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RESEARCH ARTICLE

WOMEN AND WORK IN MANIPUR

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Abstract

Women in Manipur are noted for their high economic work participation rates. A trip through all the lanes, by- lanes, markets of Manipur will depict active participation of women in economic activity of the economy. There is the all-women Ima Market in the heart of Imphal City which is run almost exclusively by women vendors since ancient times. It seemed as if no other place in India will ever see such active participation of women in economic activity. The culture and ethos of the land speak of women's economic participation from ancient times. From traditional times, women had a greater role to play in the economic life of Manipur, compared to the patriarchy dominated rest of India. They face lesser discrimination than in other parts of the country. Moreover, social norms are such that there is lesser pressure on women to marry, greater freedom in their movement, in choice of occupation and in the choice of their life partner. Hence, they were able to play an active role in the economy. Census data show higher work participation of women in Manipur as compared to overall India, but NSS data do not always show such higher work participation rates, except in some years. Women are always working, in paid and in unpaid work; but their work may not be effectively captured in official statistics. They concentrate in the informal sector, in home-based work and in subsistence activities, the magnitude of which are sometimes difficult to capture adequately. The paper uses secondary data to study the employment status of women workers in the economy of Manipur. It shows how women of Manipur participate in productive sectors of the economy and in fact are 'the backbone' of the economy of Manipur.

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Introduction:-

Economic development in terms of growth is defined as a process which results in "a sustained increase in per capita output" (Thakur, 1985: 17). The full extent of development in the developing economies can only be achieved if the human resource is utilized to its optimum level. This implies, among other things, that both men and women must equally participate in the economic activities of the nation (Singh, 1987).

Women also contribute to an economy and society in various ways; as workers participating in the production process, and also in the household with their valuable household labour which are as yet unaccounted for but which contribute to human capital formation of the economy and of which new studies have emerged arguing for its valuation.

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The paper is concerned with the contribution of Manipuri women as workers in the economy, participating in various sectors of economic activity despite all cultural, social and occupational constraints, labouring under dual burdens of work but managing to play an active role in the economy of Manipur since traditional times.

Objectives, Database and Methodology: -

The objectives of the study are:

1. To explore the employment scenario of women of Manipur
2. To illustrate how women also engage a lot in subsistence activities.

The study is based on secondary data sources only. It uses data from Employment-unemployment surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), and other reports, publications, and online articles. The data on employment is taken for all workers (usual status and subsidiary status in NSS, total workers in Census).

Scope and Limitation of the Study:

The study tries to fill in the gap regarding lack of information on women workers in Manipur, but it is limited to a study of broad aggregates only using data from Census and NSS. Detailed Analysis using quantitative techniques are beyond the scope of the current study and are required in future research.

Some Studies:

Women in labour market:

As Azeez and Akhtar(2019) notes, “it is quite surreal to think of women’s work participation since almost all women work- inside or outside their home, against or without payment, for production or self- consumption, and for reproduction. The traditional academic view however ignores this and chooses to define work in such a manner so as to exclude majority of these activities that are predominantly performed by women”.

Literature suggest that women’s economic participation contributes to economic growth. In fact, it is more ‘robust’ and ‘sustainable’ when women and men alike participate fully in the labour market. Higher labour force participation rates of women will increase total output. Also, with better jobs women will earn higher wages. This will result in increased investment in children’s nutrition, health, and education.

Yet despite the persuasive evidence that gender equality has a transformative effect on productivity and growth, women’s full economic and productive potential remains unrealized in many parts of the world. Globally, while women’s education levels have increased and educated women now earn more than their uneducated peers, gender gaps in labour-market participation and wage levels persist. Women continue to be underrepresented in formal and higher value-added employment (International Finance Corporation 2013).

Women’s workforce participation also improves the quality of life for the families and households of the women(Acharya and Bennett, 1983).

“While women need work, work also needs women. By equalising the labour force participation rates of men and women, the UK could further increase GDP per capita growth by 0.5 percentage points per year, with potential gains of 10% of GDP by 2030”(Thevenon, Ali, Adema& Salva Del Pero 2012)

As pointed out by Akyeampong and Fofack (2012), over the last few decades, the contribution of women to economic growth and development has been increasingly recognized in both academia and policy circles. Women have been participating in various aspects of growth, both through formal and informal production in recent years. They point out that non-inclusion of home- produced goods would also undermine women’s contribution.

Gender inequality result in labour market disadvantages which seems divided along gender lines. Male work participation rates are still higher than female work participation rates,

Various studies have documented how gender inequality hinders growth and how decreased gender inequality contributes to improved efficiency and increased growth. Various studies have also shown how gender-based inequalities limit both economic growth and poverty reduction(Awoyemi 2006; Dollar and Gatti 1999;Esteve-Volart 2004; Mason and King 2001etc).

