
Women's Participation in the Labor Force of Meghalaya, India: A Spatial Disseminated Analysis

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Abstract: Meghalaya is an important state of north-eastern India. The main focus of the paper is to present an overall picture of women's participation in Meghalaya and also shown employment of female's in rural and urban areas of the state. Paper tries to show the gender gap in each district of the state. Along with comparing the incomes, educational attainment, and types of jobs held by women in urban and rural Meghalaya, it also looks at the type and caliber of work that women in these regions do. According to the report, between 2000 and 2014, there were 116 women working in Meghalaya on average every day. Women's earnings per day are likewise far lower than those of men; in 2014, women's wages were rupees 299.3, while men's salary were rupees 403.5. This is demonstrated by the fact that the majority of rural women work in low-paying agricultural jobs on a casual basis. There is notable difference in the gender gap and the rate of female employment participation throughout Meghalaya's districts.

Keywords: *Women's Participation Rate, Workforce, Gender Gap, Women's Employment, Usual Status.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is essential to human and economic growth. Growing gender disparity is a significant impediment to human progress. Participation in the labor force has a significant impact on how a century develops overall. The employment of women can contribute to the reduction of gender inequality. Women face distinct obstacles when trying to obtain respectable employment. As per the International Labor Organization, the global average rate of female work participation is 53.4 percent; nonetheless, there exist notable regional variances in female labor participation. Almost 80% of participants are men in all locations. In certain areas, the gender gap has narrowed as a result of a decline in the percentage of men who are working. However, where male involvement rates are more than three times greater than female rates, South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa continue to exhibit a

particularly noticeable gender disparity in participation. As opposed to this, the gender gap has shrunk greatest in Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, and Central Asia. The percentage of women in the labor force worldwide fell from 52.4 percent in 1995 to 49.6 percent in 2015. The 2018 Indian labor force participation rate shows a gender disparity of over fifty percentage points, according to the country's economic report. In all of India, the rate of workforce engagement for women was 25.5 percent, while the rate for men was 53.3 percent, according to the most recent NSSO data accessible. For the past five years, a downward trend in female labor force participation has been identified using more recent data from the Labor Bureau of Employment Unemployment Survey. In India's rural areas, 79.4 percent of the estimated 7.3 million women who dropped out of the workforce between 2013–14 and 2015–16 did so. Northeastern India's Meghalaya is one of the key states. It has become apparent that the state is progressive and has a strong, dynamic economy. During the state's creation in 1972, substantial developments have occurred. As per the 2019 report by the Directorate of Economic and Statistics, Meghalaya, the tourism industry helps over one lakh people get by either directly or indirectly. The GDP of the state increased at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.84 percent from 2004–05 to 2014–15. The GDP of Meghalaya has increased, according to the state administration, from \$1.46 billion in 2004–05 to \$4.20 billion in 2014–15. Across Meghalaya, the average rate of female labor force participation from 1991 to 2014 was 15.34%, higher than the average rate of 13.49% across India. The employment trends and patterns of women in Meghalaya's rural and urban areas are examined in this article.

2. RELATED WORKS

The employment trends and patterns of women in rural India have been investigated by Srivastava and Srivastava (2009), who have also looked at the factors that influence women's employment. They discovered that while the employment of women in rural areas has grown over the past few decades, results have not improved.

In the current study by Sahu and Behra (2023), the government of India's most recent periodic labor force survey report from 2017 to 2020 is used to analyze and critically assess the views of female employment in India under the NIC and NCO classification. Based on the data, it appears that although women's participation in the labor market increased in India between 2017 and 2020, their rate of participation remains lower than that of men.

Regarding the structural alterations and caliber of women's labor, Sundari (2020) has discussed. The author discovered that variables other than economics affect women's participation in the labor force. Furthermore, the study reveals that women's labor is of poor quality and that agriculture plays a significant role in providing jobs for women.

The number of female employees and their rates of job participation have drastically decreased, according to Ghosh and Mukhopadhyay (1984). The situation was primarily explained by the predominance of men in the workforce, the low rate of employment overall, and the unfavorable sex ratio of women in the population.

This study, by Mahapatro (2013), aims to determine the reason for the decrease in female labor force participation, which has been observed in both the 66th and 68th rounds of the

National Survey of Statistics. Age and period variations may be able to explain a significant drop in labor force participation, according to the empirical estimations.

