

A Comparative Study on Gender Wise Work Participation in Patrilineal and Matrilineal Societies of Rural North- East India

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ABSTRACT :

A gender perspective adds significant insight into the understanding of rural employment pattern and issues. North- East India with its dual matrilineal and patrilineal societies offers an uncommon opportunity to explore fundamental question of gender inequalities in work participation. The present study attempted to analyse the existing rural employment pattern as well as gender- wise work participation and employment in patrilineal and matrilineal societies of rural north- east India. It was found that the matrilineal society is dominated by scheduled tribe population (89.13 percent) in comparison to patrilineal society which has only 5.25 percent of scheduled tribe population. Contrary to the common belief, gender disparity exists in both the societies and statistically this difference is significant also. In the patrilineal society, of the total rural main workers, 79.81 percent are males and 20.19 percent are females. In matrilineal society, of the total rural main workers, 63.09 percent are males and 36.90 percent are females. The females in both the societies predominantly take up marginal type of works. In the patrilineal society, of the total rural marginal workers, 48.19 percent are males and 51.81 percent are females. In matrilineal society, of the total rural main workers, 43.13 percent are males and 56.87 percent are females. The non worker category is also dominated by females. Thus, even though, in public sphere, there is absence of discriminatory social practices in matrilineal society in comparison to patrilineal society, in reality, in matrilineal society also, women are facing discrimination, in work participation.

§ The paper is based on ICSSR, New Delhi funded project entitled "A Comparative Study on Income and Employment Pattern in Patrilineal and Matrilineal Societies of Rural North East India: A Socio- Economic Assessment" presently carried out by the author in Department of Management, NEHU, Tura Campus, Meghalaya.

INTRODUCTION :

Indian economy is principally rural where 75 percent of its population and 65 percent of its work force are living and working in rural areas (Reddy, 2014). There is a need of proper understanding of rural employment pattern and resulting issues from different

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possible perspectives. A gender perspective will add significant insight into the understanding of present rural employment pattern and issues. Gender has a prominent role in influencing the rural work participation (Davis, 2003). The difference in set of laws, traditions and practices of the society towards males and females, results in the two genders being valued differently and in their having unequal opportunities and life chances (Kabeer, 2003). Gender inequalities in rural employment exist in all places, but display divergent patterns according to social, cultural, religious and economic factors (FAO, 2010). In Africa women are permitted to work on smaller plots of land and farm less remunerative crops than men (World Bank, 2012).

In India, the rural labor force participation rates of males and females shows significant differences (Reddy et al., 2014). Women are not getting proper employment opportunities and end up in taking any available work (Gupta, 2005) which are mostly unskilled work with unstable earnings (ILO, 2012). Part-time work continues to be primarily in female domain (ILO, 2010). Female rural workers are engaged in agricultural work as self employed or casual labour (Srivastava & Srivastava, 2010). Women also constitute a significant proportion of unpaid family workers (UNIFEM, 2005).

Though studies have provided sufficient confirmation that gender disparities exist in all places, there is a perception that north- east India offers a divergent state of affairs. There is noticeable gender equality in public sphere (Banerjee, 2010; Xaxa, 2008). Due to their role in economic activities and their visibility in public spaces, women here are considered more empowered (Srivastava, 2016). On some indicators the women here are having better status than that of entire nation (Das, 2013). However, here also, the women's status relies on the gender based rights, privileges and roles assigned to them (Krishna, 2005). In spite of presence of various ethnic groups who in general does not believe in sex discrimination, the evidences of gender inequality cannot be ignored (Mahanta and Nayak, 2013). There are evidences showing women's limited role in decision making & low status in family (Srivastava, 2016). In brief, even though there is absence of discriminatory social practices in the region, in reality, the women's have to face discrimination mainly in the light of tradition and customary practices (Buongpui, 2013). One of possible explanation for such a situation can be the prevalence of matrilineal and patrilineal societies and resultant influence in the region.

Thus, northeast India with its dual matrilineal and patrilineal societies offers an uncommon opportunity to explore fundamental question of gender inequalities in work participation. In patrilineal system, an individual is recognized with his or her father's lineage and usually involves the inheritance of property, names, or titles through the male line. However, in matrilineal system, the lineage is traced from the mother and

usually involves inheritance of property to the youngest daughter (Meghalaya Human Development Report, 2008). In comparison to patrilineal societies, the matrilineal societies are widely understood to confer more autonomy on women (Meghalaya Human Development Report, 2008).

