

# CHAPTER 5

## CHAPTER 5

### **Factors Influencing Adolescent Girls’ Health in Manipur**

The previous chapter has described socio-economic, political and cultural aspects that influence the overall infrastructure and development of Manipur. Since health is a necessary ingredient of a state’s overall development, it has further highlighted the population in the region along with their nature of health services and health infrastructural facilities available. The present chapter intends to focus on the importance of socio-economic and cultural factors that influence the health aspects, overall growth and development of adolescent girls. It also tries to look at the importance of parents in overall bringing up of girls in all aspects. The chapter covers mainly two parts (1) profile of the adolescent girls and (2) factors influencing adolescent girls’ health such as economic factors, social factors and cultural factors.

#### **5.1 PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS (ADOLESCENT GIRLS) UNDER THE STUDY**

As justified in the methodology and details of methods used in the present study, the samples of adolescent girls are from the school going girls of 10+1 and 10+2 at the age of 15-19 years old who reside in both Thoubal and Chandel districts. Thus, the data collected from 128 adolescent girls of both the districts were considered under

this part. The data have been presented as per the responses that have received from focus group discussion and interview schedule. This includes distribution of age, community, religion, caste, etc. The profiles of the adolescent girls are highlighted below:

### 5.1 (i) Age

Table: 5.1 Age group of adolescent girls per district

Sl. No.	District	Age					Total (%)
		15 (%)	16(%)	17(%)	18(%)	19(%)	
1.	Chandel	2 (3.1)	5 (7.8)	7(10.9)	34 (53.1)	16 (25)	64
2	Thoubal		3 (4.69)	5 (7.8)	31 (48.4)	25 (39.1)	64
	Total	2 (1.6)	8 (6.3)	5 (3.9)	72 (56.2)	41 (32)	128

Age factor plays a very important role among the adolescents in their physical growth up, decision making in terms of educational aspects, marital aspects, etc. From the Table: 5.1, it is seen that majority of the girls in both the districts fallen into the age group of 18-19 years with 88.2 percent. Marriage is a social phenomenon; 'age at marriage' is considered to be important as it reflects the socio-economic and traditions that again strike the status of girls. It is found that all the respondents (100 percent) are unmarried. According to NFHS-2, it can further indicate that the girls are in good status against the corresponding national average proportions of 16.4.years for female and Manipur state witness 22.4 years.

### 5.1 (ii) Community

From the Table: 5.2, it is found that in both the districts of Chandel and Thoubal, Meitei community are dominant in Thoubal district with 87.5 percent. Naga community with 6.25 percent and Meitei-pangal with 6.25 percent whereas in Chandel district, Naga and Kuki communities have a larger population with 46.9 percent and 18.8 percent respectively and no Muslim community is found.

Table: 5.2 Community of adolescent girls as per district

Sl. No.	District	Community				Total (%)
		Kuki(%)	Meitei (%)	Meitei-pangal (%)	Naga (%)	
1.	Chandel	12(18.8)	22(34.4)	-	30(46.9)	64(100)
2.	Thoubal	-	56 (87.5)	4(6.25)	4(6.25)	64(100)
	Total	12(9.4)	78(60.9)	4(3.1)	34(26.6)	128(100)

### 5.1 (iii) Religion

Table: 5.3 Religion of adolescent girls as per district

Sl. No.	District	Religion			Total (%)
		Christian (%)	Hindu (%)	Muslim (%)	
1.	Chandel	42 (65.6)	22 (34.37)		64 (100)
2.	Thoubal	4(6.3)	56(87.5)	4(6.3)	64 (100)
	Total	46(35.94)	78(60.93)	4(3.13)	128(100)

From the Table: 5.3, it is shown that 60.93 percent of the respondents are Hindu. 35.94 percent are Christian and only 3.13 percent belong to Muslim. Looking at the cross table, majority of Hindu population is inhabited at Thoubal district whereas

Christian religions are found more in Chandel district. It can be noted that the Meiteis of all General Caste, Other Backward Classes and Scheduled Caste follow Hindu religion while all the Scheduled Tribe follow Christian religion. According to 2001 census, the majority population in Manipur is Hindu with 46 percent, Christian 34 percent and 9 percent of Muslims as against the country's corresponding percentages of 82.41, 2.32 and 11.67 respectively.

#### 5.1 (iv) Caste

Table: 5.4 Caste of adolescent girls as per district

Sl. No.	District	Caste				Total (%)
		General (%)	Other Backward Classes (%)	Scheduled Caste (%)	Scheduled Tribe (%)	
1.	Chandel	2(3.1)	2(3.1)	18(28.1)	42(65.6)	64(100)
2.	Thoubal	4(6.3)	26(40.6)	30(46.9)	4(6.3)	64(100)
	Total	6(4.7)	28(21.9)	48(37.5)	46(35.9)	128(100)

From the Table: 5.4, it is found that majority of respondents are Scheduled Caste with 37.5 percent closely followed by 35.9 percent of Scheduled Tribes and 21.9 percent of Other Backward Caste and 4.7 percent of general. It can also be highlighted that Scheduled Caste population of Manipur, named as Lois recognized by the Constitution of India under the Article 341 is mainly inhabited in Thoubal district with a population of 9.3 percent and less population of Scheduled Tribe with 1.2 percent. But in Chandel district, almost all the populations belong to Scheduled Tribe with of 91.9 percent with 0.2 percent of population of Scheduled Caste (Government of Manipur, 2004). But in the table, Chandel district also has quite a good number of Scheduled Caste with 28.1 percent. It shows that most of the girls from Thoubal

district enrolled in schools of Chandel district for studies. Very interestingly in Manipur unlike the rest of India where caste system hierarchy has been prevalent for long, the social life people of northeast in general and the people of Manipur in particular does not show this hierarchy. In this region, it is the religion that plays a pivotal role.

## **5.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING ADOLESCENT GIRLS' HEALTH**

Adolescence is a period of dynamic transition in which many interrelated changes of body, mind and social relationship take place. During this period, the adolescents are highly responsive to environmental challenges, parental, economical, social and cultural upbringing and the level of education. With the expansion of the media across cultural boundaries, the adolescents are also being exposed to and influenced by parents, siblings, teachers, peers, lifestyle, dressing, societal and cultural relationships. Adolescents concern covered a broad range of issues that are intimately connected with their developmental and psychological needs. In this context, the chapter further discusses the economic, social, and cultural factors that influence the overall development of adolescent girls' health.

