in the formal sector of employment, 80 per cent of matriculates were employed in the services sector compared to none in the case of below primary level of education, who were mostly self-employed and working in low-grade jobs in the informal sector. Correlation coefficient (r) between the level of education and type of employment worked out to be + 0.7815 which is significant. Thus, overall higher literacy has a highly positive influence on the proportion of workers among the tertiary sector in Shillong. This can be

attributed to the rejection of highly educated women of lower order jobs, even in the lower strata of population.

(13) The present investigation was conducted mainly to gauge the status of women in poor pockets especially measuring the status of women in terms of health, education and gainful employment. Arranging all these women in a single dimension of socio-economic status raises a methodological problem. This is due to the fact that the dimension of occupational prestige is applicable only to employed women. It is also true that the dimension of the amount of education, another correlate of socio-economic status, varies in the case of educated women only. But with regard to education, all uneducated women can be placed at the extreme end of the dimension. In this sense, all non-working women cannot be placed on any one extreme of the continuum of occupational prestige.

With a view to circumventing this problem, women in the study area have been divided into four classes. A priori status categories are in the following (descending) order:

Category I	Highly educated working women
Category II	Highly educated non-working women
Category III	Less educated working women
Category IV	Less educated non-working women

These form a hierarchical pattern, as educational attainments and the occupational status are the most important indices of socio-economic status of women. An attempt has been made to see how far the indices selected correspond to hierarchical arrangement of women into these status categories. It reveals that higher educated women who are employed have a

higher status than uneducated unemployed counterparts in the study area. These women fall in the highest status category, i.e. I.

Category I: Highly Educated Working Women :

Women having a high level of education in tribal and non-tribal segments, who are also gainfully employed, had the highest status. Out of the total working tribal women of 33.33 per cent, 55 per cent fall in Category I compared to 40 per cent of the total 13 per cent working, non-tribal women. Tribal women had a higher socio-economic status than the non-tribal women. In the case of tribal women, 45.45 per cent are matriculates, 45.45 per cent, graduates and 9 per cent post graduates, which constitutes the 55 per cent women falling in this category. All these women are not only working but also employed mostly in higher end, white collar jobs in the formal sector. Thus, the high level of education combined with employment in higher prestige jobs enable them to enjoy higher status in the society. They had higher incomes, greater authority and more freedom regarding economic matters than the uneducated, unemployed counterparts. In the case of non-tribal women, of the 40 per cent women falling in this category, 50 per cent were graduates and 50 per cent matriculates and were engaged mostly in the service sector.

Moreover, better educated women who are employed had a better health status, as is revealed by the findings. Highly educated women engaged in higher prestige occupations, had a

higher health status. There exists a positive correlation between educational status, employment status, level of income and various health indices like (a) age at marriage (b) age of first pregnancy (c) number of children (d) adoption of family planning devices (e) nutritional status/personal hygiene. Women belonging to category I have higher income levels, marry late, conceive their first child at later age, adopt family planning measures earlier because of greater knowledge via media and contacts and have a smaller family size and therefore, have better health and nutritional status. Mean age at marriage is the highest in the category I i.e. 23 +, especially for highly educated women employed as computer programmer, teachers, clerks etc. Age at marriage is directly related to education, not only because those who go in for higher education get married after the completion of their education but also because of the change in the value system, implying assignment of roles to these women that extend beyond the universal one, of child bearing. These women pursue their careers and education combined with employment and proved a major instrument of upward mobility in attaining higher status.

Category II: Highly Educated, Non Working Women

Among the highly educated women, i.e. women who had attained education beyond matriculation, many of them are not working. Of the total 45.39 per cent highly educated tribal women, 42 per cent are working and 58 per cent are not working. Similarly of the total 14.47 per cent of highly educated women which is very low compared to tribal women, reveals that only

36.36 per cent are working and 63.63 per cent are not working. In this respect, also tribal women had higher status than non-tribal women.