Thus, to offer sex-disaggregated analysis to fill critical gaps in knowledge and improve policy decision making processes, the present study attempted to analyse the existing rural employment pattern as well as gender- wise work participation and employment in patrilineal and matrilineal societies of rural north- east India.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY :

Meghalaya is the only state in the region known for its matrilineal society, thus selected as one of the study area. State of Assam was selected to represent patrilineal society as it has maximum land share and population in the region. In this paper, the state of Assam shall be interchangeably used for patrilineal society and the state of Meghalaya shall be used interchangeably for matrilineal society. From each state two divisions were randomly selected - Upper Assam and Lower Assam from Assam and Western Meghalaya (Garo hills) and Central Meghalaya (Khasi hills) from Meghalaya. From Upper Assam Jorhat, Dibrugarh and Sibsagar districts and from Lower Assam Bongaigaon, Nalbari and Dhubri districts were randomly selected. From Western Meghalaya (Garo hills) all the three districts (undivided) i.e. West Garo Hills, East Garo Hills and South Garo Hills and from Central Meghalaya (Khasi hills) all the districts (undivided) i.e. East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills and Ri Bhoi were selected. A brief description of study area is presented in Table 1 and Table 3.

The survey conducted for Census, 2011, constituted the data base of this study. The data were taken mainly from District Census Handbook, Village and Town Wise, Primary Census Abstract, Census, 2011 Series- 19, Part- XII-B for the selected districts. The data pertaining to main workers, marginal workers, non-workers and those marginal workers, non-workers seeking/available for work were taken. Since, the focus of the study was to analyse the gender perspectives on above dimensions in rural areas, sex-disaggregated data pertaining to rural areas on the above dimensions were collected. Since the two states varies in area, number of households and total population, all the comparisons on the above dimensions, between the two states, thus, the two societies, were made on the basis of percentages and difference in percentages. For data analysis apart from descriptive analytical tools, t- test was also employed.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION :

A Gender Perspective of Study Area :

The total rural area in the six selected districts of Assam and Meghalaya was found to be 12921.34 km² and 18335.11 km² respectively (Table 1). Though, the total rural area in Assam for the six selected districts was found to be less in comparison to that of Meghalaya, it has more number of households (12,62,963) in comparison to that of Meghalaya (3,69,487). This may be because Meghalaya is predominantly a hill state with difficult terrain resulting in lower the population density. In the selected districts, similar to household pattern, Assam has more rural population (60,58,741) than that of Meghalaya (20,04,745) (Table 1). Of the total rural population in the selected districts in both the states, very less belongs to schedule caste category (5.12 percent in Assam and 0.52 percent in Meghalaya). However, the state of Meghalaya, a predominantly matrilineal society, is dominated by schedule tribe population in the selected districts (89.13%). The selected districts in Assam have only 2.25 percent of schedule tribe population (Table 1). As far as literacy rate is concerned, there is not much difference between the two societies. The number of literates in selected districts of Assam and Meghalaya was found to be 59.58 percent and 57.36 percent respectively (Table 1).

A gender perspective presents a better understanding of the two states and thus the two societies (Table 3). In the selected districts of Assam, of the total rural population, 51.02 percent are males and 48.98 percent are females. In Meghalaya, 50.63 percent are males and 49.37 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and females in selected districts of both the states. However, there is no significant difference in percent of males between two states and percent of females between the selected districts of the two states.

Of the total rural schedule caste population in the selected districts of Assam, 51.36 percent are males and 48.65 percent are females. In Meghalaya, 55.27 percent are males and 44.73 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of schedule caste males and females in selected districts of both the states. The t-test shows significant difference in percent of schedule caste males between the two states and percent of schedule caste females between two states (Table 3).

In the selected districts of Assam, of the total rural schedule tribe population 50.31 percent are males and 49.69 percent are females. In Meghalaya, 50.35 percent are males and 49.65 percent are females (Table 3). Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of schedule tribe males and female in selected districts of both the states. However, unlike schedule caste population, the t- test shows no significant difference

in percent of schedule tribe males between the two states and percent of schedule tribe females between two states.