Under this part, as per justified in methodology, the information are mainly collected from adolescent girls and parents. Further the data are presented by clubbing together of both the districts as there is not much different indications in the information given by respondents.

### **5.2 (i) Economic factors**

The term 'economic factor' refers household and family structure which is one of the characteristics for knowing the socio-economic status of the respondents that include

the types of accommodation, number of earning members, family income, sanitation facility, water facility, electric facility, etc that influence the adolescent group and individuals in the present study.

*(a) Type of Accommodation*

Table: 5.5 Type of accommodation of roof and floor by caste

Sl. No.	Roof	Caste				Total
		General	Other Backward Classes	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribes	
1.	Cement	1(0.8)	2(1.6)	7(5.5)	2(1.6)	12(9.4)
2.	Thatch	-	5(3.9)	3(2.3)	9(7.0)	17(13.3)
3.	Tin	5(3.9)	21(16.4)	38(29.7)	35(27.3)	99(77.3)
	Total	6(4.7)	28(21.9)	48(37.5)	46(35.9)	128(100)
	Floor	Caste				Total
		General	Other Backward Classes	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribes	
4.	Cement	1(0.8)	6(4.7)	16(12.5)	7(5.5)	30(23.44)
5	Mud	5(3.9)	22(17.2)	32(25.0)	30(23.4)	89(69.53)
6.	Wooden	-	-	-	9(7.0)	9(7.03)
	Total	6(4.7)	28(21.9)	48(37.5)	46(35.9)	128(100)

From the Table: 5.5, it is evident that the maximum numbers of respondents reside in tin roof houses with 77.3 percent. There are less number of respondents residing in both cement roof with 9.4 percent and thatch roof houses with 13.3 percent. There are

not many differences in the type of accommodation of roof among the different caste group whereas there is a slight difference in the construction of floor.

Looking at the Table: 5.6, it is evident that the maximum number of respondents reside in mud floor houses with 69.53 percent followed by 23.44 percent of cement and 7.03 percent of wooden floor houses. It is also noted that type of household is very much associated with the type of geographical area of one lives. The type of accommodation of wooden floor household that is found only for Scheduled Tribe people with 7.0 percent may indicate that Scheduled Tribes respondents are settled at hills side. As the hills are in slopewise people construct their houses with the foundation of wood and wooden floor. In Chandel district inhabitants are mainly Scheduled Tribes and live in hilly regions but it is seen that many of the tribes has started settling in the pocket of valley. Thus this data not only reflects the socio-economic conditions of the people but also the type of community of the people settling in different areas and their association with cultures, religion and their land use.

#### ***(b) Source of Income***

Agriculture forms the backbone of the economy in Manipur. It provides the livelihood to more than 70 percent of the region's population. But due to certain ecological and socio-economic factors together with lack of modernization in farming practice, the agricultural productivity is still far satisfactory.

Looking at the Table: 5.6 (below), it is found that there is not much difference among the caste group of the type of occupations and their sources of income. It is also found that the average earning members among the families of respondents is 2.06. It is seen that in both the districts across the caste group, agriculture is the main source of



income with 46.1 percent followed by combination of farming (agricultural job) and governmental job with 12.5 percent and private sector job with 12.5 percent. It is also seen that those government employees are not getting their monthly salary due to state's instable financial conditions. Through interview it is found that almost all the people have their own agricultural land where there is equal work participation of male and female. Right from the beginning of sowing upto harvesting the female provides a helping hand beside her household duties. The female work participation in Manipur is 40.51 percent compared to the male counterpart 48.91 percent. The female work participation is very high with correspond to National average of female work participation 25.68 percent and its male counterpart with 51.93 percent (Office of the Registrar General, 2001)<sup>6</sup>. It was also seen that Chandel district is mainly hilly terrains therefore the type of agriculture was mainly jhum cultivation. Both wet and dry terrace cultivation methods are being practiced. The former cultivation is used mainly for growing rice while the latter for growing various types of vegetables along with rice, millet, maize, etc. Their agriculture chiefly depends on climate as there is no proper irrigational system. In Thoubal district the type of agriculture is traditional one where the irrigational system is much better off than Chandel district. Besides farming, there are other sources of income like small business; shops, own mills, handicrafts and handlooms, tailoring, making baskets, preparation of pickles, mason, private teachers, private company, drivers etc. It can also be noted that the female work participation is mainly seen both inside and outside the households where female mainly occupy the market business.

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<sup>6</sup> The figures for India and Gujarat exclude the data for the entire Kutch district, Morvi, Maliya-Miyana and Wankaner talukas of Rajkot district Jodiya taluka of Jamnagar district of Gujarat State where population enumeration of Census of India, 2001 could not be conducted due to earthquake.

Table: 5.6 Relationship between sources of income by caste.

Sl. No	Source of income	Caste (%)				Total (%)
		General	Other Backward Classes	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribe	
1	Business	1 (0.8)	2 (1.6)	3 (2.3)	5 (3.9)	11 (8.6)
2	Business, farming	1(0.8)		1(0.8)		2(1.6)
3	Business, government job		1(0.8)	3(2.3)		4(3.1)
4	Farming	2 (1.6)	12 (9.4)	21(16.4)	24(18.8)	59(46.1)
5	Farming, government job	2 (1.6)	1 (0.8)	7 (5.5)	6 (4.7)	16 (12.5)
6	Farming, private sector job			3(2.3)	2(1.6)	5(3.9)
7	Government job		2 (1.6)	5 (3.9)	2 (1.6)	9 (7.0)
8	Private sector job		8 (6.3)	3 (2.3)	5(3.9)	16 (12.5)
9	Private sector job, government job		2 (1.6)	2 (1.6)	2 (1.6)	6 (4.7)
	Total	6 (4.7)	28(21.9)	48(37.5)	46(35.9)	128(100)

The presently studied population, as observed earlier, is basically an agricultural community. Cultivation is the mainstay of the general population. The number of people holding white collar jobs is rather low. If we look at Manipur, there is high in the percentage of population living below poverty line with 28.54 percent in corresponding National average to 26.10 percent. In the planning commission

estimates report during 1999-2000, it was highlighted that in Manipur there is a quite variation between urban and rural population living below poverty line with 7.47 percent and 40.04 percent respectively.