This study, by Narayan (2016), examines the employment trends and patterns in Haryana's rural and urban areas. The study discovered that Haryana's female involvement rate is far lower than India's. Compared to their urban counterparts, rural women make up a substantially larger portion of the workforce. The salary difference between men and women for workers in direct employment from 1999–2000 to 2009–2010 was Rs. 231.90, or 31.7 percent less than what men made in the same amount of time.

The study by Bourah and Das (2022) aims to examine the trends and factors that influenced female LFPR in Assam between 2004 and 2011. Based on unit-level data from three rounds of employment and unemployment surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the analyses were conducted. This paper examines female LFPR across socioeconomic categories, status, education levels, and age cohorts. The most recent data available is used to create Probit regression models. One significant finding of the paper is that women's participation in the labor force is hampered by caste-based status concerns that intersect with land ownership.

Suryawanshi (2015), This study uses Census of India data from 1991, 2001, and 2011 to try to understand the male-female, urban-rural, and overall labor participation rates in India and its two developed states, Maharashtra and Gujarat. The study reveals that in India and Maharashtra, Gujarat, the overall rates of labor engagement among men and women, as well as between urban and rural areas, are rising every ten years. The rates of work involvement across urban and rural areas, as well as across males and females, have been steadily increasing in India and its two developed states.

Shukla, (2015), the purpose of this study is to examine Uttar Pradesh's women's status in relation to the national average. The analysis reveals that, save for a few chosen measures, women's position in the region is somewhat better than it is across the entire nation. According to the indications, women in Uttar Pradesh have very little control over their own lives and very little freedom of movement.

Objectives of the Study

1. Our focus is to present the trend of female workforce participation in Meghalaya.
2. Another objective is to represent the gender gap and female employment rate in different districts of Meghalaya.
3. This paper also tried to show percentage of female workforce participation as different workers like cultivator, agricultural laborers, household workers and other workers.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article primarily uses secondary data from several federal and state government publications in order to conduct a thorough investigation of women's employment in the state of Meghalaya. Using reports from the National Sample Survey (NSS) and other pertinent data



sets, the main goal is to present an analytical overview that provides a comprehensive picture of female labour force participation in the state's rural and urban areas. The basic basis for tracing the trajectory of female labour participation over time is the data from the NSS reports of the 55th (1999-2000), 61st (2004-05), 64th (2007-08), 66th (2009-10), and 68th (2011-12) rounds. There are two main categories in which the labour force participation rate (LFPR) is displayed: rural and urban. The usual status (permanent activity status), usual status (permanent and subsidiary status), current weekly status, and current daily status are the sources used to further categorise the data. This multifaceted approach makes it possible to comprehend the labour dynamics that impact women in Meghalaya in a more sophisticated way.

Statistical profiles from the years 2007–2008, 2012–13, and 2014–15 are used to show developments in average daily employment and formal sector employment among women. These profiles offer an overview of women's participation in the formal sector and aid in highlighting changes in the labour market. In addition, the 61st, 64th, 66th, and 68th rounds of the NSSO employment and unemployment surveys are essential for examining the relationship between women's educational attainment and labour force participation rates. The research intends to illustrate the effect of education on women's labour engagement in Meghalaya by analysing these surveys, with a focus on how higher education levels can affect employment opportunities and participation rates. This study explores the present state of women's unemployment by including data on the number of unemployed women per 1000, in addition to participation rates. This indicator provides a clear picture of the difficulties encountered by women looking for work as well as the efficacy of the laws already in place regarding employment.

A thorough analysis of the female participation percentages in each district is also made possible by the data from the district census handbook. Showcasing variations in male and female participation rates as well as the evolving gender gap, this district-specific data, taken from the Meghalaya district handbooks of 2001 and 2011, provides for a comparative comparison over a ten-year period. Through this approach, the research draws attention to regional differences and pinpoints locations where gender inequality is most noticeable.

Analysis is also done on the employment of women in several industries, including agriculture, domestic work, and other occupations, as well as in different districts. This part of the study uses the identical district handbooks from 2001 and 2011 to give a thorough picture of the changes in women's employment patterns over time. This discussion is further enhanced by the spatial analysis component, which shows how the gender gap changed between 2001 and 2011 and how the proportion of women working in agriculture, domestic work, and cultivation changed. Through the integration of many data sources, the paper not only charts the historical and contemporary patterns in women's employment in Meghalaya, but it also offers a framework for comprehending the fundamental causes that shape these patterns. The focus on educational attainment and its relationship to labour force participation highlights the significance of policy measures meant to improve women's access to education as a method of advancing their economic empowerment. Furthermore, local officials can benefit greatly from the thorough district-level study in terms of addressing regional



inequities and advancing gender equity in the labour market. Targeted interventions can be created to support women's employment and lessen the obstacles they experience by identifying areas with notable gender gaps and lower participation rates.