Of the total rural literate population in the selected districts of Assam, 55.30 percent are males and 44.69 percent are females. In Meghalaya, 52.45 percent are males and 47.55 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of literate males and female in selected districts of both the states. The t- test shows significant difference in percent of literate males between the two states and percent of literate females between two states (Table 3). The percent of literate males are more in Assam and percent of literate females are more in Meghalaya. Thus, in comparison to females in Assam, the females in Meghalaya are relatively more literate.

A Gender Perspective in Work Participation :

The gender perspective in work participation is analysed for main workers, marginal workers and non- workers (Table 3). In the selected districts of Assam, of the total rural main workers, 79.81 percent are males and 20.19 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in main workers category, 63.09 percent are males and 36.90 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of main workers males and female in selected districts of both the states. The t- test also shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category. In comparison to their counterpart, the percent of main worker males are more in Assam and percent of main worker females are more in Meghalaya. Thus, in comparison to patrilineal society, the females in matrilineal society are relatively getting more opportunities and engagement as main workers.

The marginal workers category is classified into three categories- those who worked for less than 3 months, those who worked for 3 to 6 months, and those who are seeking/ available for work. In the category of those workers who worked for less than 3 months, in the selected districts of Assam, 43.99 percent are males and 56.01 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 44.52 percent are males and 55.48 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and female in selected districts of both the states in this category. The t- test shows no significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category (Table 3).

In the category of those workers who worked for 3 to 6 months, in the selected districts of Assam, 49.32 percent are males and 50.68 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 42.74 percent are males and 57.26 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows no significant difference in percent of males and females in selected districts of

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Assam in this category. But, statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and female in selected districts of Meghalaya in this category. The t- test shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category (Table 3). The percent of males who worked for 3 to 6 months are more in Assam and percent of females who worked for 3 to 6 months are more in Meghalaya. Thus, in comparison to patrilineal society, the females in matrilineal society are relatively more engaged in marginal works.

In the category of those workers who are seeking/ available for work, in the selected districts of Assam, 57.74 percent are males and 42.26 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 50.64 percent are males and 49.36 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and females in selected districts of Assam in this category. But, statistical analysis (t-test) shows no significant difference in percent of males and females in selected districts of Meghalaya in this category. The t- test shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category (Table 3). The percent of males who are seeking/ available for work are more in Assam and percent of females who are seeking/ available for work are more in Meghalaya. Thus, in comparison to Assam, the females in Meghalaya are relatively more interested in getting any type of work; even if it is marginal in nature. The non workers category is classified into two categories- those who are non- workers and those who are seeking/ available for work. The non- workers category is dominated by females in both the states. In the category of non- workers, in the selected districts of Assam, 39.09 percent are males and 60.91 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 45.64 percent are males and 54.34 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and female in selected districts of both the states in this category. The t- test shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states. However, it was found that there is no significant difference in percent of females between two states in this category (Table 3).

Among the non-worker category, in the selected districts of Assam, 36.33 percent males and 63.67 percent females are seeking/ available for work. In Meghalaya, in this category, 41.94 percent are males and 58.06 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and female in selected districts of both the states in this category. The t- test shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states. The t- test shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category (Table 3).

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that though, in terms of average percentage, the women's in matrilineal society are having better access to work than their

counterparts in patrilineal society be it as main worker or marginal worker, but in reality, there is significant difference between males and females in both the societies with reference to access and opportunity to work. Thus, the state of affairs of having equal employment opportunities for women in the north- eastern states cannot be considered satisfactory irrespective of the matrilineal or patrilineal society. In brief, it can be concluded that, the women, in both the societies are at disadvantageous position than their male counterparts. This is evident from the fact that 63.67 and 58.06 percent of female non- workers in patrilineal society and matrilineal society respectively are seeking/available for work, but could not get work or not working.