Table: 5.7 Average Monthly Family Incomes by Caste

Sl.No.	Monthly family income	Caste (%)				Total
		General	Other-Backward Classes	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribe	
1.	<3000	1(0.8)	9(7.0)	10(7.8)	19(14.8)	39(30.5)
2.	3001-5000	4(3.1)	8(6.3)	13(10.2)	12(9.4)	37(28.9)
3.	5001-7000	1(0.8)	6(4.7)	15(11.7)	6(4.7)	28(21.9)
4.	7001-10000	-	5(3.9)	7(5.5)	9(7.0)	21(16.4)
5.	10001>	-	-	3(2.3)	-	3(2.3)
	Total	6(4.7)	28(21.9)	48(37.5)	46(35.9)	128(100)

It is seen from Table: 5.7 that majority of the households with 30.5 percent live in a poor economic condition having a monthly family income of less than 3000 and closely followed by 28.9 percent whose income ranges from 3001 to 5000. There is less number of respondents, 3.2 percent who belong to the income group of above 10000. It is found that the major respondents of Scheduled Tribe 14.8 percent belong to the income group below 3000 per month compare with Scheduled Caste 7.8 percent and Other Backward Classes 7.0 percent. Scheduled Caste and Other Backward Classes have similar and better off socio economic conditions compare to Scheduled Tribe. It also shows that the respondents who belong to different caste and class, the majority of the respondents are in the low economic conditions. Hence, policy planners need to take positive steps to look into the prevailing situation in order to

uplift their economic condition thereby bringing the community at least to the national level of economic status.

***(c) Sanitary Facility***

Table: 5.8 Toilet facility of the respondent

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Toilet facility</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	Flush	6	4.7
2	Latrine	87	68.0
3	Pit	35	27.3
	Total	128	100.0

From the Table: 5.8, it is seen that majority of the respondents i.e. 96.7 percent have latrine followed by pit 27.3 percent and very less of flush with 4.7 percent. The type of flush facility is less. it may due to two reasons -unaware of the type of facility and there is not enough of water facility. All the respondents have facility of toilet. The data can reveal that the sanitation facility is quite high among the respondents as everyone has and use one or another type of sanitation facility.

***(d) Water Facility***

The availability of proper water supply is one of the basic necessities for a proper household. From the Table: 5.9. it can reveal that majority 32.8 percent got water for drinking, washing and bathing from hand pump and closely followed by tap water of 26.6 percent. It is also evident that 32.8 percent of the respondents are not only using tap water but also associating with, hand pump, ponds, and river water. It shows that the availability of tap water is not adequate. It is also seen that majority of the people have piped connection but water does not come and when comes it is not all sufficient

enough. The water comes once in a day, in the morning for one hour or less than that. The speed of the water flow has low pressure of flow. As the water flow is slow, there many localities that cannot avail the facility. The nearby houses situated at water supply area have better availability of tap water than the far off places. It can highlight that the infrastructure of water supply is not adequate for the population. Therefore, most of the people use pond water; river water and hand pump according to the availability at their locality. This individual of good source of water can have an impact on health of the individuals, family and the whole community. The situation is worst in the hilly areas as they hardly get the facility of water supply, river and ponds but hand pump and tube well.

Table: 5.9 Source of water of the respondents

Sl. No.	Source	Frequency	Percent
1	Hand pump	37	28.9
2	Hand pump, tap water	4	3.1
3	Pond	25	19.5
4	Pond, hand pump	1	0.8
5	Pond, river	1	0.8
6	Pond, tap water	2	1.6
7	River	15	11.7
8	River, tap water	1	0.8
9	Tap water	27	21.1
10	Tube well	15	11.7
	Total	128	100.0

### *(e) Electric Facility*

Looking at the electric facility of the respondents, it reveals that all the respondents (100 percent) have the connection of electric facility. Though they have facility, there are still electric facility problems as the districts have slot wise system where there would be light in alternative days. On those current days, the electric light will be there from afternoon till 10pm. The per capita consumption of electricity during 2002-2003 in the region is only about 166 units as against the country's average of 330 units (Electricity Department of Manipur, 2001), so the state infrastructure of electricity is also very poor to reach the people. It is also seen that during rainy days, there won't be any light for the whole day due to burnt of powerhouse. problems in the connection of posts and lightening problems etc. all these problems lead to disturbance the normal life of the community in many ways. This will ultimately hamper in everyone's life especially in health sector as in case of emergency time most of the CHCs, PHCs and even in district hospital they cannot do any minor and major operation thus they have to refer the case to state level hospital. This will delay in all the treatment procedures in dealing with the serious cases.

### **5. 2 (ii) Social factors**

In order to understand the social role and responsibilities of adolescent girls, one has to study the social construction of knowledge, people's attitudes, values, and behaviours that are acquired, organized, and changed through social interaction, and also the social influence from parents, siblings, relatives and society at large. In this context, data highlighted the knowledge of girls and communication with parents on their physical changes at the time puberty, relationships and parents' attitude towards girls, restriction among the girls by parents and society at large.

*(a) Knowledge on Onset of Puberty*

The period of adolescence, beginning with the onset of puberty is a crucial transition into adulthood. Most adolescents go through with little or knowledge of the body impending physical and psychological changes.

Table: 5.10 Physical changes occurred during puberty.

Sl. No	Physical changes	Frequency	Percent
1	Menstruation begins	13	10.2
2	Menstruation begins, growth spurt occurs	16	12.5
3	Menstruation begins, pubic and underarm hair appears, breast develops, pimples on face	45	35.2
4	Menstruation begins, growth spurt occurs, pubic and underarm hair appears	24	18.7
5	Change in mood, emotional, waistline narrows	10	7.8
6	Emotional, pubic and underarm hair appears, breast develops	7	5.4
7	Others*	13	10.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Others\* - enjoy staying with others, voice change, day dreams, change in complexion