Overall, a strong analytical approach and the extensive use of secondary data from federal and state sources allow this research to provide a detailed analysis of women's employment in Meghalaya. The findings have practical implications for policymakers looking to increase women's involvement in the workforce in addition to adding to the body of knowledge on gender and labour economics. This paper proposes a more inclusive and equitable labour market in Meghalaya where women can fully realise their economic potential by resolving the complex issues and utilising education's potential.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Women’s labor force participation rate in Meghalaya is estimated from various rounds of NSSO. It has been observed that women’s participation rate is lower than the male participation rate. Table -1 shows the male female participation rate in the labor force per 1000 persons/persons-days.

From the table-1, it has been observed that in rural areas male participation per 1000 days is more than 50 percent and where female participation is nearly around 35 percent according to usual status, CWS and CDS. Same participation rate on urban areas for male is nearly around 48 percent and for female it was around 20 percent. It has been observed from the data that male participation in urban areas has continuously increased from, according to usual status, 457 days per 1000 persons in 64th round, 483 days per 1000 persons in 66th round and 515 days per 1000 persons in 68th round. Female participation rate has also been increased from 195 days per 1000 persons from 64th round, 233 days per 1000 days in 66th round and 210 days per 1000 days 68th round.

Tale-1: LFPR (number of persons in the labor force per 1000 persons/persons-days) according to usual, current weekly, current daily status for Meghalaya

Round	Male				Female			
	Usual Status (ps*)	Usual Status (ps+ss*)	CWS#	CDS@	Usual Status (ps*)	Usual Status (ps+ss*)	CWS#	CDS@
RURAL								
64th round (2007-08)	509	526	516	471	327	354	336	271
66th round (2009-10)	570	582	575	556	332	373	343	310
68th round (2011-12)	521	529	527	491	377	392	383	332
URBAN								
64th round (2007-08)	457	466	461	440	195	203	196	177



66th round (2009-10)	483	483	482	476	233	235	235	228
68th round (2011-12)	515	515	518	506	210	210	211	204

Source: NSSO 64th, 66th, and 68th round. * ps- Permanent activity status. *ss- subsidiary economic activity. CWS- current weekly status. CDS- current daily status.

Women’s Employment in Formal Sector

Table-2: Women Employment in Organized Sector in Meghalaya (in thousands)

Period	Sector	India	Meghalaya
2004	Public	2890	15
	Private	2044.3	4.3
	Total	4934.4	19.3
2005	Public	2921	15
	Private	2095.2	4.4
	Total	5016.2	19.4
2010	Public	3196.04	11.33
	Private	2662.54	2.28
	Total	5858.58	13.61
2011	Public	3170.64	14.23
	Private	2783.47	2.58
	Total	5954.11	16.81
2012	Public	3152	16.47
	Private	2903	3.1
	Total	6054	19.58

Source: Labor Beureau, Statistical Profile on Women Labor – 2007-08, 2012-13 and 2014-15.

Table-2 is comparable to Meghalaya and shows the sector-specific employment of women in India's organized economy. All throughout India, the number of women employed in the public and commercial sectors has steadily increased. 2890 women worked in the public sector overall in 2004; and 2044 worked in the private sector. In the private sector, there were 2903 women and 3152 women working for the government in 2014. Between 2004 and 2014, the percentage of women employed in the organized sector in Meghalaya was extremely low. Number of women employment in public sector was 15 in 2004, but it was raised slowly to 16.47 in 2014. But the number of women employment in organized private sector has been declined a little from 4.3 in 2004 to 3.1 in 2014.

Table-3: Trend in Average Daily Employment, Man days Worked, Wages /Salaries and Earnings by Directly Employed Workers in Meghalaya (1999-00 to 2013-14)

Year	Average Daily Employment	Man days worked ('000)	Wages/Salaries per Man day Worked (Rs.)
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	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1999-00	467	44	142	12	80.7	37.4
2000-01	537	19	164	5	98.1	47.4
2001-02	591	44	182	13	102.6	117.6
2002-03	984	46	298	13	96.2	136.7
2003-04	1031	55	312	16	100.6	114.5
2004-05	1599	75	511	22	214.7	110.1
2005-06	1866	79	594	23	203.8	138.9
2006-07	2294	89	728	26	199	142.6
2007-08	2379	154	758	49	202.1	214
2008-09	2483	192	782	59	224.5	228.8
2009-10	2505	162	813	48	242.6	283.9
2010-11	3140	136	949	39	304.2	347.5
2011-12	2978	65	917	22	300	326.3
2012-13	3219	314	974	96	374.2	316
2013-14	3200	266	970	80	403.5	299.3

Source: Labor Bureau, Statistical Profile on Women Labor – 2007-08, 2012-13 and 2014-15.

