

How to Cite:

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International Journal of Economic Perspectives, 14(1), 222-230

Retrieved from <https://ijeponline.org/index.php/journal/article>

Comparative Study on Gender in Manipur

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Based on the secondary data, the paper was an attempt to discuss where Manipur stood compared to the rest of India when it came to Gender equality. The study stressed that women were relatively empowered in terms of education, employment and health.

Keywords: Gender equality, Literacy rate, Enrolment ratio, Sex ratio, Political participation

Introduction

Gender equality formed a major development strategy in many countries of the world including India. When both men and women had equal access to services and resources, enjoyed equal rights, and got equal opportunities to develop skills and capabilities then the country would be fast and balanced. Gender equality has become a great challenge for the modern world (Rout and Panda, 2008). The past few decades have witnessed a steadily increasing awareness of the need to empower women and achieve gender equality through measures towards social, economic and political equity, and broader access to fundamental human rights, improvements in nutrition, basic health and education. The concept of Gender relations between men and women as gender equality has been rank as the subsidiary status of women in relation to men has been seen in almost every aspects of life. Gender equality is silent as that platform of human development at which the rights, accountabilities and prospects of individuals are not to be resolute by the fact of being born as male or female when both men and women realize their full potential and become partners in every sphere of their lives.

The gender factor was no longer to be only a supplement to development but central to the practice of development.

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Submitted: 27 Aug 2020, *Revised:* 09 Sep 2020, *Accepted:* 12 Oct 2020, *Published:* 30 Nov 2020

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The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) examines the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories: *economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival* and *political empowerment*.

The effects of global issues on the lives of women and explored the conceptual basis of gender awareness planning and implementation of development project had been worked by Wallace and March (1991). Moser (1993) and Mathew (2003) motivated on the interrelationship between gender and development, formulation of gender policy and implementation of gender planning and practices. Anand and Sen (1995) strived to develop a measure of gender inequality by using of gender-equity-sensitive indicators and the formulation and utilization of measures of gender equality and inequality. The international political and economic thought must be sensitive to gender difference as a problem of justice, and feminist thought must begin to focus on the problems of women in the third world (Nussbaum, 2001). Sen's assessment on gender inequality and capability approach and its applicability in religious ethics had been judgementally examined (Hicks, 2002). Mahanta (2002); Mahanta & Nayak (2013) pursued to explain the question of women's access to or deprivation of basic human rights as the right to health, education and work, legal rights, rights of working women besides issues like domestic violence, all the while keeping the peculiar socio-cultural situation of the North East in mind. Sullivan (2004) examined the changing gender relations between heterosexual couples in the domestic spheres that conferred the changes in attitude to gender equality, images of masculinity and intimacy in personal relationship showing cross national quantitative evidence based on time use diaries suggesting long term changes in gender practices around the domestic division of labour.

The World Bank (Malhotra et al., 2002) emphasised the methodological aspects of measurement and analysis on women empowerment. A workshop was organized to split with women's empowerment through political participation wherein presentations were made on various theoretical works and case studies (Institute of Social Sciences and South Asia Partnership, Canada, 2003). The workshop lectured issues corresponding 'proxy women' which was used by some apparent that women elected to

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Panchayat bodies were just 'proxies' or puppets in the hands of their husbands, relatives and other male *Panchayat* members. So, the workshop emphasized to deconstructing the idea of proxy women for elected women for their capacity building. Average women in India were disempowered absolutely and have been little change in their empowerment over time (Gupta and Kishor, 2004).

Blumberg (2005) observed that economic empowerment of women was the key to succeed gender equality as well as wealth and well-being of nation that financial autonomy would enhance women's capacity of decision making in various grounds of life. The third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on gender equality and women's empowerment were the active agents for sustainable development (Kabeer, 2005; Govt. of India, 2008).

Region of Study

Manipur is measured as a subtle border state, which is bounded by Nagaland on the north, Mizoram on the south, Myanmar on the east, and Assam on the west. Manipur has a balanced sex ratio but has a large rural population and comparatively much lower urban population. The state is inhabited by 35 different ethnic groups at different locations, indicating a multicultural pluralistic society.

