

## **A CHANGING PARADIGM OF OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE IN URBAN CENTERS OF NORTH EAST INDIA**

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### **Abstract**

The occupational structure of a region or a country refers to the division of its labour force engaged in different economic activities of primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. It reflects to the development of people habited and is the mirror of economic status. As national income increases steadily from primary activities and the necessities of life are met, there is an occupational shift of labour and other resources into manufacturing or secondary production to tertiary activities, quaternary and quinary activities. The present paper aims to find out the regional disparities in work forces engaged in different economic activities. The work also find out the total working populations engaged in cultivators, agriculture, household industries and allied activities in urban centers of the region. The study of the present paper based on an outcome of in-exhaustive secondary sources of information /data available from census, e-resources and journals. Diagrams, figures and charts will be highlighted for more significance of the studies. The occupational structure of an economy plays a vital role in the overall economic scenario of the economy. The number of workers in the north-eastern region employed in different sectors of the economy is crucial to determine the level of development of the economy of a region or state. The region is still industrially backward despite of huge potentials and is predominantly agrarian occupational structure except some cities. Though the region has endowed with rich natural resources, the region is industrially very backward in compared with the rest of the country. Altogether, the scenario of occupational structure in the region of India is

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not very encouraging. The rate of growth of work force participation in the region is low (39.88%) as compare with India as a whole (39.80%). Among the North-Eastern States of India, the percentage of workers to the total population is highest in Sikkim with 50.47 % while it is lowest in Assam with 38.36 percentages.

**Keywords:** Economic Activities, Primary Activities, Regional Disparities, Industrially Backward, Agrarian

### **Introduction**

The occupational structure is a vital of a country because it refers to the division of its work force engaged in different economic activities. Occupational distribution of population or occupational pattern refers to the proportion of total working population engaged in different broad sectors of the economy. The studies can find out the total working population who are engaged in agriculture and allied activities and how many of them are engaged in industrial and service sector. The contrasting characteristics of urban and rural populations have drawn the attention of geographers for long based on occupational structure. However, studies concerned with 'occupational pattern' especially in India, have attained a greater significance only in recent years (Gozal, 1958). Such studies can reveal the relationship between various occupations and the resultant spatial interaction within a spatial interaction and within a regional framework. An economically productive pursuit is conceived here as an occupation and as such there can be many occupations. It is quite significant to note that North Eastern Region of India is predominantly agricultural occupational and major source of incomes comes from the primary activities. Nevertheless, even after the vigorous efforts by the Central and the State Governments to develop industries, trade, transport and communication, banking, insurance, etc in the region, the majority of our working population are still dependent on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. As per 2011 census, the work participation rate of males and females of the region distinct from one state to other. As a whole, work participation rate of male and female of northeast India were 49.73 percent and 35.50 percent respectively as compared with all India rates of 53.26 percent of males and 25.51 percent of females. It shows that the region is still backward in the field of industries and depending too much on agriculture. Inadequate and lop

sided growth of secondary and tertiary sectors is another fundamental cause for this imbalance in the occupational distribution.

### **Objectives**

The present paper aims to find out the regional disparities of work participation rate both male and female population in the urban centers of the region. This paper also attempt to investigate and analyse the occupational structure among the seven sister states.

### **Study Area**

North-Eastern India (21<sup>0</sup>50'N to 28°N Lat. and 89°46'E to 97°29'E longitude) comprises seven States of Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh covering an area of 2,62,179 sq km, accounts for some 7.9 percent of the country's total area. The region has a total population of 45,161,611 (in 2011) which is about 3.78% of the population of the Indian Union and Assam alone occupies with 29.91 percent of the area of the region. In 2011, 18.36 percent of the total population of this region were concentrated in 405 urban centres, 82 districts, 598 sub-divisions, 44,538 villages (including uninhabited) of different size classes, in which there were only 8 (eight) cities (Class I town) with over 1,00,000 persons and 39 medium size towns with over 20,000 population. Work participation rate in the urban areas of the region is 51.57(male) and 23.69 (female) of which 53.76(male) and 15.44 (female) of all India rate in 2011.

### **Database and Methodology**

The present paper is the outcome of secondary sources collected from Census of Manipur, Economic Survey of Manipur, Statistical Handbook of Manipur, Basic Statistics of North Eastern Region, reputed articles of research journals, books and e-journals. The studied area comprises the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura.

