

# A Study on Changing Values of Working Women in Colleges of Imphal East and Imphal West Districts of Manipur from the 1980 to 2020

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## Abstract

The value system of a woman or mother is passed down to her children or siblings, which influences the child's personality. As a result, a study on changing values among women is deemed vital in the current scenario. Women belonging to different ethnic communities of Manipur are employed in the colleges of different districts of the state. Women of all the communities are exposed to similar and dissimilar social situations. The current study focuses on how women in the profession influence in changing social value system and vice versa, specifically in Imphal East and West Districts of Manipur. It has led to sociocultural, psychological, and political- economic changes in women's life patterns, values, and attitudes, particularly among occupations and professions. The socioeconomic emancipation of women has been both a product of and an instrument of the changes in their values towards various concerns of life, which has, in turn, influenced their behavior patterns in various spheres of life. This, together with newly gained political legal privileges, is likely to impact their sentiments, beliefs, and perspectives on life's most important concerns.

**Keywords:** Imphal East, Imphal West, Manipur, value system, women's life patterns

## Introduction

Manipur is a traditional society where its cultural values bind the lives of the people. Cultural sets of life norms govern personal behavioral patterns. People are expected to adhere to and live in conformity with the norms. Universal cultural pragmatism of women as cultural carriers is a formidable role expectation from women in society. Social lives and family lives are filled with role sets traditionally aligned with cultural patterns. For instance, the personal life of a Meitei lady is under the radar of traditional responsibilities of waking up early morning by dawn, doing all domestic chores- sweeping, mopping and cleaning the house, taking a bath, engaging in ritualistic animistic worship offering flowers, water, burning incense, and lamp. Later changed clothes to take care of kids and elders. One has to manage to prepare the lunch of the family, feed the family members, and do the dishes. Meantime, with little free time during the noon, a lady is expected to engage in productive activities like weaving, kitchen gardening, or any other activities. The evening routine rotates in the same paradigm of caring for and nurturing the family. During agricultural seasons, women are assigned extra responsibility for engaging in prime agricultural activities. Life never provides a space for a traditional Meitei lady to sit back and stay idle. It always is a speed-moving entity except during traditional festive seasons. Traditionally,

Manipuri women were only assigned household responsibilities such as cooking, weaving, spinning, nursing family members, and loading their children. Servant/helper-keeping culture is alien in Meitei families, except for aristocrats and privileged classes. Women are to shoulder the responsibility of domestic chores. With a growing number of women receiving education and working in many fields, a rich cultural heritage, and institutions of Manipur society that were functional during ancient times, such as marriage, polygamy, and the joint family system, have become obsolete or nearly so, according to modern ideas, and there is a definite change in the role and status of women in the society. Education and its subsequent outcomes have resulted in a distinct change in their position. Professional shifts will be subject to role twists in the traditional life of women. The time sought to dedicate to professional proficiency clashed with traditional role sets. When women have to initiate multiple roles, lack of support or explanation from the angle of deviation from norms generates misunderstandings. Failures to lend a supportive hand to working women and subjection to criticisms of being incompetent or obstinate aggravate degenerating family relationships.

As advancements in technology and small-scale industries emerged, social values have evolved and changed in society's structure. Divorce, widow remarriage, and inter-caste marriages are now recognized and accepted by society, and women are given a part of family property. Old ideals are giving way to new values such as equality, individuality, and rationalism. Although men are yet to be domesticated to share everyday responsibilities, they have been taught that they do not have a dominant position in the family. Manipuri women were no longer willing to accept the standard established by men that indicated complete subordination and degradation of all levels of women. They are speaking up against prejudice and injustice in the social, economic, and political realms. Politics, for them, is more than just electing legislators and governing. It also includes efforts to raise awareness and reform the unequal power structure in order to achieve a just and equal system. They have begun to rise to positions of power in administration and politics. Women in Manipur have been subjected to a variety of gender-specific crimes against humanity, such as harassment, sexual and physical assault, and murder by Indian army troops. Such activities exacerbated the women of Manipur's sense of exploitation and feeling powerless, resulting in physical as well as emotional uneasiness (Meitei 2016). With an aim to maintain an atmosphere of tranquility and to safeguard the common people in particular and society in general, the womenfolk of Manipur from both urban and rural regions began to emerge from their houses and formed women-led movements in the late 1970s (Yumnam 2023). They have not kept silent since, and have been at the forefront of countless protests in response to crimes performed on citizens by security forces, outlawed organizations, and other anti-social elements. Women's struggles over atrocities have become an iconic representation of the modern women's movement for social transformation. These women's initiatives are highly respected, thus boosting women's position in the community and cementing women's roles as protectors and transmitters of culture to future generations. With a growing number of women receiving education and working in many fields, a rich cultural heritage, and institutions of Manipur society that were functional during ancient times, such as marriage, polygamy, and the joint family system, have become obsolete or nearly so, according to modern ideas, and there is a definite change in the role and status of women in the society. Education and its subsequent outcomes have resulted in a distinct change in their position. Professional shifts will be subject to role twists in the traditional life of women. The time sought to dedicate to professional proficiency clashed with traditional role sets. When women have to initiate multiple roles, lack of support or explanation from the