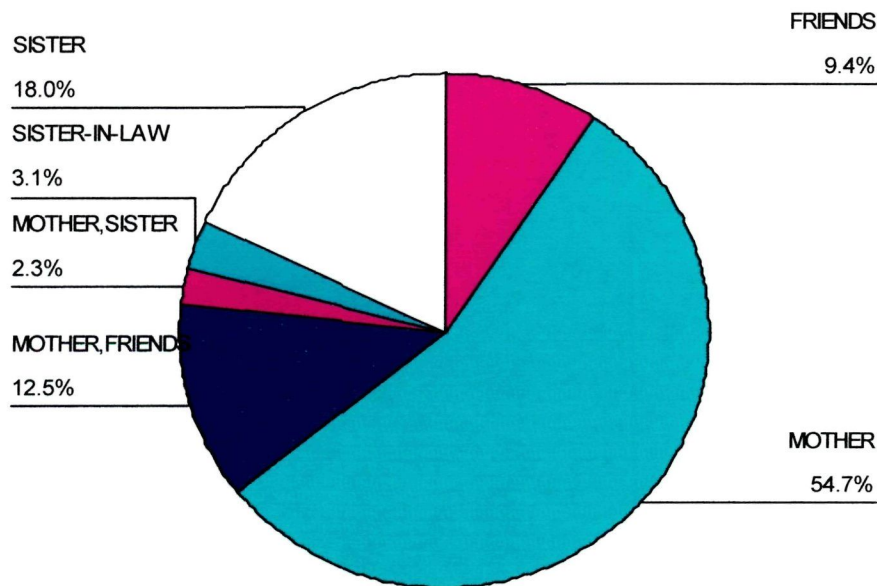
The in-school adolescent girls were asked about the physical changes that had occurred in girls at puberty. As evident in the Table: 5.10, it is found that all the girls can list down some of the physical changes that have been occurring during their adolescent period. It is seen that all the respondents can list at least one or two physical changes that have occurred to them. Majority of the respondents i.e. 76.6 percent listed

menstruation begins, breast develops, underarm and pubic hair appears and growth spurt occurs but very few girls could list down the emotional changes that were happening to them. It can be noted that the age of the respondents of the study are 15-19 years of age where girls have already got the experienced of their physical development.

***(b) Communication on Physical Changes on the Onset of Puberty.***

❖ Adolescent girls and their communication on physical changes on the onset of puberty

Chart: 5.1 Adolescent girls’ communication on physical changes on the onset of puberty



Unfortunately very few girls understood the physical and emotional changes that occurred to them before the onset of their puberty. Majority of the girls could understand the changes within and after the puberty occurred. It was found that 69.5 percent of the girls asked their mothers associating with sisters and friends circles



about their physical and emotional changes. 20.31 percent and 3.1 percent of girls asked to their sisters and sister-in-laws respectively. Often parents didn't explain the girls about the physical changes that happened to them but told them what has to be done when the menstruation occurred. It can also be noted that even if parents explained to them it was not cleared properly to girls. It was found that most parents especially mothers told the girls not to mix up with the boys and to be aloof from the boys once their menstruation occurred. At the same time girls also didn't disclose to their parents and to others when they began their puberty as they got afraid. So, they hardly get the proper information about their physical development. Thus they get the uninformed knowledge from the peer circle that is also having the similar knowledge.

Different experiences of girls during their physical development are cited below:

*Prameshwari (name changed), an 18 years Science student, said:*

*"I had periods for the first time when I was in school. I was aware of menstruation from my mother before my periods began. So I came early from school and told my mother and she gave me clothes".*

*Jotika (name changed), an 18 years Science student, said:*

*"When I reached my puberty, I hardly understand the changes that were happening to me. I was having severe bodyache and stomachache and lied on the bed for whole day. But now I am fully aware of it".*

*Anuradha (name changed,) having age of 19 years and a student of Arts stream, said:*

*"I heard about the menstruation from my friends and I was little apprehending to tell my mother when my period started. My*

*mother came to know as I used to go toilet quite often. She later told me to be careful in front of others. She also told me not to go to kitchen, father's bed room and not to do puja.*

❖ Parents and their communication with girls on the onset of puberty.

The family being the most socializing influence among the girls as there is more contacts with family members than with other people, but the contacts are closer, warmer and more emotionally tinged. As regards parental preference, since mothers spend more time with young girls than the fathers, and because they better understand emotional and the physiological changes taking place among the girls and also the troublesome behaviour, mothers are mainly chosen for details of the information like physical changes, societal and cultural restriction, etc. whereas fathers are being asked on decision making and any restriction towards girls, within and outside the family.

Majority of the mothers have shared that girls are totally unaware of their physical changes so they have told the girls what have to be done during their menstruation. It is also found that some mothers have explained to them how the menstruation occur in the body. but they themselves are also not fully aware of the mechanical and physiological changes happening within the body. Very minimal parents can explain the reason of menstruation and other physiological changes. It is seen that majority of the mothers neither explain the girls before reaching puberty nor till the girls ask them. It can also be noted that often girls were told how to maintain themselves during the periods and also told to maintain the secrecy of their periods to others. It reveals that parents do not explain the girls before their puberty even after the puberty, but only the managing of themselves during periods.

Some mothers shared their experiences of their daughters:

*A mother said:*

*“I think my daughter was in 9<sup>th</sup> standard, she started her periods. She was not coming for meals when I entered her room I found her crying. When I asked her she was not answering. I could get it so I explained her, period is necessary for the girls. I gave clothes and told her how to use it”.*

*A mother explained:*

*“When my daughter started growing up I could notice her growing of chest. She used to take bath with me in the river. Then suddenly she stopped taking bath in the river. She would fetch water from river or hand pump and took bath at home. So I stitched blouses for her so that she could use it even at river for taking bath”.*

*A mother said:*

*“My daughter did not ask me I also didn't ask her because she has her elder sister. Her sister must have explained to her”.*

### ***(c) Restrictions among the Girls***

#### ***❖ Girls' view on restrictions in mobility***

The girls were told to give views for only two major problems of restrictions within and outside their families. From the Table: 5.11, it is evident that majority of the respondents 24.2 percent felt they became care takers and were subordinate in the family. They also have to help especially their mothers in the household chores and in their earning activities. 21.1 percent respondents have felt there are no restrictions from their parents in their movement and doing any activities but they still need to inform them for whatever acts they do. It is seen that girls are found restricted in

mixing up with opposite sex with 23.5 percent because they don't want their girls to involve in any relationships. It is also evident that 14 percent girls are restricted in choosing their own career. It is found that fathers are more conserved than the mothers in terms of restricting the girls in choosing their careers. They often don't want and stop their daughters going out of the state for higher studies. It reveals that girls are still deprived by their families and society in large. Girls are still deprived of opportunities for education as well. Thus the girls mark an abrupt transition in their lives. Girls grow into adulthood without being able to experience the important period of adolescence as they have to work in the home, stop going colleges (in the state and outside the state) as stopped by family, society in many ways.