The trend of average daily employment and income or salary that male and female workers in Meghalaya get is displayed in Table 3. The average daily employment rate of female workers in Meghalayan factories is 15.34 percent, surpassing the national average of 13.49 percent. The data displayed spans the years 1999–2000 through 2013–2014. Men worked 467 hours on average per day in 1999, compared to 44 hours per day for women. In 2013–14, it was increased to 266 for women and 3200 for males. Throughout these 14 years, the mean daily employment for men and women has been 1952 and 116, respectively. Mean daily employment of women is significantly less than the average daily employment for men. The pay per man day worked was as follows: in 1999–2000, they were rupees 80.7 for men and 37.4 for women; in 2013–14, they increased to 403.5 for men and 299.3 for women. Women earned an average of 190.73 per man day worked throughout these 14 years, much less than men, who earned an average of 209.78.

Women’s Workforce Participation Rate by Educational Level

Table-4, show the percentage of women in Meghalaya's workforce who are employed in their regular capacity. The average number of illiterate women employed in rural areas was 601, and the average number of literate women employed up to the primary level was 680, according to data from the last four rounds of the NSSO. These numbers are significantly higher than those of women who have completed middle (505), secondary (362), and higher secondary (441). However, the average employment rate (919) of women with a bachelor's degree or more is significantly greater than that of the other group.

General Educational Level	Rural (Female)				Urban (Female)			
	61th	64th	66th	68th	61th	64th	66th	68th
Not Literate	801	441	373	788	495	396	391	377

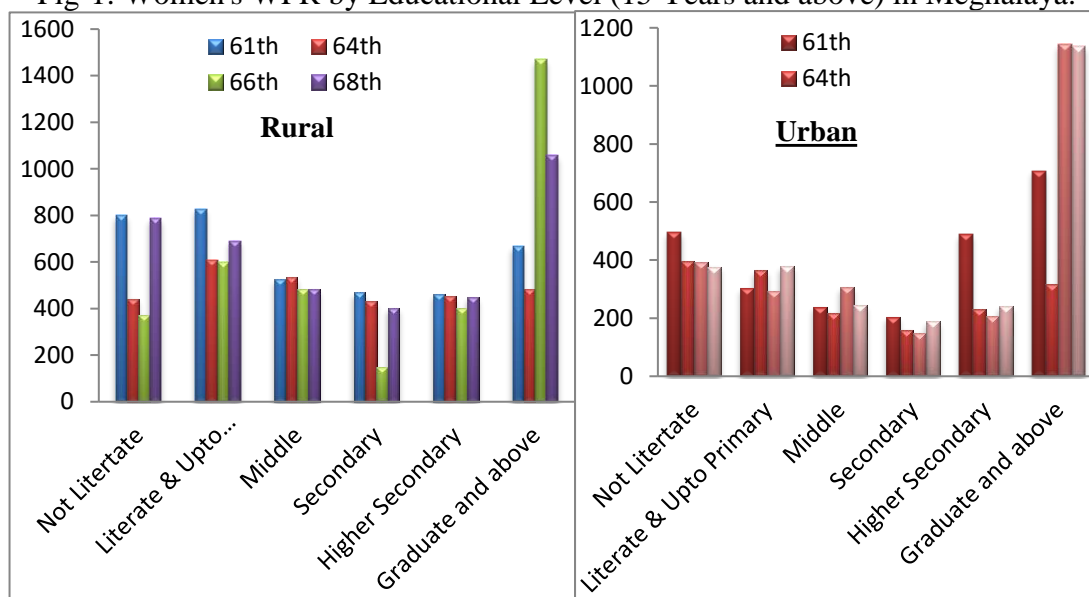
Literate & Up to Primary	827	606	597	691	303	364	294	379
Middle	526	533	482	482	239	218	306	244
Secondary	468	429	149	402	204	159	150	189
Higher Secondary	462	452	402	448	489	229	207	241
Graduate and above	667	481	1470	1058	708	315	1142	1135
All (Avg.)	752	561	496	696	488	316	454	502

Table-4: Women's WPR by Educational Level (15 Years and above) according to Usual Principal and Subsidiary Status (PS+SS) for Meghalaya

Source: NSSO, Employment and Unemployment survey 61th, 64th, 66th, and 68th round.