Table : 1
A brief Description of the Study Area

Sl. No.	Divisions /District	Area (Rural) KM²	No. of Households (Rural)	Total Population (Rural)			Scheduled Caste Population (Rural)			Scheduled Tribe Population (Rural)			Literates (Rural)		
				Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
ASSAM															
1	Upper Assam														
a)	Jorhat	2758.82	184642	871722 (100)	442968 (50.82)	428754 (49.18)	72434 (100)	36973 (51.04)	35461 (48.97)	134361 (100)	67932 (50.56)	66429 (49.44)	614748 (100)	336698 (54.77)	278050 (45.23)
b)	Dibrugarh	3335.52	222414	1082605 (100)	550299 (50.83)	532306 (49.17)	41396 (100)	21480 (51.89)	19916 (48.11)	92593 (100)	46689 (50.42)	45904 (49.58)	685573 (100)	385122 (56.18)	300451 (43.82)
c)	Sibsagar	2625.07	222136	1040954 (100)	531286 (51.04)	509668 (48.96)	34483 (100)	17526 (50.83)	16957 (49.17)	47274 (100)	24078 (50.93)	23196 (49.07)	723490 (100)	396272 (54.77)	327218 (45.23)
2	Lower Assam														
a)	Bongai-gaon	1061.31	125095	628994 (100)	319786 (50.84)	309208 (49.15)	67460 (100)	34760 (51.53)	32700 (48.47)	15267 (100)	7574 (49.61)	7693 (50.38)	347869 (100)	191158 (54.95)	156711 (45.05)
b)	Nalbari	996.56	137601	688909 (100)	353677 (51.39)	335232 (48.67)	54232 (100)	27675 (51.03)	26557 (48.97)	23003 (100)	11511 (50.04)	11492 (49.96)	464211 (100)	257140 (55.39)	207071 (44.61)
c)	Dhubri	2144.06	371075	1745557 (100)	893914 (51.21)	851643 (48.79)	39929 (100)	20692 (51.82)	19237 (48.18)	5631 (100)	2831 (50.28)	2800 (49.72)	773646 (100)	431395 (55.76)	342251 (44.24)
TOTAL (1+2)		12921.34	1262963	6058741 (100)			309934 (5.12)			318129 (5.25)			3609537 (59.58)		
MEGHALAYA															
3	Western Meghalaya (Garo Hills)														
a)	West Garo Hills	3658.68	109609	568433 (100)	286923 (50.48)	281510 (49.52)	6249 (100)	3197 (51.16)	3052 (48.84)	420285 (100)	210724 (50.14)	209561 (49.86)	298448 (100)	163020 (54.62)	135428 (45.38)
b)	East Garo Hills	2578.46	50585	273725 (100)	138763 (50.69)	134962 (49.31)	215 (100)	128 (59.53)	87 (40.47)	265979 (100)	134637 (50.62)	131342 (49.38)	157893 (100)	84705 (53.65)	73188 (46.35)
c)	South Garo Hills	1878.20	22176	129203 (100)	66470 (51.45)	62733 (48.55)	191 (100)	109 (57.07)	82 (42.93)	123068 (100)	62583 (50.85)	60485 (49.15)	72275 (100)	39880 (55.18)	32395 (44.82)
4	Central Meghalaya (Khasi Hills)														
a)	East Khasi Hills	2679.38	86985	459441 (100)	228409 (49.71)	231032 (50.29)	3054 (100)	1566 (51.28)	1488 (48.72)	432621 (100)	213721 (49.40)	218900 (50.59)	283008 (100)	138245 (48.84)	144763 (51.15)
b)	West Khasi Hills	5150.37	57720	340356 (100)	172380 (50.65)	167976 (49.35)	145 (100)	83 (57.24)	62 (42.79)	332455 (100)	168040 (50.55)	164415 (49.45)	200573 (100)	102493 (51.10)	98080 (48.89)
c)	Ri Bhoi	2390.02	42412	233587 (100)	118705 (50.82)	114882 (49.18)	504 (100)	279 (55.36)	225 (44.64)	212325 (100)	107235 (50.55)	105090 (49.49)	137817 (100)	70682 (51.29)	67135 (48.71)
TOTAL (3+4)		18335.11	369487	2004745 (100)			10358 (0.52)			1786733 (89.13)			1150014 (57.36)		

Note: Calculations are based on Census, 2011 data; Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to total population in each category

Table 2: Main Workers, Marginal Workers, Non-Workers and those Marginal Workers, Non-Workers Seeking/Available for Work Classified by Sex