### **Findings**

An economically productive pursuit is conceived here as an occupation and as such there can be many occupations. However, to gain insight into the occupational pattern of a population,

three broad categories of occupations namely the primary, secondary and tertiary are recognised in the North East India. The operational definition of the term ‘occupational pattern’ or ‘occupational structure’ (the terms are used as synonym) is taken as the relationship pattern of the above mentioned three major occupational components of the working population, as it forms the core of a city’s economic system.

### **Classification of Occupations**

The occupation classification of population generally refers to different branches of activity based on the type of establishment, product made or service rendered. In order to overcome the difficulties in comparing the detailed information in this respect is customary to categories it into three principal occupational groups or sectors for the purpose of analysis. Based on the above observation and census records an attempt is being made to group the occupations of towns of the region into the following three broad categories for the convenience of drawing a comparison.

1. **Primary Sector includes -**

- (i) Cultivators
- (ii) Agricultural labourers
- (iii) Livestock, Forests, Fishing, Hunting and Plantations, Orchards and allied activities

2. **Secondary Sector -**

- (i) Manufacturing (in household industry)
- (ii) Manufacturing (other than household industry)
- (iv) Constructions

3. **Tertiary Sector -**

- (i) Trade and Commerce
- (ii) Transport, Storage and Communications
- (iii) All service occupations

Quaternary and Quinary are sub-divisions of tertiary activities -

Some new categories of activities such as quaternary and quinary have come into use only

recently. It is mainly concerned with knowledge such as education, research, information and development are quaternary activities. On the other hand, people engaged in 'gold collar' professionals such as research scientists, financial and legal consultants, etc are termed as quinary activities. Such type of activities is not a new trend in the region. Unfortunately, the data of this occupation is not available and very difficult to find out short duration and therefore unable to discuss in the research paper.

The North-Eastern Region of India is rich endowed with natural resources. The states of the region, except Assam are industrially less developed. Most of the industries of the region are primary sector and based on local raw material. Assam is the most industrialised state where industries are concentrated in Digboi, Nahorkatiya, Numaligarh, Guwahati and Bongaigaon. Digboi and Nahorkatiya are the two leading petroleum and gas fields of Assam. However, variable rich untapped natural resources in Manipur, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh are not properly utilised. Agriculture is the main occupation and rice is the principal food crop of the people of North Eastern region comprising Assam, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, and Meghalaya. It is an important place in the economy of the region and agricultural sector contributes a major share to the total domestic product, about 50% and provides their income and employment. Assam is notable for the cultivation of tea not only in the region but also in the world. In the hilly areas, slash and burnt type of shifting cultivation is common and about 12 percent of the net shown area is under shifting or locally known as jhuming cultivation.

### **Work Participation Rate (Wpr)**

The proportion of workers in a population is expressed by a rate called Participation Rate. Work Participation Rate (WPR) is the percentage of total workers (main and marginal) to total population. Work Force Participation Rate (WFPR), on the other hand, is defined as the number of persons/person-days employed per thousand persons/person-days.

$$\text{Work participation rate} = \frac{\text{Total Workers (Main+Marginal)}}{\text{Total Population}} \times 100$$

The North Eastern India has a big work force where having a total population of 45,486,784 out of which 16, 670,984 are engaged in different activities according to 2011 census. Among the hree different sectors of the economy of the region, most of the people are engaged in the primary sector and comparatively a small number of the working population are associated with the secondary and tertiary sector. However, the picture is more complicated if deeply analysed the present scenario by dividing the total working population based on rural and urban areas. As per 2011 Census, the highest work participation rates of males and females in rural areas of the region are Tripura (55.67%) and Nagaland (52.26%). In urban areas, male and female works more in Tripura (56.97%) and Manipur were 33.17 percent respectively.