The NSSO data of the 61st, 64th, 66th, and 68th classes show the same picture of Meghalaya's urban areas, where the average female workforce participation rate among illiterate women (415) and literate women up to the primary level (335) is significantly higher than that of women who have completed their education up to the higher secondary level (292). However, the highest mean employment rate (825) was shown in all four rounds among women who had completed graduation and beyond.

Fig-1: Women's WPR by Educational Level (15 Years and above) in Meghalaya.



Unemployment Rate in Meghalaya

Table-5, presents the unemployment rate of female in Meghalaya in both rural and urban areas. It has been observed that unemployment among female has been increased continuously from 6st round of NSSO to 66th round of NSSO. In rural areas of Meghalaya, unemployment rate is very low compared to urban areas of the state. Unemployment rate in urban areas of Meghalaya has been increased continuously from 42 (per 1000) in 61at round to 55 (per1000) in 64th round and further raised to 90 (per 1000) in 66th round. But it has been improved slightly to 37 (per 1000) in 68th round.



Table-5: Unemployment rate according to NSSO data among women in Meghalaya (per 1000)

Round	Rural				Urban			
	Usual Status (ps)	Usual Status (ps+ss)	CWS	CDS	Usual Status (ps)	Usual Status (ps+ss)	CWS	CDS
61 st (2004-05)	6	5	6	7	42	35	36	39
64 th (2007-08)	3	3	3	5	55	53	55	53
66 th (2009-10)	8	5	7	10	90	90	90	94
68 th (2011-12)	4	4	4	6	37	37	44	46

Source: NSSO, Employment and Unemployment survey 61th, 64th, 66th, and 68th round.

District wise Female Workforce Participation Rate:

Up to 2011, Meghalaya was divided into seven districts; however, within the past 10 years, five more districts have been created. However, we have only used data up until 2011 because the statistics for these five recently formed states are not yet available.

Table-6: District wise Female Workforce Participation Rates in Meghalaya (in percentage)

Districts	2001		2011		Gender Gap 2001	Gender Gap 2011	Changes in Gender Gap
	Male	Female	Male	Female			
East Garo Hills	54.60	45.40	57.32	42.68	9.21	14.64	5.43
East Khasi Hills	63.10	36.90	62.52	37.48	26.20	25.04	-1.16
Jaintia Hills	56.64	43.36	42.38	57.62	13.29	-15.24	-28.53
South Garo Hills	55.36	44.64	61.86	38.14	10.73	23.71	12.98
West Garo Hills	60.43	39.57	59.41	40.59	20.85	18.83	-2.03
West Khasi Hills	54.06	46.01	54.91	45.09	8.05	9.82	1.78
Ri bhao	57.53	42.47	59.99	40.01	15.07	19.98	4.91

Source: District Handbook of Meghalaya.

Table 6 displays the percentage of men and women who participated in the workforce, as well as the gender disparity between 2001 and 2011, for each of Meghalaya's seven districts. Of these seven districts, the one with the highest male participation rate is East Khasi Hill district, which recorded 63.1 percent in 2001 and 62.52 percent in 2011. The district with the lowest male participation rate was West Khasi Hills, with 54.06 percent in 2001 and Jaintia Hills, with 42.38 percent in 2011. In terms of female participation, the district of West Khasi had the greatest rate in 2001 (46.01 percent), whereas the district of Jaintia Hills had the

highest rate in 2011 (57.62 percent). With a female participation percentage of 37.48 percent in 2011 and 36.90 percent in 2001, East Khasi Hills is the district with the lowest rate of female engagement. Districts with the lowest female involvement in the state were those where male participation peaked in 2001 and 2011, and vice versa, according to the data. The gender difference in each district is also calculated and presented. With a gender disparity of 26.20 percent in 2001 and a little decrease to 25.04 percent in 2011, East Khasi Hills has been shown to have the highest gender gap. 2011 saw Jaintia Hills record a gender difference of -15.24 percent, while West Khasi Hills recorded the lowest gender gap in 2001 at 8.05 percent. The only district of Meghalaya where the proportion of women in the workforce exceeded that of men between 2001 and 2011 was Jaintia Hills.

Fig-2: Female Workforce Participation Rate.