Area	Main workers (Rural)			Marginal workers (Rural)						S
				Worked for less than 3 months			Worked for 3 to 6 months			
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Per
ASSAM										
1	Upper Assam									
Jorhat	267445 (100)	191410 (71.57)	76035 (28.43)	29060 (100)	11612 (39.96)	17448 (60.04)	113575 (100)	50576 (44.53)	62999 (55.469)	63
Dibrugarh	313762 (100)	220144 (70.16)	93618 (29.84)	29374 (100)	14007 (47.69)	15367 (52.31)	127360 (100)	61465 (48.26)	65895 (51.74)	78
Sivasagar	282259 (100)	206567 (73.18)	75692 (26.82)	37436 (100)	17703 (47.29)	19733 (52.71)	125216 (100)	67266 (53.72)	57950 (46.28)	82
2	Lower Assam									
Bongaigaon	158430 (100)	138873 (87.66)	19557 (12.34)	13270 (100)	5362 (40.41)	7908 (59.59)	46787 (100)	22247 (47.55)	24540 (52.45)	29
Nalbari	174337 (100)	152778 (87.63)	21559 (12.37)	10998 (100)	5319 (48.36)	5679 (51.64)	55154 (100)	29517 (53.52)	25637 (46.48)	38
Dhubri	444278 (100)	393909 (88.67)	50369 (11.34)	34062 (100)	13701 (40.22)	20361 (59.78)	121123 (100)	58528 (48.32)	62595 (51.68)	86
MEGHALAYA										
3	Western Meghalaya (Garó Hills)									
West Garó Hills	169149 (100)	109847 (64.94)	59302 (35.06)	12891 (100)	5749 (44.59)	7142 (55.40)	50215 (100)	20368 (40.56)	29847 (59.44)	19
East Garó Hills	73306 (100)	48019 (65.50)	25287 (34.49)	8998 (100)	3677 (40.86)	5321 (59.14)	36461 (100)	11041 (36.25)	19420 (63.75)	6
South Garó Hills	34993 (100)	23834 (68.11)	11159 (31.89)	2969 (100)	1314 (44.26)	1655 (55.74)	11327 (100)	4861 (42.91)	6466 (57.08)	36
4	Central Meghalaya (Khasi Hills)									
East Khasi Hills	161743 (100)	99154 (61.30)	62589 (38.69)	6469 (100)	2920 (45.14)	3549 (54.86)	22714 (100)	10771 (47.42)	11943 (52.58)	12
West Khasi Hills	108910 (100)	62575 (57.46)	46335 (42.54)	8871 (100)	4145 (46.73)	4726 (53.27)	30586 (100)	14208 (46.45)	16378 (53.54)	15
Ri Bhoi	81511 (100)	49927 (61.25)	31584 (38.75)	3464 (100)	1577 (45.53)	1887 (54.47)	11385 (100)	4880 (42.86)	6505 (57.14)	6

Source: Calculations are based on Census, 2011 data. Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to total population.

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Table 3: Difference in Main Workers, Marginal Workers, Non-Workers and those Marginal Workers, Non-Workers Seeking/Available for Work Classified by Sex in Rural Assam and Meghalaya

Sl. No.	Particulars	Assam (Rural)			Meghalaya (Rural)			Difference between Assam and Meghalaya	
		Males (%)	Females (%)	t-value	Males (%)	Females (%)	t-value	Males (%)	Females (%)
1	Total Population	51.02 (0.056)	48.98 (0.047)	15.469***	50.63 (0.316)	49.37 (0.316)	3.901***	1.558	-1.543
2	Schedule Caste Population	51.36 (0.203)	48.65 (0.204)	10.415***	55.27 (11.618)	44.73 (11.594)	5.359***	-2.790***	2.791***
3	Schedule Tribe population	50.31 (0.205)	49.69 (0.202)	2.363***	50.35 (0.269)	49.65 (0.263)	2.343***	-0.160	0.138
4	Literates	55.30 (0.336)	44.69 (0.336)	31.709***	52.45 (5.960)	47.55 (5.941)	3.477***	2.789***	-2.789***
5	Main Workers	79.81 (81.250)	20.19 (81.215)	11.458***	63.09 (14.544)	36.90 (14.546)	11.894***	4.184***	-4.184***
6	Marginal Workers								
a)	Worked for less than 3 months	43.99 (17.389)	56.01 (17.389)	-4.994***	44.52 (3.951)	55.48 (3.952)	-9.551***	-0.281	0.282
b)	Worked for 3 to 6 months	49.32 (13.04)	50.68 (13.033)	-0.656	42.74 (16.516)	57.26 (16.532)	-6.184***	2.962***	-2.960***
c)	Seeking/available for work	57.74 (11.616)	42.26 (11.616)	7.870***	50.64 (4.875)	49.36 (4.868)	1.008	4.284***	-4.284***
7	Non-workers	39.09 (4.351)	60.91 (4.351)	-18.115***	45.64 (2.769)	54.34 (2.769)	-9.073***	-6.011***	6.013
a)	Seeking/available for work	36.33 (15.20)	63.67 (15.20)	-12.14***	41.937 (31.221)	58.06 (31.253)	-4.997***	-2.015**	2.016**