The large percentage of highly educated but non-working women is due to the enhancement of the process of withdrawal of women even in lower strata of population from economic participation in so called low prestige jobs. At the lowest level of education, women would still do manual work but with high level of education, employability in low grade jobs is drastically reduced as is evident from the study area. As a symbol of their newly earned status through education women prefer only high prestige jobs. These highly educated but non-working women have a comparatively lower status than women in category I. This is because they have comparatively lower level of high education and are not working. Out of the 58 per cent non-working, highly educated women in case of STs, 86.86 per cent were matriculates and only 13.33 per cent were graduates. In the case of non-tribals, the figures are 71.42 per cent matriculates and 28.52 per cent are graduates; so in this category, a large majority of women i.e. nearly 3/4th of the total are matriculates. This indicates that although all the women in the first two categories were highly educated, yet the women in the first category were comparatively more educated. Moreover, being employed helped them to have a higher status than these women.

But women belonging to this category had higher socio-economic status than the less educated, working and non-working

women. They had better health status due to better hygiene, awareness and personal care. The age at marriage was 20+ in most of the cases. They had their first child at a later age. Average number of children borne by them were 2.25-2.8. Nearly 60-75 per cent of the women had adopted some family planning measures which helped in proper spacing of children and lower fertility rate. A comparatively lower percentage of highly educated non-tribal women were employed due to job protection and reservation policy of the government for STs. Moreover, in both the cases, higher level of education demarcated the line between 'manual' and 'mental' work, resulting in unwillingness to work in lower prestige, manual jobs.

Category III: Less Educated Working Women

A great majority of the non-tribal women i.e., 85.50 per cent were less educated having educational level upto middle standard whereas nearly 56 per cent of the tribal women were less educated. Out of the total less educated women in the case of non-tribals, only 9.23 per cent are working and nearly 90 per cent are not working, whereas in the case of tribal women 26.50 per cent of the total less educated women are working. So the less educated but working women had a comparatively lower status than the first two categories of women. Even in this category, the tribal women were better off. One third of the illiterates, 12.5 per cent of below primary, 50 per cent of the primary and 26.31 per cent of the middle level educated tribal women were working. On the other hand, 9.5 per cent of the illiterates, 25

per cent of below primary and 5 per cent of the primary level educated non-tribal women were working. Majority of the working women were self-employed or wage earners. None of them, except 20 per cent with middle class educational level were employed in the service sector and that too, as in low skilled, low prestige, low paid jobs like selling vegetable, 'teer' shops, and as domestic servants. Cent per cent of the illiterates were self-employed as vendors, tailroress~~ess~~ and selling pan-beedi etc. These women had low socio-economic status because of low level of education and also being employed in low prestige jobs. Moreover, their level of income was also low. Most of the self-employed women earned between Rs. 7,000 to Rs. 10,000 p.a., whereas the wage earners had an annual average income ranging between Rs. 9,600 to Rs. 13,200 p.a. and women from category I who were engaged in white collar and higher prestige jobs like telephone operators, construction supervisors, teachers, clerks and computer programmers earned comparatively much higher income. Their annual average income ranged from Rs. 18,000 to Rs. 38,400 per annum. So most of them were above the poverty line. Therefore, their status (category I) is the highest among all these women.

The health status of these less educated working women was far worse than the highly educated working and non-working women. Their mean age at marriage was 18+ years, they conceived within the first year of their marriage, their mean fertility was between 3 to 5 and only 10 to 25 per cent had adopted some family planning measures. Moreover, their attitude regarding personal

hygiene, lack of adequate nutrition and long hours of hard work combined with repeated pregnancies resulted in poor health. But they had comparatively better socio-economic status than less educated, non-working women.