Table-1:

Male and Female Work Participation Rate in Rural and Urban areas of North East India, 2011

Source: computed from Census 2011, Registrar General of India (RGI)

Tripura recorded 55.77 percent of males and Arunachal Pradesh 49.06 percent as compares with all-India rates of 53 percent of males and 26 percent of females in rural areas and 53.76 percent of males and 15.44 percent of females. Fig.6.13 shows the work participation rate of rural, urban and combined work participation in North Eastern States. As per 2011 Census, the highest and the lowest NE work participation rates of rural and urban population of the region were Nagaland (54.02 %) and Manipur (41.41 %) respectively as compared with All-India rates of 41.83 percent

States	Work Participation Rate								
	Rural			Urban			Combined		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Arunachal Pradesh	48.49	39.49	44.10	50.91	21.31	36.97	34.44	49.06	42.47
Assam	53.06	23.69	38.68	56.79	14.86	36.41	53.59	22.46	38.36
Manipur	52.01	42.73	47.44	49.87	33.17	41.41	51.40	39.88	45.68
Meghalaya	47.04	34.97	41.05	47.68	23.59	35.63	47.17	32.67	39.96
Mizoram	53.91	41.86	48.03	50.89	31.05	40.98	52.35	36.16	44.36
Nagaland	55.67	52.26	54.02	47.95	25.87	37.44	53.42	44.74	49.24
Tripura	55.35	26.28	41.15	56.97	16.00	36.76	55.77	23.57	39.99
Total NE India	52.21	37.32	44.92	51.57	23.69	37.94	49.73	35.50	42.86
All India	53.03	30.02	41.83	53.76	15.44	35.31	53.26	25.51	39.79

and 35.31 percent. Table No. shows the work participation rate of North Eastern States and All-India as per 2011 Census (Table.1).

Table – 2: North East India

Female and Male Work Participation Rate 1991-2011

State	Female Work Participation			Male Work Participation Rate		
	1991	2001	2011	1991	2001	2011
Assam	21.6	20.7	22.5	54.21	50.69	49.06
Arunchal	37.5	36.5	35.4	49.93	49.93	53.59
Manipur	39.0	39.0	38.6	49.09	47.76	51.58
Meghalaya	34.9	35.1	32.7	45.36	48.91	47.17
Mizoram	43.5	47.5	36.2	54.37	57.45	52.35
Nagaland	38.0	38.1	44.7	48.61	46.82	53.42
Tripura	14.9	21.1	23.6	53.6	57.58	60.16

Source: Computed from Basic Statistics of North-Eastern Region, 2015, Table.1.12, p.8 and Census of India, Various Issues