Increasing gender equality in households, markets and society at large contributes to increased growth directly and indirectly. Directly, through women's labour force participation, increased income for consumption and investment and indirectly, through improved health and education for children. Growth resulting from higher gender equality in the labour market 'increases the size of the pie'. Gender inequalities in the labour market that result in sex-segregated labour markets lead to welfare losses (reducing total output) arising from the misallocation of the labour force: competent female workers are excluded from some of the more productive activities. Lower labour force participation by women also results in lower output and hence lower GDP along with lower value of production due to lower earnings. As a result, in simplistic terms, gender equality contributes to a more inclusive pro-poor growth. (Sida 2010)

Studies have also shown how women's workforce participation is limited by several factors relating to gender and domestic relations, household circumstances, family resources and assets, and cultural expectations etc. (Azeez and Akhrar, 2019)

Women's in Subsistence Activities:

Another problem with regard to women's work is that much of their work remain unrecognised and underestimated. They are mainly subsistence workers, informal sector workers and home-based workers and are also involved in care-giving household labour where such work is not recognised as work. In fact, the actual contribution of women, particularly in developing countries is much larger than given by the facts if the underestimation and non-recognition of much of women's work is properly accounted for (Arambam 2013).

In an underdeveloped economy like India, although most women work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for. Women have learnt to juggle their activities combining much of their subsistence work with household work. She may be cooking at the earthen stove, carrying a child in her lap, and may also pump out water for milch animals. In such a situation it becomes difficult even for her to distinguish between 'work' and so-called 'non-work'. This problem of classification leads to underestimation of women's work in subsistence activities when the line between domestic work and subsistence activities is difficult to draw (Kaur 2004: 184).

In countries like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the great majority of women are engaged in carrying out unpaid subsistence activities like kitchen gardening, post-harvest processing, feeding of farm hands or hired labour, livestock maintenance, gathering of fuel, fodder, water and forest produce, working as unpaid labour in family farm or family enterprise, household industry, and so on, performing these tasks together with the work that a housewife normally does. So, such women generally report themselves as 'housewives' or 'not working' in the census. The economic activity of females- the tasks they engage in, do not get counted by the existing investigation methodology, with the same precision as that of males. The concept of main activity, priority criteria, and even majority time criterion puts them into the category of non-economic work. The efficiency with which their 'other activity' - namely economic activity - is netted depends on the degree of visible marketability of this activity (Kaur 2004:185).

There are also problems associated with designing more comprehensive and accurate methods of data collection particularly for work in the informal sector in which women are mostly concentrated. Also, women are often engaged in home-based work, which is intended for the market, but is often hidden from public view and missing from statistical accounting, because it does not take the formal character of either wage employment or independent enterprise. There may be bias in data collection methods both from the enumerator's side and also on the respondent's side, because, information is usually obtained from the head of the household, whose answers may reflect socio-cultural norms of the community (Kaur 2004: 185). In India, it is criticized that the census data has produced a 'distorted picture of women' with all its sex-based stereotypes (Souza 1980).

Women's work thus suffer on two fronts. On one hand, even in areas where they contribute, often the contribution is not recognized or underestimated. On the other hand, though women make up a little over half the world's population, their contribution to measured economic activity, growth, and well-being is far below its potential (Arambam 2013).

Women account for most unpaid work and household labour. Women, though employed in paid work, are over-represented in the informal sector. They also face wage differentials by sex. Discrimination and distortions in the labour market result in occupational segregation by gender (Arambam 2013)

Women in Manipur:

Women constitute a significant part of the work force in the State. Amongst rural women workers, a majority are employed in agriculture as labourers and cultivators, participating in all agricultural operations like transplanting, weeding, applying fertilizers and harvesting, except for ploughing which remain a male preserve. In the urban areas, women workers are primarily employed in the unorganised sector such as household industries, petty trades and services, and construction workers (Directorate of Economics and Statistics 2013)

In Manipur, the work participation rate is quite high for women, as compared to the rest of India, and women are quite visible in the economic field. According to 2011 census, 42.59 percent of the total workers in Manipur are women. Main and marginal workers among females constitute 60.88 percent and 39.12 percent of the total female workers respectively. Out of total female workers, 44.46 percent were cultivators, 6.71 percent were agricultural labourers whereas the remaining 48.83 percent were engaged in sectors like manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairing other than household services, and in other services. Here we note that a high proportion of women were cultivators, only few were agricultural labourers.

Shivakumar's (1995) study considers it a striking feature that, Manipuri women's work participation rate is much higher than that of India as a whole. Manipur has also a high proportion of women engaged as cultivators (63%) and a relatively small proportion engaged as 'agricultural labourers' (7%) in 1981. This, as Shivakumar points out, is in sharp contrast to many other states, where women often work predominantly as 'agricultural labourers' and a much smaller proportion work as cultivators (Arambam, 2013).

Women in Manipur enjoy factors conducive to high economic participation. From ancient times, they enjoy a high status and play an active role in society, economy, and polity. 'Ancient Manipuri women were major economic contributors, both in subsistence and trade, and also had a considerable voice in the political sphere. Until the colonial period, there was even a women's court with formal jural authority vested in women' (Chaki-Sircar 1984: 7).