Note: Calculations are based on Census, 2011 data; Figures in parenthesis indicates variance; *** Significant at 0.05 level of significance

A Gender Perspective in Industrial Categories of Main and Marginal Workers

The gender perspective in industrial categories of work participation is analysed for total workers, main workers (cultivators, agriculture labourers, household industry workers, other workers) and marginal workers (cultivators, agriculture labourers, household industry workers, other workers and non workers) (Table 4, 5 & 6).

In the selected districts of Assam, of the total workers, 70.36 percent are males and 29.64 percent are females. In Meghalaya, of the total workers, 57.87 percent are males and 42.13 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of total males workers and female workers in selected districts of both the states. The t- test also shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category. The male workers are more in Assam and female workers are more in Meghalaya. Thus, in comparison to patrilineal society, the females in matrilineal society are relatively getting more opportunities as workers or are involved in earning livelihood for their family.

As discussed above, in the selected districts of Assam, of the total rural main workers, 79.81 percent are males and 20.19 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in main workers category, 63.09 percent are males and 36.90 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of main workers males and female in selected districts of both the states. Thus, in comparison to patrilineal society, the females in matrilineal society are relatively getting more opportunities and engagement as main workers.

The main workers category is classified into four categories- cultivators, agriculture labourers, household industry workers, other workers. In the main workers category, among the cultivators, in the selected districts of Assam, 86.34 percent are males and 13.66 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 59.53 percent are males and 40.47 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and female in selected districts of both the states in this category. The t- test shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category. The percent of male workers as cultivators are more in Assam and percent of female workers cultivators are more in Meghalaya. Thus, in comparison to patrilineal society, the females in matrilineal society are relatively getting more engaged in cultivation as main worker.

Among the agricultural labourers in this category, in the selected districts of Assam, 74.08 percent are males and 25.92 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 61.89 percent are males and 38.11 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and female in selected districts of both the states

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in this category. The t- test also shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category. The percent of male workers as agricultural labourers are more in Assam and percent of female workers agricultural labourers are more in Meghalaya. Thus, in comparison to patrilineal society, the females in matrilineal society are relatively getting more engaged as agricultural labourers.

Among the house hold industry workers in this category, in the selected districts of Assam, 65.75 percent are males and 34.25 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 54.23 percent are males and 45.77 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and females in selected districts of Assam in this category. This difference was not found significant in Meghalaya. The t- test shows no significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category (Table 6).

Among the other workers in this category, in the selected districts of Assam, 77.99 percent are males and 22.00 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 72.44 percent are males and 27.56 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and females in selected districts of Assam and Meghalaya in this category. The t- test shows no significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category (Table 6).

In the marginal workers category, among the cultivators, in the selected districts of Assam, 48.89 percent are males and 51.12 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 34.94 percent are males and 61.06 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and female in selected districts of Meghalaya in this category. The t- test shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category. In this category, the percent of male workers as cultivators are more in Assam and percent of female workers cultivators are more in Meghalaya. Thus, in comparison to patrilineal society, the females in matrilineal society are relatively getting more engaged in cultivation, even though it is marginal in nature.

Among the agricultural labourers in this category, in the selected districts of Assam, 47.58 percent are males and 52.42 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 40.88 percent are males and 59.12 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and female in selected districts of Meghalaya in this category. The t- test no significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category.

Among the house hold industry workers in this category, in the selected districts of Assam, 28.00 percent are males and 71.99 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 35.17 percent are males and 64.83 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and females in selected districts of Assam and Meghalaya in this category. The t- test shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category (Table 6). In this category, in comparison to their counterparts, the percent of male house hold industry workers are more in Meghalaya and percent of female house hold industry workers are more in Assam. As an exception to previous scenarios, in comparison to matrilineal society, the females in patrilineal society are relatively getting more engaged in household industry works. This may be because; females of matrilineal society are more engaged as cultivators and agricultural labourers, even though it is marginal in nature.