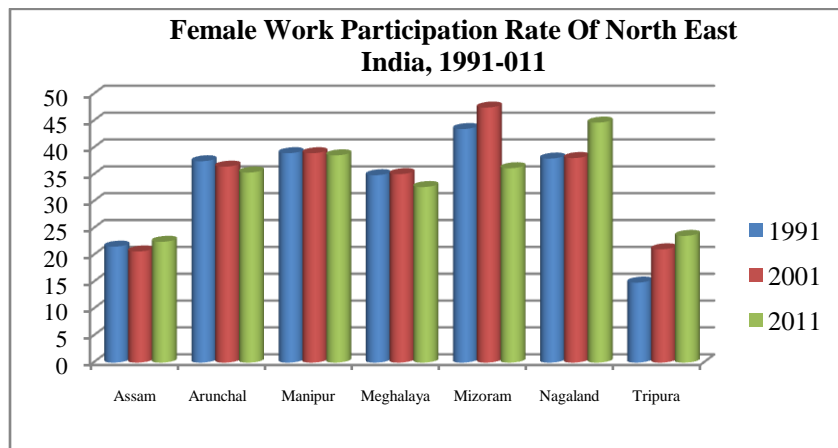


Fig. 1

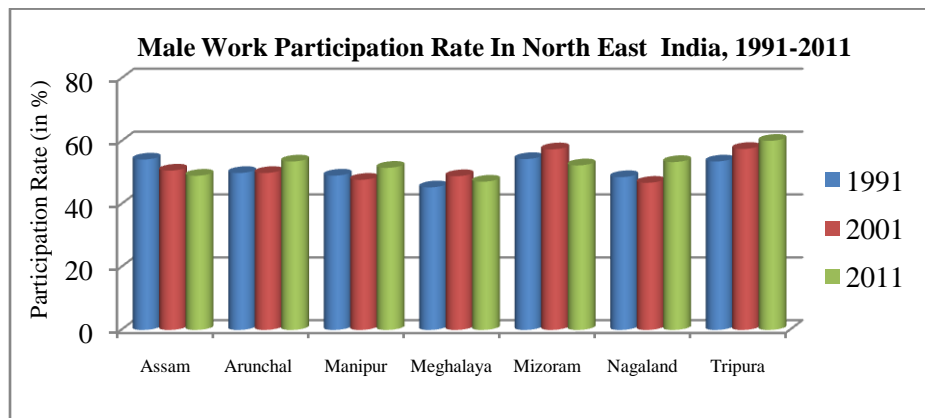


Fig. 2

In Meghalaya, the women in large number are engaged in the urban-based economic activities like trade and commerce and other events. Traditionally the women in Manipur hold a higher position with men also have higher participation rate in household industry and trade and commerce. FWPR vary significantly in Northeast India from one state to another. One of the major factor accounted for higher male and female work participation rate in Mizoram amongst the states of North-Eastern Region in 1991, 2001 and 2011 is due to lack of transport and hilly states, women of the state are involve in agriculture, especially jhum cultivation and household small scale industries. Among all the north eastern states, Nagaland is bearing the highest level of female workforce participation where it is 44.7% in 2011 (Table-2). In Assam, female work participation was increased up to 21.6% in 1991 and slightly decreased to 20.7% in 2001 again it increased to 22.5% in 2011. Mizoram has also a trend of decreasing female work participation. The table shows that in Mizoram, the ratio was 47.5% in 2001 and it declined to 36.2% in 2011. In case of Manipur it is noticed that the state has been continuously maintaining the same level of female workforce participation from 1991 to 2001(39.0%) but it decline to 38.6% in 2011. From the above analysis, it is clear that there are variations in FWPR (Female Work Participation Rate) among the Northeast states, which may be attributed due to certain factors, discussed in the next section. The findings of the study indicate that due to the existence of tribal dominant states in Northeast India, its average Female Labour Participation Rate (FLPR) exceed the national average and large number of female workers is involved in the agriculture sector (Table-6.14). The study revealed that in Northeast India interstate variations has been observed for labour force participation for both males and females. In some states, FWPR rate has increased which has positive impact on the ideological, political and social spheres. The work participation rate by gender in the region that the males' overall WPR registered an increase in 2001 and 2011, whereas the females' overall WPR had increased in 1991 and 2001 but remained same in 2011. The male-female combined WPR had increased all throughout during the last three decades. For the males, their main worker's WPR has declined and their marginal workers' WPR has increased. For the females, their main workers' WPR does not show any patters; it has increased between 1981 and 1991, it declined between 1991 and 2001, and thereafter shown an increase between 2001 and 2011. The WPR of female marginal workers had increased between 1991 and 2001 and thereafter it has shown a marginal decline in 2011 (Fig.1 & 2).



The findings of the study suggest that in few states of Northeast region especially in Assam male work participation rate is a bit slower to compare with other states in the region. Wage discrimination on the basis of sex should be removed because it discourages women to participate in labour market. Among the 7 states of the North eastern region, Mizoram has highest Female work participation rate (47.5%) in 2001 while Assam has the lowest. Females (22.5%) in 2011; Nagaland have the second rank of highest work participation (44.7%) in 2011 and Assam has the lowest female work participation rate of 21.6, 20.7, and 22.5 percentage in 1991, 2001 and 2011 respectively. It is seen from the above table that the growth rate of total workers between 1991 and 2001 is highest in Nagaland and it is lowest in Assam. The growth rate of male workers is highest in Nagaland while the same of male is highest in Tripura (60.16%) in 2011

### **Conclusion**

The changing paradigm scenario of occupational structure in the region is not very impressive. The disparity phenomenon of male and female work participation rate and their growth of work forces, even after the vigorous efforts by the Central and the State Governments to develop industries, trade, transport and communication, banking, insurance, etc in the region, the majority of our working populations are still dependent on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. work in the states of the region. The tertiary sector has emerged significantly even before the economy became highly industrialized is noted in Indian context; however the north east region is lacked far behind the pace. The region is still dominated by the agricultural sector and most of the workers belong to the primary sectors. To upgrade the socio-economic condition the industrial backwardness situation should be eliminated by properly tapping the rich endowed natural resources and taking special industrial policies for the region.

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