The main market in Imphal, aptly named Ima(mother) Market where women vendors ply their wares, with items like vegetables, fish, traditional clothes, etc., was the pivot of women's social and political activity, where they come together in times of crises and rise up for justice. For example, women successfully revolted against British policy, once in 1904 (First Nupilan and another in 1939 (Second Nupilan)¹. This main market, Ima Market or the Khairamband market is supposed to be the biggest market in the world, which is controlled and managed by women (Sinha 2003: 427)

Women in Manipur face lesser discrimination than women in other parts of the country. Moreover, social norms are such that there is lesser pressure on women to marry; there is greater freedom in their movement, in choice of occupation and in the choice of their life partner. Hence, they are more socially visible outside the home front and are relatively more economically active and independent than women in the rest of India (Arambam 2013).

They do not suffer from pressures of dowry, bride burning etc and are relatively well-placed compared to women in the patriarchy dominated rest of India. They have high ritual status and egalitarian relationship of the sexes. But this co-exists with the ideology of socio-structural superiority of men (Chaki-Sircar 1984: 7).

It is a patriarchal society and social customs do place a higher value on the male child, but there is no overt discrimination against the girl child in Manipur, unlike in the rest of India. So, female infanticide is not there, sex selective abortions etc. may be rare, and as Thokchom (2010: 138) notes: "What are considered to be the social handicaps that make women completely voiceless and powerless...are absent in Manipur. This genuine aspect in the Manipuri culture where the girl child is so well-placed unlike other patrilineal society is something which all of us should be proud of" (Arambam 2013)

¹Nupilan means women's war.

The prominent economic role of women has its historical roots in the lallup system of Manipur, where the men folk had to be tied down in the service of the king, at regular intervals, may it be in serving as state forces in times of war, or of rendering of free labour in road construction, digging and clearing river beds, or any other service for the king, for which they were not paid, and which left the women to fend for themselves in their husband's, men folks' prolonged absence. They had to shoulder immense economic and social responsibility in the absence of their husbands (Arunkumar and Arun 2009).

The high economic participation and high social status is reflected in Grimwood's (1975: 58-59) words who observed that:

"The Manipuris do not shut up their women as is the custom in the most parts of India. And they are much more enlightened and intelligent in consequence."

The phenomenon of high levels of women's participation in Manipur's economic activities is not new but was noted even at the turn of the century. Allen (1905), who had written 'Gazetteer of Naga Hills and Manipur', wrote:

"Women exceed men in numbers. They enjoy a position of considerable importance, and most of the trade of the valley is in their hands. The internal trade of the State is carried on at markets which are held in the neighbourhood of the larger village...almost all the business is transacted by women, who are shrewd and capable, the men thinking it below their dignity to come and traffic at the bazaar"(Quoted in Shivakumar 1995: 63-64).

A Meitei proverb² says, 'A man who does not go to Loishang and a woman who does not go the market, are worthless' and another, 'The fruit of knowledge is from fathers and grandfathers; the reserved wealth is from mothers and grandmothers'. Both these proverbs underlie the basic concept of the division of labour between the sexes. Women's role in housework is also emphasized as in other parts of the country and the world. The difference is that women in Manipur also contribute as bread earners, and sometimes as primary earners. The activities of women in Manipur are such that they carry out the activities simultaneously, as the bread earner, and as a wife and a mother in their family. But this also means a dual burden of work. In fact, they bear the triple burden of work because they also undertake community managing work, for example through their roles as Nisha Bandhis³ and MeiraPaibis⁴.

A study of North-East States by Samantroy(2017) revealed how states like Manipur and Tripura have recorded the highest percentage share of female workers in secondary and tertiary sectors, respectively. In Manipur, women's contribution to economy of Manipuri society is witnessed by the large participation of women in the Ima Market or Mother Market, the only women market in Manipur where many women are engaged from rural areas (Sinha and Sinha, 2013 cited in Samantroy, 2017)

According to Thiyam (2012), the better status of Manipuri women can be explained by increased literacy rate, sex ratio, strong political force, entrepreneurial skills, socio-cultural, political, economic activities, and being skilled weavers. Yet their labour force participation is much lower compared to that of their male counterpart. They are marginalised in terms of their decision-making process and right to inherit property and majority of them work in vulnerable sectors. Hence there is need to improve the economic status of women and their work participation by offering them better opportunities and financial credit.

A study by Yumnam (2004), found that educated working women have a multifaceted role to play: They contribute triple services in the society- at the home, as the sister, housewife, mother, daughter in law and sister-in-law, at the working place, she was the professional; at the society level she was the representative and also participant. Working women have to engage in their domestic work in limited time by increasing the intensity of their work. Even if the

²AribamSanajaobi (1999). The Sangai Express, Vol 1/60. 14th November 1999. P. 5

³A movement that began in the context of alcoholism and its detrimental effects on family life. Women come together, patrol the streets at night, round up drunks and punish them.

⁴Women march at night, with lit torches(meiras) in their hands, to protect their menfolk from unwarranted search and seizure by security forces. This came up in the context of conflict situation. In any social issue, MeiraPaibis still come together to protest and carry out mass movements against injustice.

husband wanted to help, they were not supported in a joint family system but were mocked as henpecks. This heavy burden of work can have consequences on her health and overall wellbeing. A study by Arambam (2013) found that about 25% of the whole 24-hourday of a Meitei⁵woman is confined to household labour. Other studies by Mayanglambam(2010, 2016) found that women in valley districts spend about 7.4 hours per day on household labour as compared to 2.3 hours per day by males while in tribal districts the figures are 8.6 hours by females and 2.7 hours by males (Planning Department 2019).