Observance the points in mind an attempt had been made in the present paper to analyse the issues of sex gap in the state.

Data and Methodology

From the secondary sources of data, the range of gender gap in Manipur had been examined using the indicators as follows with that of National level.

Gender Development Index (GDI)

The GDI value of Manipur has been compared with whole India as highlighted (Fig. 1). GDI values above the national average indicate that women of the region enjoyed greater sovereignty and less disparity in the attainment of lives.

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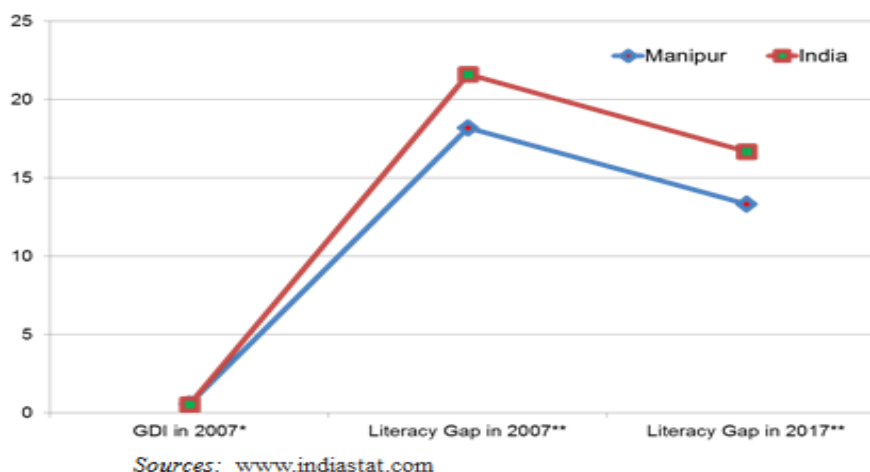


Figure 1: GDI and Male-Female Literacy Gap

Gender Gap

The status of women had been surveyed on education which was one of the significant aspects for the gender gap.

- 1) **Literacy Gap:** Formal education was the signed of literacy. Fig. 1, exhibited that gender gap in literacy rate existed in most of India as a whole from 2007 to 2017. However, the gender gap in literacy rate was inferior in Manipur than that of the national literacy rates (Fig. 1).
- 2) **Enrolment Gap:** Enrolment ratio at different levels of education was another aspect in which gender gap was regarded. Comparing the enrolment ratio of classes I to V and VI-VIII over the period from 2012-13 and 2014-15 a noticeable change was observed (Fig. 2). In 2012-13 the gender gap in enrolment ratio existed in most of the states in India with respect to class I-V whereas in Manipur gender gap was less than that of the national average.