Category IV: Less Educated Non Working Women

These women had the lowest status. Nearly 75 per cent of the non-tribal women fell in this category compared to 30 per cent in the case of tribal women. Thus, tribal women in all the socio-economic categories had far better status than non-tribal women. A great majority of the illiterates (90 per cent), literate but below primary (75 per cent) and 95 per cent of the women with primary level of education in the case of non-tribals were not working. None of the middle class women were working. In the case of ST's also, 67.67 per cent of the illiterates, 87.50 per cent of females who had not done primary, 56 per cent of the primary and 73.68 per cent of the women with middle level of education were not working.

These women, due to their ignorance and no means of earning, have an ignoble status. Their habits of poor hygiene, comparatively early marriages (16+), early pregnancies (17+), large family size (4 to 6 children) and poor nutritional status, and less than 10 per cent adoption of the family planning measures, all adversely affect their health status. This increased their being prone to diseases and having very poor access to health facilities, these poor women suffer from the combined effects to poverty and illiteracy. Poor educational

status, combined with poor health status and total dependency on the male members resulted in the worst socio-economic status.

Thus, the educational standards attained by these women and their being employed justifies the ranking of these women in an hierarchical order on an a priori basis.

Women having a high level of education, have better health status (category I & II). There is a strong positive correlation between health and education status as mean age of marriage increases with education, number of children borne by a women decreases with high level of education, adoption of family planning increases with education and health consciousness and personal hygiene becomes better with rising level of education. This adequately proves the second research question raised.

(14) The findings also reveal that educated, employed women have a much higher status than uneducated, unemployed counterparts. Moreover, at each educational level, mean-age of marriage is higher, average family size small, for highly educated, working than uneducated, non working women. This can be attributed to longer period of schooling or professional education combined with employment, which might have been responsible for postponement of marriage. Mean age of marriage is the lowest for less educated, unemployed (category IV) women. They belonged to the lowest strata of society and the norm of a lower age of marriages, large family size and non-adoption of family measures is still accepted by them.

(15) The findings also reveal that the type of employment a

woman is engaged in, has an impact on status within and outside the family. This corroborates the fourth research question raised. Women who are engaged in occupations of greater prestige have a much higher status than women engaged in menial jobs as domestic servants, sweepers etc. Moreover, women with high level of education are mostly engaged in higher prestige jobs, which is also a very important level of attaining high overall status as is evident from the case study. Moreover, the type of employment also has a bearing on the health status of women. Vendors, domestic servants and sweepresses married at an earlier age (16 to 18 years) compared to shop workers (20), telephone operators (21) and teachers (22 years). The nature of employment also influences the number of children borne by a woman. Majority of the women who were self-employed and wage earners, had higher fertility rate (3 to 5.5) compared to women engaged in services sector (2+). Moreover, the type of employment has a positive correlation with level of education ($r = +0.7815$), level of income and other social indicators like housing etc. Therefore, type of employment has a bearing on the status attained by women.

(16) Another important finding which is revealed by this investigation is that women employed in white collar jobs command greater authority, have greater freedom regarding economic matters and therefore, have a higher status in the family as well as the society. This has been inferred from interviewing women working in these higher prestige jobs. Only 35 percent of tribal and 30 percent of the non-tribal women are employed in white-

collar jobs and the great majority are employed in miscellaneous low grade jobs. These women have high level of education, which further moulds their opinion and behaviour. The ground reality throws a number of hypotheses for further research work.

(17) Because of the limitation of the scope of study, a detailed analysis of the behavioural as well as psychological aspects of the socio-economic status indicators was not attempted. Also the male counterparts were not interviewed to ascertain their opinion regarding the education and employment status of women.

The study raises a number of vital questions which can be answered satisfactorily with the help of further research into this otherwise less explored but socially very important field of inquiry.

Women are playing a seminal role in development projects, both as participants and as beneficiaries. In order to bring them, especially the poor women, in the mainstream of development efforts, there is an urgent need to effect fundamental and far reaching changes at the grass roots level. In Shillong, where all development is in an incipient stage, development is possible only when it is a people's movement and in a poor country like India, the status of women has far reaching consequences on the future of the country.