Data:

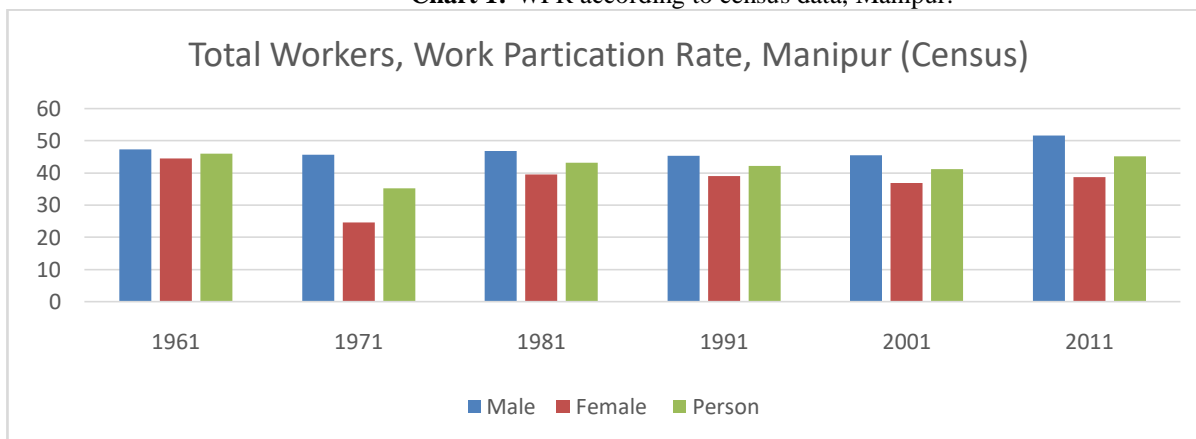
Table 1:-Labour Force Participation Rate (per 1000) for persons of age 15-59 years according to usual status (ps+ss) approach for each state/u.t.

NSS Data	States/Country	Rural		Urban	
		Male	female	Male	Female
50 th Round (1993-1994)	Manipur	48.3	31.1	45.6	23.0
	India	56.1	33.0	54.3	16.5
55 th Round (1999-2000)	Manipur	50.6	25.7	47.8	22.5
	India	54.0	30.2	54.2	14.7
61 st Round (2004 –2005)	Manipur	53.1	35.4	48.2	23.6
	India	55.5	33.3	57.0	17.8
66 th Round (2009- 2010)	Manipur	79.6	32.7	78.3	21.6
	India	84.8	39.8	80.9	21.0
68 th round (2011-2012)	Manipur	76.8	23.1	78.1	24.0
	India	82.7	27.1	80.6	19.3
PLFS (2017-2018)	Manipur	75.8	24.3	73.1	27.0
	India	80.2	26.6	80.1	22.3
PLFS (2018-2019)	Manipur	77.3	26.8	73.9	29.8
	India	80.6	28.3	79.6	22.5

Source: Various NSS Rounds and Periodic Labour Force Surveys of NSS.

The labour force participation rates are much higher for males as compared to that of females which imply that female-based disadvantages also prevail in Manipur, despite women's proactive role in economy, polity, and society.

Chart 1:-WPR according to census data, Manipur.