Table: 5.11 Respondents' view on restrictions

Sl. No	Restrictions by family/society	Frequency	Percent
1	Choosing own career	15	11.7
2	Choosing own career, making new friends	3	2.3
3	Coming late at home, watching TV for long	12	9.3
4	Going out at night, gossiping with others	10	7.8
5	Mixed with boys	30	23.5
6	Subordinate status and care takers	31	24.2
7	No	27	21.1
	Total	128	100.0

Some adolescents cited cultural change and the resulting conflict with parents as a cause of conflict with parents.

*Prameshwari (name changed), an 18 years Science student, said:*

*“My father and my brother are almost same. They want me to study the whole day. I can't even go out and meet my friends. If I come late after the school they have many questions to ask. At times I just answered back and fought”.*

*Maria kom (name changed,) a 19 years old Science student, said:*

*“I wanted to study outside (Delhi) where my brother is studying but my parents don't want me to go there. They felt if I also go there they won't able to afford both of us and no one will be there at home”.*

*Susanne (name changed), a 19 years old Arts student, said:*

*One day I was returning from school, suddenly my cycle tyre ruptured, one of my male friends helped me by taking me in his cycle back seat and other friend carried my cycle. When I came back at home, my father started scolding me as he was informed by my neighbours that I was going with a guy.*

❖ Parents' view on restriction towards girls (in general)

Majority of the parents felt that girls should not be sent liberal and should be stopped at some level because of the law and order situation in Manipur. Majority of the parents don't want their daughters coming late at home and also mixing up with boys whether he is classmate or not. It is also evident that there is no safety outside home. Thus parents do not want their daughters to send at cinema halls or any other recreational places without family members because of the uncertainty in life.

Culturally it is also seen that in Manipur eloping system is still prevailing. Therefore, parents are worried about their daughters if they run away from family before completing their studies. Some of the parents reveal that they help their daughters in choosing the subjects which can be useful in their life. In Manipur, the problems of corruption are highly prevalent. Without money and friendship it is very difficult to get jobs. So parents are worried about their children's future and stop them from choosing their own career by themselves.

Few comments cited by parents.

*A father, Mani (name changed) said:*

*"My elder daughter eloped and got married when she was just 17 years old. So I need to control my other two daughters. I don't allow them to go here and there; they should be at home after their classes".*

*A father, Shamjung (name changed) cited:*

*"My younger brother did his master in sociology from Punjab University, he could not get job as we don't have money to give. I don't want it to be repeated to my daughters and sons. I will send my daughter for nurse once she passes her 12<sup>th</sup> class. I will send my son for computer engineering".*

From the above discussion and Table:5.12, it is revealed that there are chances of cropping up conflicts between the parents and girls because parents felt the necessary of choosing career for the girls, and thought for their safety, security and protection whereas girls want their career to be chosen by self. It is also found that the girls often took parents as strict and adamant in doing and taking up activities or choosing careers.

***(d) Relationships between Girls with Parents***

From the Table: 5.12 (below), it is understood the relationship between girls with their parents. Majority of the parents 71.9 percent have expressed of having very good relationship with their daughters. It is also evident that there are difference views among the parents both father and mother for their daughters. Father with 3.1 percent mentioned of having bad relationship with their daughters during the interview period. They mentioned that their daughters were not at all ready to listen to them. Often girls argued with parents and did against their parents wish. The image of good daughter is very much seen among the parents as parents want their daughters to be responsible within and outside the family. They want their daughters to help mothers in the household chores, good in studies, respect elders, dress up properly, do not mix with boys etc.

Table: 5.12 Relationships between parents with girls

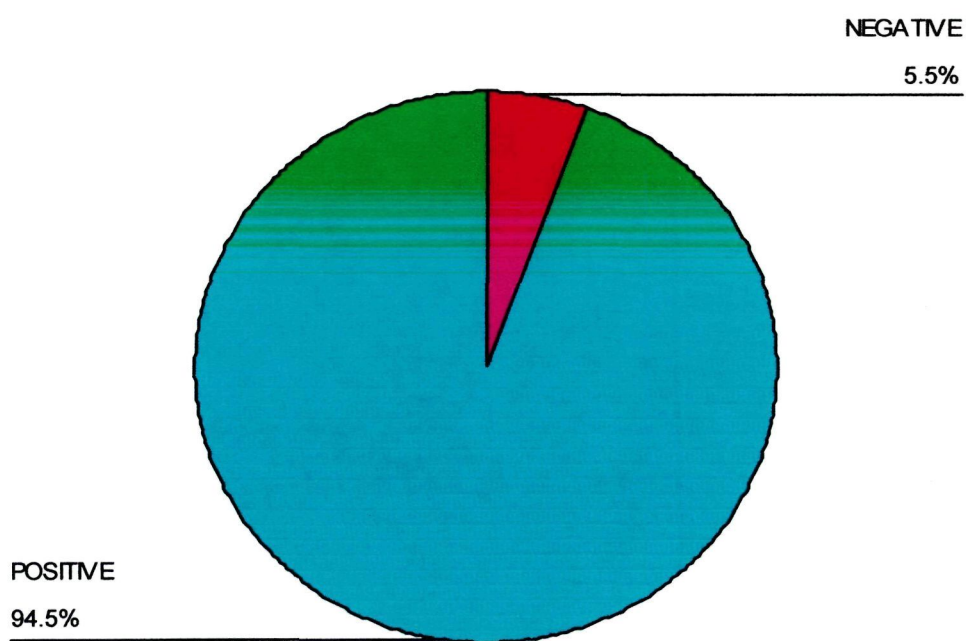
	Relationship with girls			Total
	Good	Very good	Bad	
Father	9(14.1%)	21 (32.8%)	2 (3.1%)	32 (50%)
Mother	7 (10.9%)	25 (39.1%)	0	32(50%)
Total	16 (25%)	46 (71.9%)	2 (3.1%)	64 (100%)

***(e) Girls' View on Attitudes of Family Members towards Them***

From the Chart: 5.2 (below), it is evident that majority of respondents 94.5 percent felt positive response from their family members where very few 5.5 percent respondents found negative response from their family members. The respondents feel that their parents are very supportive for education and other activities though

they control over in their choosing their career. Among 5.5 percent respondents, cultural change and the resulting conflict with parents were cited in terms of dresses, friends, relationships, etc. The data reveal that though there are restrictions from their parents in moving out with opposite sex, going out late, etc. at the same time they feel parents take care of them.