angle of deviation from norms generates misunderstandings. Failures to lend a supportive hand to working women and subjection to criticisms of being incompetent or obstinate aggravate degenerating family relationships. Working women play an array of roles: They render triple services in society: at home as a sister, housewife, mother, daughter-in-law, and sister-in-law; at work as a professional; and in society as a spokesperson and participant. Above all, backed by economic security, women may more be independent to deviate from the traditional norms. Manipur's major societal transformations from the 1980s to the 2000s have disproportionately impacted women. Changes in socioeconomic settings have increased women's educational and employment options, as well as giving them new ways to show and affirm their worth. Women's personal and social statuses have changed, as have their ways of thinking and feeling.

### Review of literature

(Menhas Rashid et al. 2014) published an article titled "Impact of Modernization on Pakistani Women" that was conducted on 100 females in Bahria Town Islamabad. A vast majority of respondents (42.0 percent) claimed that most females favor planned marriage, while 33.0 percent responded that love marriage is more prevalent among females and 25.0 percent stated that elopement marriage/court marriage is more common among females. They discovered that females prefer to wear jeans and use makeup to seem beautiful. Respondents also stated that female education rates are rising. They concluded that Islam does not prohibit the adoption of new modern values for progress, but we should adopt values that are compatible with Islamic values. At the moment, Pakistani society, particularly females, is declining religiously and adopting Western culture.

(Abduljaber Malek 2018) In his study "Effect of Modernization and Globalization on Values Changes in Arab World" looked into whether social transformation processes like modernization and globalization cause value change among ordinary Arab residents. He mentioned that female labor force participation is steadily expanding throughout the Arab world. Today's K-12 education system, job conditions, family relationships, and social interactions are not the same as they were in the Arab world in the 1970s, and people have benefited from modernization and globalization.

(Pratima Chaudhry 1988) discovered that respondents supported modest family customs, gender equality and their participation in decision-making, contraceptive spacing, and so on in her Ph.D. Thesis "Changing Values among Young Women" on Graduate and Postgraduate Girls Students of Patna University and all the colleges and postgraduate departments located in the jurisdiction of Patna municipal corporation. The majority of respondents advocated for the elimination of widow abuse, particularly in upper caste families, supported divorce only in limited circumstances, and the study revealed a positive shift in attitudes towards female education, co-education, and female work. Respondents stated that education and employment gave women with greater ability to adjust to adversity. (NCERT, 1988 p.1695)

(Dua 1991) in her Ph.D. Thesis "A study of adjustment, familial role expectations and modernization of working and non-working women" studied 600 educated married women from the Rohilkhand region in terms of their level of adjustment, familial role expectations, and modernization, and discovered that working women had significantly higher mean values than non-working counterparts on the variables of emotional adjustment, expectations for social responsibilities, outdoor work, home management, and modern attitudes towards reliability, religion, education, family planning, women's status, women's freedom, marriage, and caste. (NCERT, 1988 p.1697)

(Atal Yogesh 2006) in his book “Changing Indian Society” stated that extended families are physically being separated as mobilization rates rise. As a result, while family bonds are maintained, co-residence is becoming increasingly limited to nuclear families. The long-distance dwelling of prosperous sons or daughters has diluted the family’s hierarchical dominance. Marriage rites, such as the time of celebration, have been significantly reduced, as has the prevalence of inter-caste and inter-religious marriage. Women entering the labor force have changed family schedules and role obligations. It also has an impact on child socialization because domestic servants and nursery schools serve as surrogate mothers.

(Rani Praveen 2017) In her study “The Impact of Modernization on Women and Our Society” mentioned that women now have the same legal status as males, but women were not always treated equally throughout history. Women were not treated the same way they are in today’s culture. With the advancement of industrialization, everything is now manufactured by industry. Women who choose to work have no time to make rag dolls or knit sweaters for their children or any other member of the family.