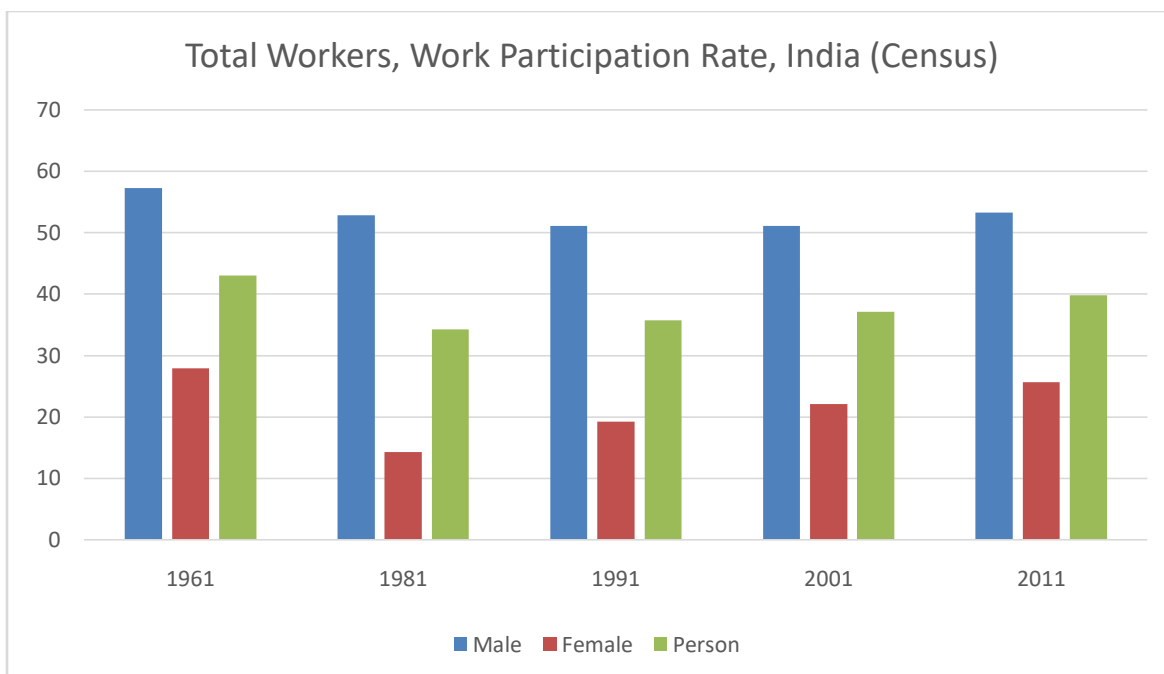


Source: Office of Registrar General, Government of India.

Chart 1 illustrate the high female work participation rate in Manipur.

Chart 2:-WPR according to Census, India.

⁵Majority ethnic community in Manipur



Sources for data of the two charts:

1. Office of the Registrar General, Government of India.
2. For Manipur, the figures from 1961 to 2001 are self-calculated from raw data of workers from various census reports using total worker and total population data.

Note: Total workers consists of main workers only in 1961 census, main plus secondary workers in 1971 census and main plus marginal workers in 1981, 1991 and 2001 censuses.

Census data show the higher work participation rate females in Manipur compared to all-India figures as the two charts, 1 and 2 depict.

Table 2:-Work Participation Rate (NSS data): Number of persons employed per 1000 persons (i.e. WFPR or WPR) according to usual status (PS+SS) during 1983 to 2009-10 (Manipur and all India).

State/ Country	Area	Gender	1983 38 th R	1987- 88 43 rd R	1993- 94 50 th R	1999- 00 55 th R	2004- 05 61 st R	2009- 10 66 th R	2011- 12 68 th R	2017- 18 PLFS (15-59 years)	2018- 19 (PLFS) (15-59 years)
Manipur	Rural	Male	50.85	43.7	47.7	52.4	52.4	49.9	75.6	31.4	71.1
		Female	35.95	19.1	30.8	35.1	35.1	21.2	38.7	12.6	22.4
	Urban	Male	46.95	37.5	43.4	45.6	45.6	47.2	73.4	23.4	66.1
		Female	27.81	12.3	22.3	22.1	22.1	14.6	25.4	12.8	27.4
India	Rural	Male	54.7	53.9	55.3	53.1	54.6	54.7	82.0	48.6	75.8
		Female	34.0	32.3	32.8	29.9	32.7	26.1	37.2	13.8	27.2
	Urban	Male	51.2	50.6	52.1	51.8	54.9	54.3	78.4	47.6	73.7
		Female	15.1	15.2	15.5	13.9	16.6	13.8	21.0	12.8	20.2

Source: Various NSS Rounds, Note: R= Round

PLFS:

Periodic Labour Force Survey, Annual Report 2018-19.

According to NSS data also, both in urban areas and in rural areas, male work participation rates are higher than the female work participation rates. The figures for female WPR in rural areas for India in 2009-10 are higher than that of Manipur. This is in contrast to Census 2011 data.

Industry Group:

Table 3:-Distribution of Usually Working Persons (PS+SS) by Broad Industry Division (Male and Female) Manipur in percentage⁶.

NSS rounds	Agriculture*		Mining & quarrying		Manufacturing		Construction		Trade**		Transport		Services**	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Rural														
55 th 1999-00	78.0	69.6	0.1	1.8	2.2	18.6	1.3	-	2.7	5.8	2.0	-	13.7	4.2
61 st 2004-05	69.4	69.1	0.5	0.6	3.1	17.2	5.0	0.1	5.3	8.7	3.4	-	13.2	4.4
66 th 2009-10	60.6	35.0	0.4	0.0	4.9	18.4	9.5	24.3	8.1	18.5	2.7	-	13.6	3.8
68 th 2011-12	55.9	24.1	0.4	0.5	3.1	17.4	13.9	40.5	6.9	9.7	4.1	-	15.5	7.1
PLFS 2017-18	49.8	26.0	0.1	0.2	6.57	29.1	7.6	1.70	8.4	15.3	7.1	0.1	19.9	27.5
PLFS 2018-19	39.1	28.7	1.0	0.5	6.8	25.4	9.2	2.1	6.5	12.4	7.3	0.2	29.1	30.5
Urban														
55 th 1999-20	29.4	13.1	1.4	0	5.2	18.0	6.2	0.4	16.0	33.8	4.1	2.9	37.7	31.8
61 st 2004-05	30.9	12.4	0	0	7.9	29.4	6.6	0.0	17.1	27.1	6.1	0	31.5	31.1
66 th 2009-10	24.3	7.1	0	0	5.8	32.8	9.2	0.3	26.5	35.9	4.4	0	29.3	23.5
68 th 2011-12	23.2	11.6	0	0	8.2	44.2	13.2	0.3	6.9	24.8	4.1	0	28.4	19.0
PLFS 2017-18	18.9	6.25	0.1	0.0	8.3	29.5	12.1	0.6	15.7	18.2	6.1	0.4	37.5	43.5
PLFS 2018-19	13.2	6.9	0.6	0.7	9.6	23.9	12.0	1.1	15.3	18.4	7.0	0.4	40.2	47.8