Chart: 5.2 Girls' view on attitudes of family members



Some of the discussions are highlighted here:

*Shila(name changed), a 17 years old Arts student, said:*

*“My parents too strict for anything, at times I ended up fighting and hating them. They should explain to me the reason too”.*

*Amita (name changed), an 18 years old Arts student, said:*

*“My mother still think that I am a child and not capable of doing things alone”.*



*Roselyn (name changed), a 19 years old Science student,  
said:*

*“My parents often stop me going out, mixing with new friends because they don't want me in trouble because of the conflicts and situation of Manipur. Anything can happen at anyone at anytime. I get angry but that's ok”.*

*Manglembi (name changed) having 19 years old of Arts student, said:*

*“My father used to get angry for nothing if I sit in front of TV. If I watch movies and songs then he will tell my mother to tell me to go to my room for study”.*

*Sobita (name changed) of 19 years old Science student,  
said:*

*“If my classmates who are boys come to my house, my father will fume at me and my mother the whole day. He is not happy if I mix with boys (classmate) whether it is at classroom or tuition places”.*

#### ***(f) Gender-Based Violence***

The gender differences and discrimination always place girls and women all over the world at a disadvantages position. The most painful discrimination against girls is the physical and psychological violence perpetuated on them in most societies. It is unfortunate that most of the girls and women have been suffering from abuses, eve teasing and many others. In fact, only a few crimes get reported to the police even though the girls have been suffering from varied verbal and physical abuses within and outside the family.

According to Article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the term violence against women includes any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, several or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (Declaration on the Elimination of violence Against women, Article 1, resolution issued by the General Assembly of the United Nations, December,1993). In Manipur, owing to the situation and the Patriarchal system prevailing, there has been widespread violence where girls and women are experiencing mental, physical and sexual violence. Girls and women are targeted both by state and non-state actors due to their status in society and their sex. The range of gender-based acts of violence is devastating.

Table: 5.13 Respondents' views on gender-based violence (eve teasing and sexual harassment).

Sl. No.	Get eve teasing/ sexual harassment	Frequency	Percent
1	Friends	20	15.6
2	Relatives	17	13.3
3	Friends, relatives	8	6.3
4	Others*	35	27.3
5	No comment	48	37.5
	Total	128	100.0

Others\*- it includes unknown to the victim, friend's friend, brother's friend.

Eve-teasing and harassment refer the behaviour towards a person that is offensive because it demeans her on the basis of her sex, or because it involves inappropriate and unwelcome sexual advances. It often includes the use of a position of power by

the harasser towards the victim. Such behaviour can range from objectionable comments to serious sexual offences, or the demand of sexual favours in return for favourable treatment (or refraining from unfavourable treatment).

The significance from the Table: 5.13 is that majority of the respondents 37.5 percent do not respond on the context of gender-based violence (eve teasing and sexual harassments). It is seen that girls got eve teasing and sexual harassments from friends and the relatives with 35 percent. It shows that the girls are also often exploited from their near ones who are closed and known to them. There is 27.3 percent who is unknown to the respondents. Thus it can reveal that society at large is not gender sensitized even if we believe that the status of girls and women in Manipur are much higher compared to other states. The policy's efforts to be gender-sensitive within the women's rights to physical, psychological and reproductive health care are very minimal.

*Jugita (name changed) of 19 years of Arts student, said:*

*"Guys pass comments to any girl whether he is our friend or relatives".*

*Ravina (name changed) of 18 years Science student, said:*

*"One day I was coming from tuition class with one of my girl friends, suddenly a man stopped me and gave a letter. I refused to take it, but he forcefully gave it. After that he used to wait with his friends for my returns from tuition class. It continued for few days then I stopped going my tuition class".*

*Priyari (name changed), an 18 years, Arts student, said:*

*"During my childhood I used to take bath at river wearing wrapper round (phanek) only. But as I was*

*growing up and my chest also started growing little bit. I was little shy to take bath in the river, but I do go by wrapping a towel. One day, somebody who was also therer in the river started giving a comment. I got very angry and threw stone at him and came running”.*

So far the nature of crime against the women is concerned, it is however, worth mentioning that unlike the country as a whole crime incidence due to dowry is almost absent in Northeast. On the basis of crime rate as compared to the national average (10.1 percent in 1995), Manipur is significantly low with a percentage of 4.9 percent. Again looking at the situation of Manipur, in everyday newspaper mentioned the crime against women, the headlines begin with the women was being raped and killed, etc because of the ongoing-armed conflict in Manipur. According to statistic on crimes against women of Manipur, the number of cases of murder, rape molestation, kidnapping, assault, and others in 2001 was 134 cases (Office of the CID: Manipur, 2001). Further, the number of reported cases on daily newspaper from January to November 2004 was 164 (Women Action for Development, 2003).The crime branch record shows very less number of raped, murder and other act of violence against women as many cases seem to be unreported.

### **5.2 (iii) Cultural factors**

The term culture refers all the learned socially-meaningful conduct which is practiced in the study area including customs, norms, religious beliefs and practices. It is to be noted that adolescence is a period of transition to adulthood. Their behaviour, attitudes and roles are so important to the family and the society everywhere that its level is more or less controlled by the cultural and religious norms.

***(a) Types of Rituals Performed at the Time of Puberty***

From the Table: 5.14 (below) it is evident that majority of Christian religion i.e. 32 percent follow ritual rites but it is not necessarily with the puberty. In Christian religion, the concept of baptism (immersion in water or sprinkle of water) is seen. Many of the respondents who follow Christian religion undergo the ritual rites of baptism. It believes that the person who has undergone the ritual rites has become the Christian.

Table: 5.14 Ritual rites by Religion at the time of puberty

Sl.No.	Religion	Follow Ritual rites		Total (%)
		No	Yes	
1.	Christian	5(3.9)	41(32.0)	46(35.9)
2.	Hindu	51(39.8)	27(21.1)	78(60.9)
3.	Muslim	2(1.6)	2(1.6)	4(3.1)
	Total	58(45.3)	70(54.7)	128(100)

It is also evident from the Table: 5.14 that 21.1 percent of respondents who follow Hindu religion have undergone ritual rites before or at the time of puberty which is named as “Laiming Louba” (meaning-taking the name of God by getting the holy chain). If a girl has not done the ritual rites before the onset of menarche then she is supposed to do the rites at the time of marriage. It is believed that the girl has become mature and can be somebody’s wife. So she has to take the name of God for their happiness and protection from enemies.

***(b) Restrictions during Menstruation***

It is seen that among the Hindu religion, during menstruation girls are restricted from entering kitchen, touching drinking water, going to temples and doing puja at home.