(Dun E.W 1886) dealt with the social situation of women, among other systems, marriage, customs, and so on, in his “Gazetteer of Manipur” published in Calcutta. He stated that women were hardworking and highly involved in family tasks and that they contributed significantly to their family’s income. Women held a lower status in society, which might be attributed to the fact that, despite their hard work, they were assigned a poor status. The divorce system, which was in place throughout the 1880s, was also analyzed. Polygamy was “common among the well-to-do section of the population, but the less fortunate order does not often indulge in it.” Despite the harmful practices, early child marriages were unheard of in Manipur. Except for Brahmin widows, widows might remarry. Young couples were allowed to meet and provide their permission when contracting marriage.

(Hodson T.C 1908) offered a brief description of the Manipuri social system in “The Meithei” (1909). It was claimed in Occupation that “in every house, the wife weaves cotton clothes for her family and husband.” It was stated that women held a high and free status in Manipur, with “all internal trade and exchange of the country’s produced goods being managed by them.

(Ghosh G.K and Ghosh Sukla 1997) in their book “Women of Manipur”; (1997) dealt with women from diverse groups and subgroups. The book was about Manipur’s communities, the revolution of Manipur women, their special creative ability, and their involvement in sports.

In her study “Social Change Among the Hmar in Manipur” (Crossthang Sanate 2011) interviewed 50 members of the Hmar community. She discovered that the process of modernization has had a significant impact on the Hmar community’s traditional family and kinship organization. As was done previously, each and every member of the family needs full cooperation in day-to-day work for the family organization to function well. However, due to the migration of family members in different areas to work abroad, such a bond and cooperation among family members has become nearly impossible nowadays. To look after the family’s concerns, hired labor, which was unknown in traditional culture, has become a necessity for the family that lacks a helping hand from its members. On the basis of cooperation, the closest kin group fulfilled this purpose. However, as the manner of life changes, so does the value of the clan and the way of family works together. This has increased the value of the nuclear family.

(Arambam Sophia 2021) in her study “Women Empowerment in Manipur” mentioned that Manipuri women, from the earliest time have been empowered in the context of being active in economic

production and actively involved in collective action against social injustices. They also get involved in household decision-making, but they are not in key decision-making positions in society as a whole and do not play a significant part as leaders and decision-makers. Though refusal to accept unjust treatment is high on Meira Paibis (bearer of torches) goals, and their political awareness and participation in public affairs as a collective force are quite apparent at the level of the individual, they appear to be constrained by patriarchy, just like their mainland Indian sisters.

(Brara, 1998) Her book “Politics, Society and Cosmology” covered elements necessary to comprehend Manipur’s state structure, including political structures, social structures, cultural value systems, and belief systems. The book revealed that women’s social standing is related to impurity, pollution, mortality, and ill fortune in Manipur. In that regard, it said, “After the birth of a female child the placenta is buried on the left side of the house, while in the case of a male child, it is buried on the right side”. It further noted that “The chakhumka (kitchen), a place exclusively used by the women of the household, is also on the left.” However, Manipur women have autonomous economic roles. They managed the conventional local marketplaces. Men are not part of the local market. There was no stigma attached to sitting in the market. There’s a loom outside on the corner of almost every house. All women, regardless of social level, weave and sew clothing for the market, other families, and themselves. There was no need for financial urgency for the creation of such a home-based enterprise. It was a pastime, a way to meet people, and a part-time source to make extra money. One distinguishing characteristic of the economy is the dignity of work of this scale.

(Khuraijam, 2022) her study “Women and Work-Life Balance- A Study of Working Women of Manipur in Balancing Family and Work” revealed that women struggle in diverse ways when it comes to juggling professional and private obligations. Due to male-centric dominance, women in two earners and only one-parent households encountered difficulties at work that hindered their advancement into more senior posts. The study found that the biggest obstacles faced by women workers in maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life are prolonged working hours, restrictive occupations, job stress, prejudice and discrimination at work, a lack of managerial assistance, and inadequate assistance from family members. Furthermore, the study found that the primary familial concerns revolved around things like having to take care of children, the house, and the elders while working, not being able to work from home, and being unable to carry out job-related duties because of familial responsibilities, which limits their ability to perform professionally. These problems are brought on by the male-dominated roles that are already in place in the household. The high prevalence of family problems affects Manipuri women workers individually and throws off the modern work-life balance.