Literacy is one of the most fundamental of our freedoms essential for a healthy, independent and fulfilled life. The women of Shillong Municipality, is in the vicinity of 51,751 out

of the total 1.1 lakh population. The literate females are 40,154 as compared to 47,259 literate males, out of the total 87,413 literate persons.

Programmes of vocational education pay rich dividends. The state government has been working closely with voluntary organisations in many projects for adult and vocational education.

The condensed education courses (for women between the ages 18-30 years) have benefited many women in Meghalaya, enabling women to stand squarely on their own feet, and in asserting their own independence, they move one step closer to the goal of equality with men, especially in the poor areas.

It is remarkable to observe that literacy coupled with broad-based developmental programmes pays rich dividends, because an educational programme for poor women diffuses and promotes further development.

The three fold targets of economic independence, educational advancement and health care for women have to be emphasised more in policy planning. The poverty related development policy issues for women must emphasise the following.

- (a) Creation and expansion of maternity related and other basic welfare services.
- (b) Organising appropriate mechanisms of delivering the maternity and other welfare-related services, including the involvement of voluntary agencies and establishment of "mahila mandals".
- (c) Training, education and skill upgradation as a strategy to enable women to enter the labour market.
- (d) Multi-sectoral development package covering employment, education, health, nutrition and

application of science and technology to prepare women to participate in the mainstream of national development.

The positive impact of these schemes and plans would be to instill in women a sense of confidence. Being independent, economically enables them the material satisfaction of supplementing a meagre family income, as is evident in the case of working women in Shillong. Social mores, sexist attitudes, popular prejudice, all are overcome with the right kind of vocational training, the poor women are ready to face any challenge.

Concern is growing in the state about destitution caused by desertion. The Department of Social Welfare is assisting 22 voluntary organisations for maintaining 748 destitute children and orphans. The department has opened three training centres for self-employment of women in need of care and protection, giving facilities for 105 women for training in weaving, tailoring, knitting and embroidery every year.

More efforts are needed to encourage voluntary organisations to participate in empowerment of women.

Health care of women and nutrition, especially for lactating and pregnant mothers should be provided at a more effective manner.

Day-care centres, creches for children of working mothers, pre-primary schools for children of the age group of 3-6 years, special nutrition programmes for children of the age groups of 0-6 years, pregnant and lactating mothers, condensed

courses for women, craft centres, orphanages, piggery units, poultry units, working women hostels, homes for the aged are being implemented by the Women Voluntary Organisations. But there is a need for stepping up all these efforts.

Social services for these women and children are primarily curative in their approach, but a constructive and integrated approach is needed to enhance their socio-economic status in Shillong. Each social policy should envisage a network of interrelated preventive, protective, promotive, curative and rehabilitative services, emphasising on grass root participatory organisation of women and the building of a women's component in all poverty alleviation programmes.

The welfare needs of poor women are themselves an expression of wide ranging social and economic problems. It is only through more meaningful participation by these underprivileged women that a process could be initiated by which they acquire greater control over their environment and resources and not to deal with the symptoms of mal-development.

The belief that growth by itself will take care of the problems of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, has to be replaced by the theory of direct policy intervention for promoting measures to deal with socio-economic forces which marginalise women.

The Constitution guarantees equality to all and in working to realise this, we all have a role to play : the state, voluntary organisations, motivated individuals, everyone.

Development of women, welfare of children : these terms are synonymous with the development and enrichment of the society.

Standing as we are today on the threshold of a new century, it is true to take stock of what has been achieved on enhancing the status of women and to chart out a new course for the future. More and more women are coming forward, often against all odds, to take their rightful place in the building of a society of which we are all a part. Even deep rooted social bias is beginning to give way before determined assault. The progress of any society is primarily dependent on the role women play in the community. We must work to ensure that women is born free and bold, capable of immense strength and boundless compassion, a true custodian of all that we cherish, woman inspired, woman empowered.

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