She is also not allowed to take bath for atleast 3-5 days. She is also stopped from entering and touching her father's room or brother's room. She is also told not to mix up with others especially with men during menstruation. Among the Hindu religion, restriction among the Brahmin is little different. On the first day of the menstruation the girl is supposed to take hair bath, and then she has to take hair bath on the 5<sup>th</sup> day by rice water. If she does not take bath on the first day of period she will not be allowed taking food and sitting with others. Among the Muslim family, the girl is confined in one room till the end of 5<sup>th</sup> day. Though the practices have changed, there are still people at large follow the practices.

❖ Adolescent girls' view on the type of restrictions during menstruation

Regarding diets, the girls are told not to take some of the fruits and vegetables like pomegranates, guava, amla, (heimang), heining, brinjal, yendam and spicy food. It is believed that if a girl takes such type of fruits and vegetables, her flow of menstruation will increase and stain will be more. Sometimes it is also believed that it will increase pain in stomach during menstruation.

Some of the discussions are highlighted here (during focus group discussion)

*Nanao (name changed) having 18 years who follows Hindu religion of Arts student, said:*

*"I do not go to temples and do puja at home during my periods. My mother told me that I would pollute and God would not listen to our prayers".*

*Abem (name changed, a 17 years old who follows Hindu religion of Science student, said:*

*If I cook food during my period and my father had it then his day will be a bad day. If I go to temple, I did a sin.*

*Bina (name changed) of 16 years, Arts student, said:  
My stomach aches if I take amla and brinjal during my periods.  
So I don't take it.*

*Romi (name changed), an 18 years old, Science student,  
said:  
I used pads and clothes. It is comfortable using pad than clothes.  
I used to wash at night when everyone has gone to sleep. In day  
time when no one is around I used to wash it and dry under my  
tables and bedroom. At times I used to hide the washed clothes  
from others and kept it in bathroom to dry it. It hardly gets  
sunlight but what to do. It got stained, and if anybody sees it, it  
will be embarrassing.  
Though pads are selling in chemist shop, stationary etc but it is  
embarrassing to buy from the shops and also for every month we  
can't afford.*

*Bala (name changed) of 17 years, Science student, said:  
"One day all our family members were watching a movie. During  
the movie there was advertisement of whisper (pad), my younger  
brother asked my mother what is that? Is it soap? Everyone else  
knows, my mother scolded him to keep quite. I got embarrassed  
and could not stand for long in front of my father so I came to my  
room".*

*Shaheanz Begum (name changed), an 18 years old who  
follows Muslim religion of Arts student said:  
"When I started my period my mother told me many things I have  
become mature. I can't go and play with others. I have to be in  
the room till the 5<sup>th</sup> day of periods. I should not enter kitchen,  
father's room brother's room and not to touch anything. I should  
cover my head all the time".*

*Radha piyari (name changed), a 17 years old who is  
Hindu-Brahmin of Arts student said:*

*“Once I fell sick and my period started. I could not take my hair bath on the first day of my period. Because of that I was told to be in my room. I could not touch anything. My food was given to my room only. On the 5<sup>th</sup> day I should clean up and mop my room then sprinkle tulsi water to the whole house. Everyone in the family comes to know”.*

*Nevi (name changed) having 16 years. Science student, said:*

*“I don't want to be born as a girl. It's a curse”.*

However, the situation varies spatially and cross-culturally in the region. The above analysis reveals that girls and women continue to be victims of social humiliation with social evils and practices. Girls and women are always being treated as impurity. The physiological changes occurring among the girls are not taken as their becoming of maturity rather they are treated as impurity. It is also shown that girls always remain the center of subordinate and inferiority. They are physically, emotionally and culturally deprived.

❖ Parents' view on the type of restrictions at the time menstruation

Many of the parents who follow Hindu religion feel, during menstruation girls should not be allowed to do Puja at home and at temples. Though there are restrictions among the parents, some parents feel alright if they go to kitchen, father's room and brother's room. Among the Muslim religion also they have restriction among the girls even in going out of the house during menstruation. The girls will be confined to the room till the 5<sup>th</sup> day of menstruation. Among the Christian religion there is no such restriction among the girls even in attending church. But all the religions have restriction in the type of food they take during menstruation.



Views of some Hindu mother:

*Mother (Hindu religion), said:*

*My daughter has undergone ritual rites at the age of 12 years. We follow these rituals from very beginning. On the day of laiming loubha she has to take bath in the early morning. Then she has to go to temple wearing saffron colour wrapper round (phanek) and top (any colour but preferable white) and white dupatta where she will offer tulsi and flowers. The priest will put chandan and give holy chain made of mutter. Once she wears the chain, then the priest will say "Hare Ram Hare Ram, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna" for three times in both the ears. She will be told to remember it before she sleeps and cite it everyday.*

*I tell my daughter not to go to kitchen and do puja during her periods. Often she may touch here and there and it will pollute all. I even told her not to take bath atleast for three days because it increase the heaviness in stomach and also flow once you are cold.*

*I used to tell my daughter not to take fruits during menstruation because she used to complain of pain in her stomach. If she continues taking it her flow will be more and also stain in the clothes even if she washes it.*

When a mother was asked for the reason of not allowing the girl to take bath till the 5<sup>th</sup> day of menstruation, she replied:

*It is followed from the very beginning. Our grandparents have done it so we also follow it. Before in our grandparents' time, there was no adequate source of water. They used to share in common well, ponds and river. They used the water for all purpose like drinking, washing clothes, utensils and bathing for human beings, animals as well. So if a women who is having periods and take bath in the same water then she will pollute the whole water that's why she is not allowed to take bath*

*till she completes her period. Nowadays we started having bathroom, separate water for taking bath, drinking water and washing. So it's not necessary to follow. Our girls don't follow what we say to them. Even if we stop them not to do they hidingly do. Sometimes we also don't know whether they have periods or not. On the 5th day we tell my daughter to take hair bath with rice water. But she does not follow it. She preferred shampoo. It's alright we can't stop her as things have changed.*

### **(c) Festivals and Food Habits**

Rice is the staple food supplemented by vegetables, fish, and meat. The type of food consumption varies slightly from religion to religion. Among the Hindu religion, girls and women do not take meat much. They prefer chicken than the other meat. But among the Christian and Muslim religion they take any type of meat except pork for Muslim. People hardly consume oily food but spicy food and boiled food. The food habits of people of Manipur, they take meals two times a day; one in the morning (7.30-9 am) and at evening (7.30-9 pm). They hardly have the practice of breakfast in the early morning. Instead they take proper meal. In day time they take light snack or sometimes no snacks.