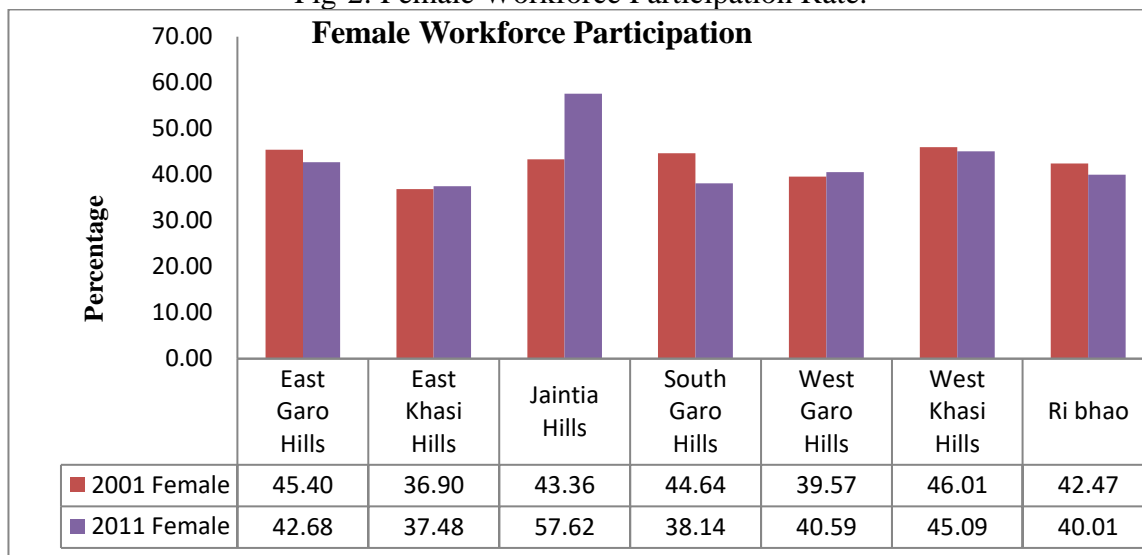
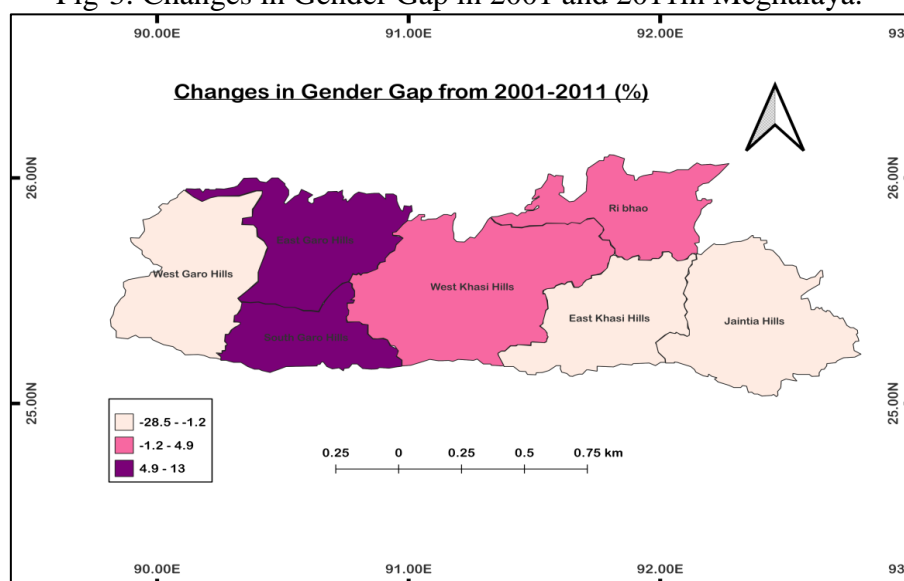


Fig-3: Changes in Gender Gap in 2001 and 2011 in Meghalaya.