Source: Various NSS Reports

Note: (1)M=Male, F=Female,

For 68th round and for 2018-19:

1. Agriculture includes agriculture, forestry, and fishing.
2. Trade include wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles.
3. Services has included only the categories sections I to S of NIC 2008

Table 3 show that women share the burden more or less equally with men in agriculture, but they predominate in trade and in manufacturing (especially in household industry, main household industry for Manipuri women being handloom weaving which survives on small scale basis, as home-based work, where women work on their looms, side by side with household work) (Arambam 2013). All three are activities which has a lot to do with capital formation (physical and financial) and economic development (Arambam,2013). "In manufacturing, women bear the lot of maintaining any nonfarm activity in the state....In fact, without this support from the women, the economy of Manipur would have completely collapsed by now...As there is hardly any industrial unit functioning in the state, this shows that women are the real backbone of the Manipur economy" (Yumnam 1999: 3). Total workers in manufacturing in 2001 were 66228, of which females were 36439(55%) of total workers. It is the only sector in which there were more females than male workers in 2001(Census 2001)

The concentration of women is remarkably high in manufacturing. In urban areas, it is as much as 32.8 % in 2009-10. It is 23.9% in 2018-19.

⁶Excludescategory, Electricity, gas and water supply, whichemploy a minimal proportion of workers

The quinquennial NSS surveys have been replaced with the periodic labour force surveys. The percentage of women remain high in manufacturing, agriculture, trade, and services in 2017-18 and 2018-19. In rural areas, figures for 2017-18 in percentage were 29.1 and 25.4 in manufacturing, 27.5 and 30.5 in trade, 26.1 and 28.7 in agriculture and 15.3 and 12.4 in trade in rural areas. The corresponding figures for urban areas in percentage were 43.5 and 47.8 in services, 29.5 and 23.9 in manufacturing, 18.2 and 18.4 in trade.

In rural areas, there is a sharp decline in the composition of women workers in agriculture from 69.6 % in 1999-2000 to 35% in 2009-10 and to 24.1 % in 2011-12, while there is an equally sharp increase in women workers in construction (from 0.1% in 2004-05 to 24.3% in 2009-10, and further to 40.5%), and also in trade, (increase from 5.8% in 1999-2000 to 18.5% in 2004-05, but it declined to 9.7% in 2011-12). The construction sector is absorbing women workers who have moved out from agriculture. This is also supported by the increase in casual labour in 2009-10 in table 4 below (Arambam 2013). “The booming construction sector accounts for 27 pc of NSDP in 2008-09 and it is absorbing female workers more than male. The booming construction has increased the demand for stone, bricks and other related activities, and females are employed in river quarries, stone crushing and brick farms” (Hanjabam 2011:12). In 2011-12 as much as 40.5% of females were absorbed in construction in rural areas, while only 13.9% of males were thus occupied. Work in construction is laborious, irregular and of unstable nature, fluctuating according to demand and is not governed by labour laws etc, it is also informal in nature. Regarding trade, women have been taking an active part in trade since ancient times, and trade has accelerated due to weak productive base of the economy, and intensified Indo- Myanmar border trade (Hanjabam 2011: 13).

Table 4:-Per Thousand Distributions of the Usually Employed (Principal Status + Subsidiary Status) (Manipur).

	Self-employed			Regular employees			Casual Labour		
	M	F	(M-F) gap	M	F	(M-F) gap	M	F	(M-F) gap
Rural									
1987-88(43 rd)	770	937	-167	169	42	127	61	21	(-40)
	(586)	(608)	(-22)	(100)	(37)	(63)	(314)	(355)	(41)
1993-1994(50 th)	767	929	-162	169	45	124	64	26	-38
	(577)	(586)	(-9)	(85)	(27)	(58)	(338)	387)	(49)
1999-2000(55 th)	762	882	-120	127	42	85	111	76	-35
	(550)	(573)	(-23)	(88)	(31)	(57)	(362)	(396)	(34)
2004-2005(61 st)	809	917	-108	128	43	85	63	41	-22
	(581)	(637)	(-56)	(90)	(37)	(53)	(329)	(326)	(-3)
2009-10(66 th)	776	707	69	146	38	108	79	255	176
	(535)	(557)	(-22)	(85)	(44)	(41)	(380)	(399)	(19)
2011-12(68 th)	731	503	149	157	46	115	112	451	-264
	(545)	(593)	(-48)	(100)	(56)	(44)	(355)	(351)	(-4)
2017-18(PLFS)	690	708	-18	196	236	-4	114	56	58
	(578)	(577)	(1)	(140)	(105)	(35)	(282)	(318)	(36)