Among the other workers in this category, in the selected districts of Assam, 54.29 percent are males and 45.69 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 50.78 percent are males and 49.22 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and females in selected districts of Assam in this category. The t- test shows no significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category. Among the non workers in this category, in the selected districts of Assam, 39.09 percent are males and 60.91 percent are females. In Meghalaya, in this category, 45.64 percent are males and 54.36 percent are females. Statistical analysis (t-test) shows significant difference in percent of males and females in selected districts of Assam and Meghalaya in this category. The t- test shows significant difference in percent of males between the two states and percent of females between two states in this category (Table 6).

In brief it can be concluded that though females in matrilineal society are more engaged as main workers and marginal workers than the females of patrilineal society, but, it cannot be concluded that women in matrilineal society are having equal opportunity and access to work. In reality, there is significant difference between males and females in both the societies with reference to access and opportunity to work. In brief, it can be concluded that, the women, in both the societies are at disadvantageous position than their male counterparts.

CONCLUSION :

The present study attempted to analyse the existing rural employment pattern as well as gender- wise work participation and employment in patrilineal and matrilineal societies of rural north- east India. It was found that the matrilineal society is dominated by scheduled tribe population (89.13 percent) in comparison to patrilineal society which has only 5.25 percent of scheduled tribe population. Contrary to the common belief, gender

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disparity exists in both the societies and statistically this difference is significant also. In the patrilineal society, of the total rural main workers, 79.81 percent are males and 20.19 percent are females. In matrilineal society, of the total rural main workers, 63.09 percent are males and 36.90 percent are females. The females in both the societies basically take up marginal type of works. The non worker category is also dominated by females. Thus, even though, in public sphere, there is absence of discriminatory social practices in matrilineal society in comparison to patrilineal society, in reality, women are not getting enough opportunities, in work participation. However, though, gender norms and patterns are rigid, and very often limit women's equal access to decent work, but gender norms can and do change with proper transformative economic policies at the macro, meso and micro levels (FAO, 2010).

Table 4: Industrial Categories of Main Workers (Rural) in Assam & Meghalaya

Sl. No.	Divisions/ District	Total Workers			Main Workers			Cultivators		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
ASSAM										
1	Upper Assam									
a)	Jorhat	410080 (100)	253598 (61.84)	156482 (38.16)	267445 (100)	191410 (71.57)	76035 (28.43)	97267 (100)	72339 (74.37)	24928 (25.63)
b)	Dibrugarh	470496 (100)	295616 (62.83)	174880 (37.17)	313762 (100)	220144 (70.16)	93618 (29.84)	85548 (100)	65927 (77.06)	19621 (22.94)
c)	Sibsagar	444911 (100)	291536 (65.53)	153375 (34.47)	282259 (100)	206567 (73.18)	75692 (26.82)	69941 (100)	58914 (84.23)	11027 (15.77)
2	Lower Assam									
a)	Bongaigaon	218487 (100)	166482 (76.19)	52005 (23.80)	158430 (100)	138873 (87.66)	19557 (12.34)	66404 (100)	62134 (93.57)	4270 (6.43)
b)	Nalbari	240489 (100)	187614 (78.01)	52875 (21.99)	174337 (100)	152778 (87.63)	21559 (12.37)	50267 (100)	46984 (93.47)	3283 (6.53)
c)	Dhubri	599463 (100)	466138 (77.76)	133325 (22.24)	444278 (100)	398909 (88.66)	50369 (11.34)	177976 (100)	166658 (95.33)	8318 (4.67)
MEGHALAYA										
3	Western Meghalaya (Garo Hills)									
a)	West Garo Hills	232255 (100)	139964 (58.54)	96291 (41.46)	169149 (100)	109847 (64.94)	59302 (35.06)	97947 (100)	58731 (59.96)	39216 (40.04)
b)	East Garo Hills	112765 (100)	62737 (55.64)	50028 (44.36)	73306 (100)	48019 (65.50)	25287 (34.49)	53406 (100)	34663 (64.90)	18743 (35.09)
c)	South Garo Hills	49289 (100)	30009 (60.88)	19280 (39.12)	34993 (100)	23834 (68.11)	11159 (31.89)	21809 (100)	13793 (63.24)	8016 (36.76)
4	Central Meghalaya (Khasi Hills)									
a)	East Khasi Hills	190926 (100)	112845 (59.10)	78081 (40.89)	161743 (100)	99154 (61.30)	62589 (38.69)	68605 (100)	38437 (56.03)	30168 (43.97)
b)	West Khasi Hills	148367 (100)	80928 (54.55)	67439 (45.45)	108910 (100)	62575 (57.46)	46335 (42.54)	69708 (100)	37969 (54.47)	31739 (45.53)
c)	Ri Bhoi	96360 (100)	56384 (58.51)	39976 (41.49)	81511 (100)	49927 (61.25)	31584 (38.75)	49098 (100)	28757 (58.57)	20341 (41.43)