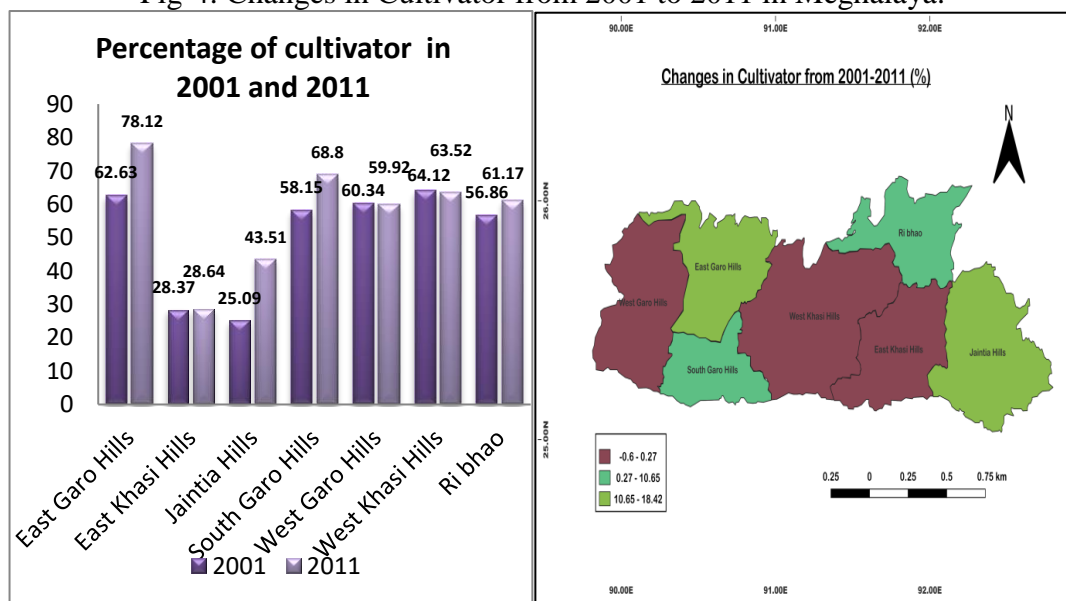
Female Participation in Different Categories of Work

The participation of women in several categories of employment, such as domestic labor, agricultural labor, cultivating, and other jobs, was covered in this section. We also attempted to illustrate the variations in the percentage of women employed in all of the aforementioned jobs between 2001 and 2011.

Changes in Cultivator from 2001 to 2011

Figure 4 displays the percentage changes in women's cultivator jobs across Meghalaya's districts. Based on the statistics, it was discovered that between 2001 and 2011, the percentage of female growers grew in five out of seven districts. The percentage of female cultivators has increased most in East Garo district, from 62.63 percent in 2001 to 78.12 percent in 2011. South Garo Hills (10.65 percent) and Ri Bhao (4.17 percent) have had the largest increases. West Garo (-0.42 percent) and West Khasi Hills (-0.60 percent) are the districts that saw a percentage reduction between 2001 and 2011.

Fig-4: Changes in Cultivator from 2001 to 2011 in Meghalaya.

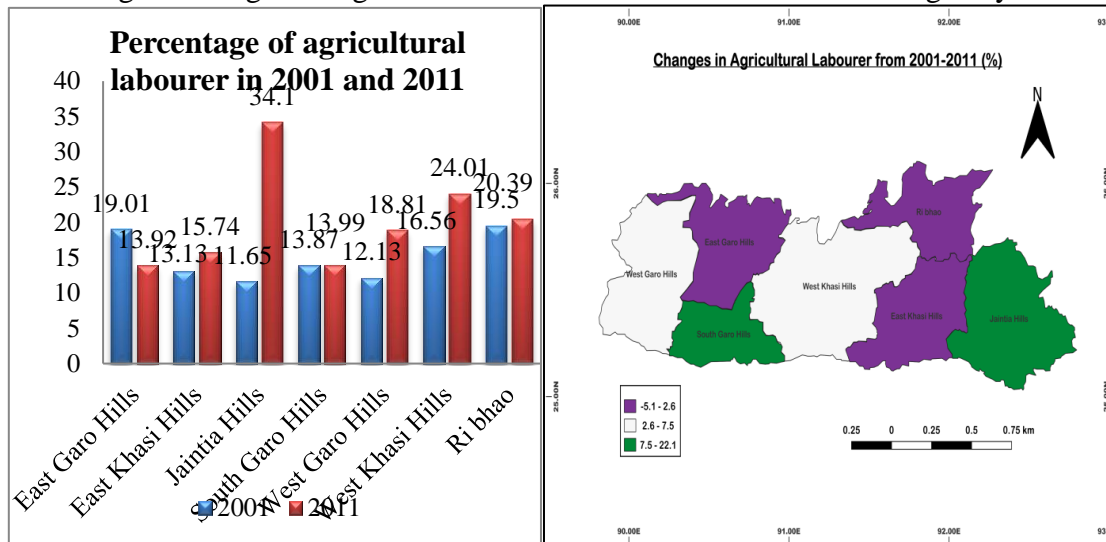


Source: District Handbook 2001 and 2011.