2018-19(PLFS)	600 (574)	660 (596)	-60 (-22)	294 (142)	285 (110)	-9 (32)	106 (283)	55 (293)	51 (-10)
Urban									
1987-88(43 rd)	592 (417)	699 (471)	-107 (-54)	339 (437)	268 (275)	(71) (162)	69 (146)	33 (254)	(36) (-108)
1993-1994(50 th)	417	448	-31	422	292	130	161	260	-99
1993-1994(50 th)	540 (417)	824 (458)	-284 (-41)	425 (420)	158 (284)	267 (136)	35 (163)	18 (258)	17 (-95)
1999-00(55 th)	531 (415)	758 (453)	-227 (-38)	355 (417)	197 (333)	158 (84)	114 (168)	45 (214)	69 (-46)
2004-2005(61 st)	619 (448)	731 (477)	-112 (-29)	331 (406)	235 (356)	96 (50)	51 (146)	37 (167)	14 (-21)
2009-10(66 th)	668 (411)	776 (411)	-108 (0)	291 (419)	210 (393)	81 (26)	42 (170)	13 (196)	29 (-26)
2011-12(68 th)	686 (417)	846 (428)	-160 (-11)	252 (434)	139 (428)	113 (6)	62 (149)	15 (143)	47 (6)
2017-18(PLFS)	508 (39.2)	568 (34.7)	-60 4.5	352 (45.7)	399 (52.1)	-47 (-6.4)	139 (15.1)	33 (3.1)	106 (12)
2018-19(PLFS)	502 (387)	547 (345)	-45 (42)	394 (472)	426 (547)	-32 (-75)	104 (142)	26 (107)	78 (35)

Source: Various NSS reports

Note: M=Male, F=Female, Figures in parentheses indicate figures of India.

Self-employment is the dominant status in rural areas, more so for females. For both India and Manipur, self-employment was higher for females compared to males, except in rural areas in 2009-10 and 2011-12. The female male gap in self-employment was much higher for Manipur than for India as a whole. Given the fact that an overwhelming proportion of self-employment in India consists of fragile working conditions and low returns, growth of opportunities in this sector seems to be 'no cause for celebration' as a large part of the self-employment in agriculture is a site for disguised unemployment. Also, an increase in self-employment is largely a distress driven phenomenon (Maisnam, 2008).

For casual labour, the proportion was higher for females in India as a whole, whereas it was higher for males in Manipur upto 2004-05, but since then, the proportion has become higher for females in rural areas. About 25.5 % of

females were casual labour in 2009-10 and it increased further to 45.1% in 2011-12, whereas male casual labour proportion is 7.9% in 2009-10 and 11.2 % in 2011-12. This lends credence to hypothesis of casualisation of female labour in rural areas. The PLFS surveys give a different picture with decline in proportion of female casual labour compared to males. Self-employed and casual labour are associated with the unorganized sector.

In all rounds, it is seen that the share of regular wage/salaried persons in total employed are significantly lower for females than the corresponding share for males in both rural as well as in urban areas. In urban areas, regular salaried employment was an important status for males, but not so for females. But it should be borne in mind that the regularly employed in the state are those employed in Government departments, which do not really contribute much to productive activities in the state (Arambam, 2013).

Table 5:-Percentage of Usual Status (PS+SS) Workers in the Informal Sector (Proprietary and Partnership) by Sex and by Sector, Manipur, and India.

	Year	Rural			Urban		
		Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Manipur	1999-2000	79.90	46.50	59.50	70.20	54.00	59.30
	2004-2005	73.8	49.1	58.5	63.2	46.1	52.0
	2009-2010	49.7	46.7	47.9	70.4	58.8	61.8
	2011-2012	38.5	52.2	46.1	84.4	66.3	71.8
	2017-2018	55.1	53.3	53.8	44.8	41.1	42.2
	2018-2019	44.6	43.5	43.8	45.7	48.6	47.7
India	1999-2000	75.00	69.50	70.70	68.50	67.40	67.60
	2004-2005	86.4	79.2	81.6	65.4	73.9	72.2
	2009-2010	74.4	74.2	74.2	61.6	68.5	67.3
	2011-2012	72.7	76.2	75.2	63.6	70.4	69.1
	2017-2018	59.3	74.5	72.3	51.0	67.3	64.2
	2018-19	58.5	76.5	73.6	50.2	65.8	62.8

Source: Various NSS Reports

Note: Workers in 1999-2000 consist of non- agricultural workers and in 2004-05 consist of non-agricultural and AGEGC workers where AGEGC means Agricultural sector excluding only growing of crops, market gardening, and horticulture and growing of crops combined with farming of animals.

The table above indicates the huge concentration of women in the informal sector in Manipur, compared to men, with the percentage even higher than that for India as a whole in 1999-00, 2009-10 and 2011-12 in urban areas, and in rural areas in 1999-00 and 2011-12.

Table 6:-Number of females usually engaged in domestic duties (principal status) and carrying out specified activities per 1000 females of age 5 years and above usually engaged in domestic duties (2004-05) and (2011-12).