The type of festivals celebrated by the respondents varies from religion to religion. Among the Hindu religion, they celebrate all types of Hindu related festivals like Holi (Doljatra), Cheiraoba (New Year), Lai Haraoba (God's happiness), Ninghol Chakaoba (invite sisters for meal), Janmashami, Rathajatra, Diwali, Durga Puja, etc. In Muslim religion, the respondents celebrate Muharram, Id-UI-Fitre, Id-Uz-Zoha, Ninghol Chakaoba and among the Christian religion, the respondents celebrate Good Friday, Christmas, Palm Sunday, and Ester Sunday.

Regarding fasting at the time of festivals it was found that there were no regular practices of fasting during the festivals among the respondents. It depends upon the individuals in observing fasting during the festivals. Some of the girls do fasting at the time of festival for Janmasthanmi but there are no specific practices as such: this year they observe fasting, the next year they don't. Otherwise they sometimes keep fasting on their birthdays during the morning session. It totally depends on the individuals when they will like to observe the fasting. But for Muslim religion the respondents observe fasting for a month during the festival of Id-Ul-Fitre. But they take food before the sunrise and after the sunsets. Among the Christian religion, it is found that mass of the people kept fasting in the morning session during Good Friday. Sometimes some respondents follow fasting in the morning session on Sundays before going to church. After she comes back from church she can take her food. It totally depends on individuals.

Regarding the festivals and food habits, almost the same answer is cited from the parents. The parents felt that fasting is not necessarily done during the festivals. Some parents even stop the girls from keeping fast but still girls observe it. Parents could not reveal the specific reason but to satisfy God, they also felt that there is no harm in keeping fast.

*Mother (Hindu), replied:*

*"During Janmasthanmi, my daughter wants to keep fasting as her friends are keeping fast. They call it fasting but they take all types of fruits. If you ask them they do not know the reason of keeping fast". (Laughs)*

*Mother (Christian), replied:*

*"In our village, mass of the people keep fast in the early morning hours to observe Good Friday because of the sadness of separating God Jesus from us".*

From the above discussion, it is found that in both the districts of Chandel and Thoubal, Meitei community are dominant in Thoubal district with 87.5 percent, Naga community with 6.25 percent and Meitei-pangal with 6.25 percent whereas in Chandel district, Naga and Kuki communities have a larger population with 46.9 percent and 18.8 percent respectively and no Muslim community is found. Under the study majority of the respondents are Hindu with 60.93 percent, 35.94 percent Christian and 3.13 percent Muslims. It is observed that the Meiteis of both General Caste and Other Backward Classes follow Hindu religion, while all the Scheduled Tribe follows Christian religion. It is gratifying to note that unlike other parts of India, caste system is less intense in this region. The respondents constitute 37.5 percent to Scheduled Caste, 35.9 percent to Scheduled Tribe, and 21.9 percent of Other Backward Classes with 4.7 percent of general category.

It is found that almost all the respondents have their own agricultural land where there is equal work participation of male and female. Right from the beginning of sowing upto harvesting the female provides a helping hand beside her household duties. The female work participation in Manipur is 40.51 percent compared to the male counterpart with 51.93 percent.

The data show that the respondents who belong to different caste and class, the majority of the respondents are in the low economic conditions. Hence, policy planners need to take positive steps to look into the prevailing situation in order to

uplift their economic condition thereby bringing the community at least to the national level of economic status.

It is also evident that 32.8 percent of the respondents are not only using tap water but also associating with hand pump, ponds and river water. It shows that the availability of tap water is not adequate. It is seen that majority of the people have piped connection but the water does not come and when it comes it is not at all sufficient enough. The water comes once in a day, in the morning for one hour or less than that. The speed of water flow has low pressure of flow. As the water flow is slow, there are many localities that cannot avail the facility. It can further highlight that the infrastructure of water supply is not adequate for the population. Therefore, most of the people use pond water, river water and hand pump according to the availability at their locality.

Looking at the electric facility, the per capita consumption of electricity during 2002-2003 in the region is only about 166 units against the country's average of 330 units, so the infrastructure of electricity is also very poor to reach the people. It is also seen that during the rainy days, there will not be any light for the whole day due to burnt off the powerhouse due to problems of lightening and connection of posts. This will ultimately hamper in everyone's life especially in health sector as in case of emergency time most of the CHCs, PHCs and even in district hospital they cannot do any minor and major operation thus they have to refer the case to state level hospital. This will delay in all the procedures in dealing with the serious cases.

It is also seen that very minimal parents can explain to their daughters the reason of menstruation and other physiological changes on the onset of puberty. It can also be noted that often girls were told how to maintain themselves during the periods and

also told to maintain the secrecy of their periods to others. It reveals that parents do not explain the girls before their puberty and even after the puberty, but only the managing of themselves during periods.

Regarding decision making of girls, it is found that fathers are more conserved than the mothers in terms of restricting the girls in choosing their careers. They often do not want and stop their daughters going out of the state for higher studies. It also reveals that girls are still deprived by their families and society at large. Girls are still deprived of opportunities for education as well. Thus the girls mark an abrupt transition in their lives. But the parents feel that in Manipur, the problems of corruption are highly prevalent. Without money and friendship it is very difficult to get jobs. Therefore, parents are worried about their children's future and stopped them on choosing their own career.

It is also seen that girls got eve teasing and sexual harassment from friends and the relatives with 35 percent. It shows that the girls are often exploited from their near ones who are closed and known to them. There is 27.3 percent who is unknown to the respondents. Thus it can reveal that society at large is not gender sensitized even if we believe that the status of girls and women in Manipur are much higher compared to other states.

The data reveal that girls and women continue to be victims of social humiliation with social evils and practices. Girls and women are always being treated as impurity. The physiological changes occurring among the girls are not taken as their becoming of maturity rather they are treated as impurity. It is also shown that girls always remain the

center of subordinate and inferiority. They are physically, emotionally and culturally deprived.

In a nutshell, the present chapter has highlighted the crucial aspects of adolescent girls where they are being deprived of socially, culturally, economically, politically within and outside the family. Thus in the next chapter, efforts have been made to understand the adolescents' perception, awareness level and health care needs within the context of availability of infrastructures such as schools, NGOs and health care institutions of Manipur.

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