Changes in Agricultural Laborer from 2001 to 2011

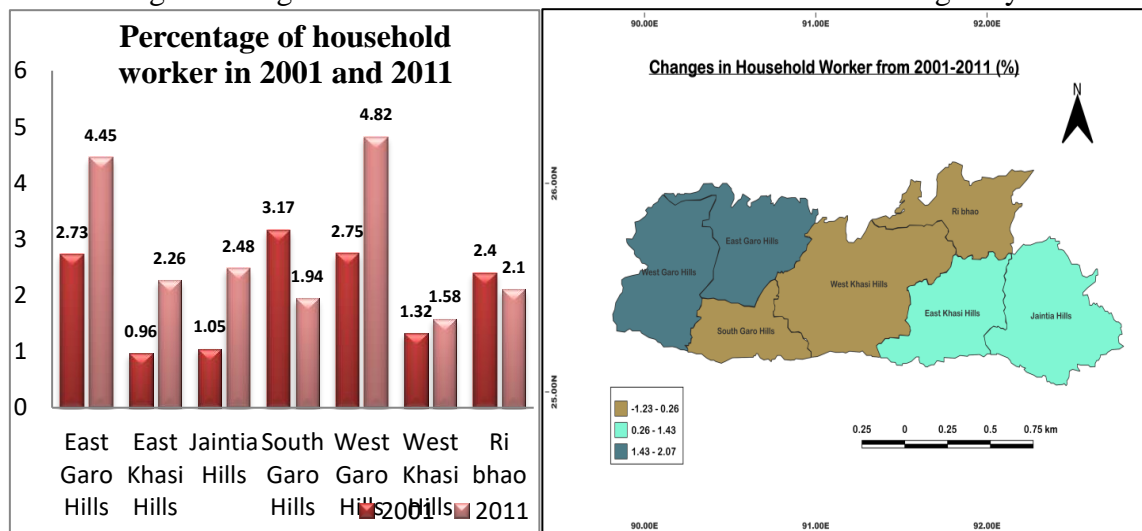
The percentage shifts in women's employment as agricultural laborers in Meghalaya between 2001 and 2011 are displayed in Figure 5. With the exception of the state of East Garo Hills, the data shows that the percentage of women working in agriculture has increased across all districts. In Jaintia Hills state, the percentage rise has been the highest, rising from 11.65 percent in 2001 to 34.10 percent in 2011. West Khasi Hills and West Garo Hills have also experienced increases.

Fig-5: Changes in Agricultural Laborer from 2001 to 2011 in Meghalaya.



Source: District Handbook 2001 and 2011.

Fig-6: Changes in Household Worker from 2001 to 2011 in Meghalaya.



Source: District Handbook 2001 and 2011.

Figure 6 shows the percentage shifts in home workers from 2001 to 2011. The greatest increase in household workers occurs in the West Garo district, where the percentage increased from 2.75 percent in 2001 to 4.82 percent in 2011. The number of women working as home workers increased negatively in South Garo district and Ri Bhao.

The percentage of women working as household workers, agricultural laborers, and cultivators increased throughout all districts between 2001 and 2011, which resulted in a decline in the percentage of women working in other occupations such as government, manufacturing, and plantation labor, as well as in business, mining, and construction.



5. CONCLUSIONS

In East Garo Hills, the proportion of women working in agriculture fell from 19.01 percent in 2001 to 13.92 percent in 2011. The majority of women in the district—78.12 percent—work as cultivators, which may be the cause of this fall. These details are displayed in Figures 4 and 5. An additional noteworthy finding is that the proportion of women working as household workers (0.96 percent in 2001 to 2.26 percent in 2011), agricultural laborers (13.13 percent in 2001 to 15.74 percent), and cultivators (28.37 percent in 2001 to 28.64 percent in 2011) is extremely low in the East Khasi Hill district because the majority of women are employed as other workers (57.74 percent in 2001 to 62.87 percent in 2011). Due to the fact that 13 census towns in Meghalaya are part of the East Khasi Hills district, women's employment opportunities as other workers have increased more than those of women in any other region. Education has a less than positive effect on women's employment involvement; women who are illiterate or only read up to the primary level participate at a higher rate than women who have completed middle school. Between 2000 and 2014, there was a significant disparity in the average daily employment of men and women: 1952 for men and 116 for women. However, the gap in average salaries between male and female employees is minimal. The NSSO data of last three rounds, shows that unemployment among women in urban areas is much higher than in rural. Spatial map of Meghalaya (fig-3) on gender gap shows that East Garo, South Garo hills are the only districts where the gender gap is very high as these two are among the most backward districts of the state (According to data of UGC 2008). Since the percentage of women in the workforce is very low, the government should launch various initiatives and campaigns to support them and give them access to employment opportunities by providing them with appropriate education and training to improve their abilities.

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