	Specified additional activities	Manipur(Rural)			Manipur(Urban)		
		With ss work	Witho ut ss work	All	With ss work	Witho ut ss work	all
1	Maintenance of kitchen garden	837	627	681	303	482	469
2	Work in hh poultry etc	531	412	443	225	161	165
3	Either item 1 or 2	858	687	731	413	512	505
4	Free collection of fish etc.	473	430	441	189	182	182
5.	Free collection of firewood etc	439	375	392	72	105	103
6.	Either item 4 or 5	552	469	490	215	205	206
7.	Any of the items 1,2,4 or 5	87	725	763	458	556	549

		3					
8.	Husky of paddy(own produce)	94	171	151	0	44	41
9.	Grinding foodgrain (own produce)	19	175	181	0	82	75
		9					
10.	Grinding gur(own produce)	24	42	38	0	4	4
11.	Preservation of meat(own produce)	20	172	180	27	11	13
		2					
12.	Making basket etc.(own produce)	6	34	27	0	3	3
13.	Any of items 8 to 12	38	341	352	27	107	101
		2					
14.	Any of items 1,2,4,5 & 8 to 12	89	752	787	469	569	562
		0					
15.	Husking of paddy(acquired)	11	182	166	50	76	74
		7					
16.	Grinding of foodgrains(acquired)	10	167	151	50	54	54
		4					
17.	Preparation of gur(acquired)	11	163	151	50	60	59
		5					
18.	Preservation of meat etc(acquired)	20	199	199	50	64	63
		1					
19.	Making basket etc(acquired)	90	145	131	50	49	49
20.	Any of items 15 to 19	25	279	273	50	97	93
		8					
21.	Any of items 1,2,4,5, 8 to 12 & 15 to 19	90	844	860	471	620	609
		7					
22.	Preparing cowdung cakes etc.	14	133	137	73	80	79
		8					
23.	Sewing, tailoring etc.	54	352	401	551	260	281
		3					
24.	Free tutoring of own/others' children	20	127	147	304	177	187
		6					
25.	Bringing water from outside hh premises	78	681	708	485	581	574
		8					
26.	Bringing water from outside village	5	36	28	NA	NA	NA
	a) distance up to 1 km						
	b) distance 2-5 km.	14	7	9	NA	NA	NA
	c)distance 6 km & above	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA
	d)all	19	42	36	NA	NA	NA
27.	Any of items 1,2,4,5,8-12, 15-19 & 22-26	99	940	954	838	896	892
		5					

Source: NSS Report No 559. Participation of Women in Specified Activities along with Domestic Duties, 2011-12, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, New Delhi

Note: ss= subsidiary

Despite being housewives according to primary status, women perform a lot of unremunerated economic or SNA activity as in activities listed as 1, 2, 4 and 5 in Table 9, which often are activities undercounted and unrecognized. The above table shows three categories of activities. The activities under category (i) are considered economic activities and fall within the production boundary according to the System of National Accounts, 1993 (SNA-93) as well as the Indian System of National Accounts (ISNA). (Activities 1, 2, 4, 5). Activities under category (ii) are also considered to be economic according to the extended definitions of SNA-93, but the ISNA does not, so far, consider them as economic if they are for own consumption. Activities 8 to 12 fall under category (ii) of the above list. The

rest of the activities (items 15 to 19 and 22 to 26) are considered under category (iii) and are not economic when pursued for own consumption but obviously provide benefits to the households.

Conclusion: -

Women in Manipur play an active economic role in Manipur. Despite playing an active role in economy, polity and society, official data show that work participation of women still lags behind that of men, just like that of any patriarchy dominated society. The gender division of labour that consigns women's place to the home as caregivers, is the basic principle that underlie female disadvantage in the labour market. The drudgery and time consumed in household labour could be an impediment to women's efficiency in the labour market.

Industrial classification data indicate that women play an active role in the economy. Their involvement in productive sectors, like agriculture, trade and commerce and in manufacturing, particularly household industry which are activities which has a lot to do with capital formation (physical and financial) imply that as, in Yumnam's(1999) words, they are really the 'backbone' of the economy of Manipur.

Suggestions and Policy Recommendations: -

What is required for women of Manipur is an action, policy or system which can contribute positively to the establishment of a supportive environment for women's economic participation, for instance: good government legislation, access to education, availability of good childcare facilities like crèche's and child care centres, and a change in society's perceptions towards women in the positive direction.

When women are gainfully employed, it can benefit individuals, communities, and economies. A greater share of entitlement accruing to females is shown to increase overall reproductive (or household) investment. They spend more on children's nutrition, health, and education. This may be desirable from a human development perspective as it increases the avenues available to children. This has potential for long term positive impact on the economy and consequently on economic growth.

Women inclusive planning strategies must be developed. Attitudinal change should be striven towards, where women's economic role is not hampered by restrictive social norms. Attitudinal change of society towards working women is another requisite. The status of working women should be enhanced. A working woman must be recognised as an asset for the family and for the nation too.

In the end, development means not just growth. It is now concerned with bringing about a real change and improvement in the quality of life of the whole population. The focus is now on human development-people as ends not means.

Steps should be taken for fostering of basic human dignity and ensuring human development of women, through mainstreaming of gender issues in development policies

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