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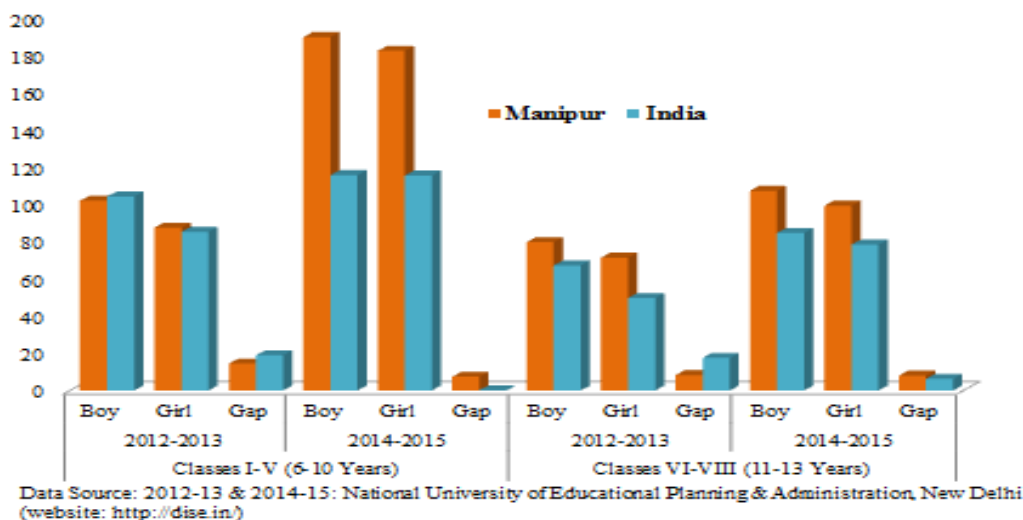
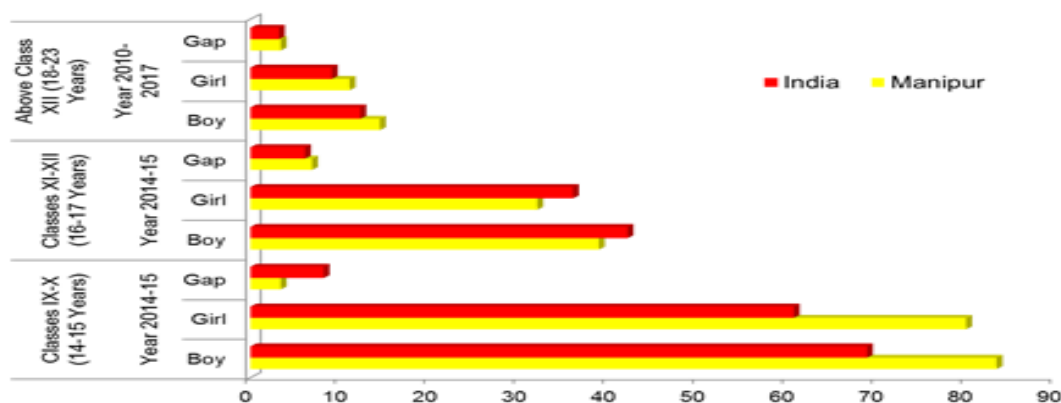


Figure 2: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Elementary Education



Data Source: School education 2014-15: National University of Educational Planning & Administration, New Delhi (website: <http://dise.in/>)
For Higher Education:- Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (website: <http://mhrd.gov.in/statist>)

Figure 3: Enrolment Ratio in High Secondary School and Higher Education

While analysing the gender gap with respect to enrolment in high secondary school and higher education, Manipur had lesser gender gap in enrolment at IX-X level as compared to all India average (Fig. 3). In classes XI-XII, Manipur had more gender gap as compared to national average. In higher education, the enrolment rate of boys and girls were significantly lower as compared to classes IX-X and XI-XII. Gender gap in enrolment at higher education was found to be higher in Manipur as compared to all India.

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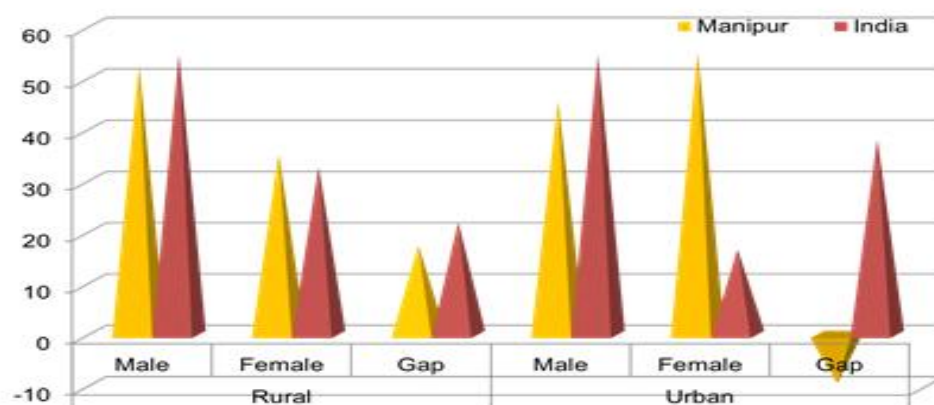
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Gender Differentials in Employment

From Figure 4, the gender differential in employment and the difference in male and female work participation rates of rural and urban was demonstration. The work participation rate was relatively more in urban areas than that of rural areas. Work participation rate of urban women were relatively more than rural women. More women in urban areas, Manipur were involved in employment than the National figure.