## Objectives

The current study is to bring out a comparative analysis of the traditional value system and the modern professional trends. The two role sets are understood to be frequently diverse from each other. This study is trying to bring out the following objectives:

To find out the changing values of working women in sociocultural and personal contexts from the 1980s to the 2020s.

To analyze the influence of the social unrest on the working principles of women, in Imphal East and West districts of Manipur.

To bring a comparative analysis of employment and education in the changing

values of working women in the traditional society of Manipur and attempting to bring out a holistic understanding of how the two different role sets can be conflicting and harmonious with each other as well.

### **Hypotheses**

H01: Women working in colleges contribute to changing social values in Imphal East and West districts with respect to different socio-cultural and personal lives.

H02: There is a significant influence and relationship between employment and education and the changing values of working women.

H03: There are both favorable and unfavorable aspects of change in values that affect personal lives and vice-versa.

### **Research Methodology**

The research methodology that would be employed for the current research is a mixed one, both quantitative and qualitative methods. Surveys for primary data collection will be engaged for the study. Data collection methods like closed/open-ended questionnaires will be employed for the present study. Secondary sources like books, research articles/papers, journals, websites, published and unpublished theses, and newspapers will also be relied upon to make the study insightful and theoretical. Narratives and life accounts will be the backbone methodology of the research. Short-selected cases of specific relevance to the studies will constitute additives to the study. Narrative research will reveal behaviors, feelings, and intentions that are not explicitly expressed. This technique will provide detailed information and rich language data, which can throw light on many elements of cultural or social phenomena.

### **Sample and Sampling**

The current study's population will consist of women who work as principals, vice principals, teachers, librarians, and peons in government, government-aided and private colleges of the Imphal East and Imphal West districts of Manipur. The stratified and purposive sampling technique will be used to choose the sample as the sample to be drawn is not homogeneous. The sample size will be restricted to 500 working women. Twenty colleges will be used as sample units. To ensure an even distribution, 10 colleges from Imphal East and 10 colleges from Imphal West would be chosen. 25 working women will be selected from each selected college of both Imphal East and Imphal West districts (250 working women from each district)

### **Definition of terms used in the research**

Value: D.H Parker, Values belong wholly to the inner world of the mind. The satisfaction of desire is the real value, the thing that serves is only an instrument- A value is always an experience never a thing or an object. According to Chaman Lal, Durga Dev, and Jug Mohan Bhardwaj, "Value is the mutual respect in ideology towards one another in a social" setting." (Bhardwaj, 2001, p- 27-30)

Working women: Women who are employed as principals, vice-principals, teachers, librarians, and peons in the government, government-aided, and private colleges of Imphal East and Imphal West districts of Manipur.

Imphal East district: The district was formed on June 18, 1996, by dividing the former Imphal district into two districts: Imphal East District and Imphal West District. It occupies the eastern part of the Imphal district and has its headquarters in Porompat. Imphal East District (including Jiribam) has a total land area of 709 square kilometers.

Imphal West district: Imphal West District was formed in 1997 from the former Imphal district by placing all of the villages and towns of Imphal West I and Imphal West II divisions under the authority of the Government of Manipur (Secretariat). It is a valley district in which the state capital, Imphal, is located. The district, with an area of 519 square kilometers, is eighth in terms of area and accounts for only 2.32 per cent of the state's total area.

### Delimitation

The study will be confined to working women in colleges only and delimited to two districts of Manipur. Data collection will purely be based on institutional statistical accounts supported by the competent authority and influential subjective emotions may affect the researcher in due course of recording similar life situations that she has gone through at a particular point i

### Conclusion

The number of educated women is growing by leaps and bounds and they can be seen working in a variety of departments and facilities such as schools, colleges, and universities. They also work as professionals such as doctors, engineers, and lawyers. The purpose of this study is to examine in depth the numerous changes in values and outlook brought about by the process of modernization and sociocultural changes in a specific group of working women. The current research will determine if traditional values and professional trends may coexist together. The impact of education on enhancing people's personalities and attitudes will be stressed. Women's positive and negative values as mothers and sisters will be passed down to future generations. It is correct to argue that values are caught rather than taught. It is not enough to teach folks what is good and wrong. Values must be practised and exhibited, not just taught. To understand how women's roles and contributions in society, as well as their personal lives, are evolving, it is vital to analyze the shifting values of working women.

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