Source: Provisional results of Sixth Economic Census, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation

Figure 4: Work Participation Rate of Rural and Urban 2013-14

Gender Differentials in Health

Improving gender ratio directed a better prestige of women in the society. The indicators like gender ratio, infant mortality rate, and life expectancy at natal were used for examine the stated differentials.

- 1) Sex Ratio:** The sex ratio for Manipur was significantly higher than that of the national average (Fig. 5). Yet sex ratio was not favourable to women in all the states of the region.

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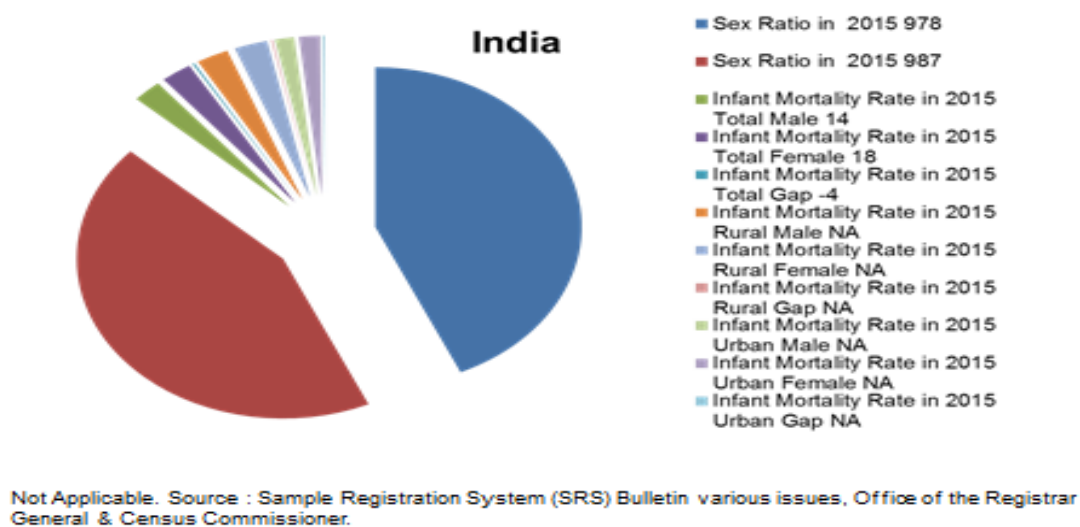


Figure 5: Sex Ratio and Infant Mortality Rates

- 2) **Infant Mortality Rate:** The outcome of tradition and its gratitude of the girl child in Manipur highlighted a positive inspiration on health and nutritional status of girl children (Fig. 5). The gap between boys and girls was narrow and the mortality outlines of female infants were lower in Manipur in comparison to the National Figure.
- 3) **Life Expectancy at Birth:** The endurance of life of a person spectacted the life expectancy at birth. The life expectancy at birth was higher for women than that of men both at the national level. Manipur (61.5 years) (Govt. of Manipur, 2011) had lower life expectancy at birth for women than that of the National Figure (63.3 years) (SRS based Abridged Life Table).
- 4) **Gender Differentials in Political Participation:** Women's political membership was additional input to their empowerment that subsidized to their wellbeing. However in Manipur, the strong family based structure of Indian politics generated it difficult for women to emphasise sovereign political choices, as distinct from the male headed families.

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Conclusion

The extent of gender equality and status of women were relatively better in Manipur as compared to national level yet there were gaps in educational attainment, access to employment, health, political participation etc.

Only giving property right, access to employment and educational opportunity to women is not going to change the picture. The need of the hour is a revolutionary change in the social and cultural values and behavioural pattern is necessary to foster the process of achieving gender equality. As soon as women feel that they have the capability to operate the society at the same term as men, then achieving gender equality would not remain as a distant dream.

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