Note: Calculations are based on Census, 2011 data; Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to total

Table 5: Industrial Categories of Marginal Workers (Rural) in Assam & Meghalaya

Sl. No.	Divisions/ District	Marginal Workers			Cultivators			Agricultural Labourers			Household Industry Workers			Other Workers			Non-Workers		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
				s			s						s			s			
ASSAM																			
1 Upper Assam																			
a)	Jorhat	142635 (100)	62188 (43.59)	80447 (56.40)	46247 (100)	20420 (44.15)	25827 (55.85)	31843 (100)	11832 (37.16)	20011 (62.84)	15012 (100)	3629 (24.17)	11383 (75.83)	49533 (100)	26307 (53.11)	23226 (46.89)	461642 (100)	189370 (41.02)	272272 (58.98)
b)	Dibrugarh	156734 (100)	75472 (48.15)	81262 (51.85)	48898 (100)	22844 (46.72)	26054 (53.28)	39047 (100)	17063 (43.69)	21984 (56.30)	6922 (100)	2520 (36.41)	4402 (63.59)	61867 (100)	33045 (53.41)	28822 (46.59)	612109 (100)	254683 (41.61)	357426 (58.39)
c)	Sibsagar	162662 (100)	84969 (52.24)	77683 (47.76)	67700 (100)	36276 (53.58)	31424 (46.42)	34177 (100)	16171 (47.32)	18006 (52.68)	8044 (100)	2571 (31.96)	5473 (68.04)	52731 (100)	29951 (56.79)	22780 (43.20)	596043 (100)	239750 (40.22)	356293 (59.78)
2 Lower Assam																			
a)	Bongaigaon	60057 (100)	27609 (45.97)	32448 (54.03)	16566 (100)	5902 (35.63)	10664 (64.37)	22088 (100)	10533 (47.69)	11555 (52.31)	4443 (100)	1117 (25.14)	3326 (74.86)	16960 (100)	10057 (59.29)	6903 (40.70)	410807 (100)	153304 (37.35)	257203 (62.65)
b)	Nalbari	66152 (100)	34836 (52.66)	31316 (47.34)	6571 (100)	4243 (64.57)	2328 (35.43)	14845 (100)	9124 (61.46)	5721 (38.54)	10275 (100)	2108 (20.52)	8167 (79.48)	34461 (100)	19361 (56.18)	15100 (43.82)	448420 (100)	166063 (37.08)	282357 (62.97)
c)	Dhubri	155185 (100)	72229 (46.54)	82956 (53.46)	25211 (100)	12277 (48.69)	12934 (51.30)	63284 (100)	30482 (48.17)	32802 (51.83)	10915 (100)	3253 (29.80)	7662 (70.19)	55775 (100)	26217 (47.00)	29558 (52.99)	1146094 (100)	427776 (37.32)	718318 (62.68)
MEGHALAYA																			
3 Western Meghalaya (Garo Hills)																			
a)	West Garo Hills	63106 (100)	26117 (41.39)	36989 (58.61)	22314 (100)	9362 (41.96)	12952 (58.04)	19048 (100)	6304 (33.09)	12744 (66.90)	3509 (100)	1161 (33.09)	2348 (66.91)	18235 (100)	9230 (50.95)	8945 (49.05)	336178 (100)	150959 (44.90)	185219 (55.09)
b)	East Garo Hills	39459 (100)	14718 (37.29)	24741 (62.70)	21621 (100)	7632 (35.29)	13989 (64.70)	10284 (100)	3674 (35.73)	6610 (64.27)	1151 (100)	367 (31.89)	784 (68.11)	6403 (100)	3045 (47.56)	3358 (52.44)	160960 (100)	76006 (47.23)	84954 (52.77)
c)	South Garo Hills	14296 (100)	6175 (43.19)	8121 (56.81)	6028 (100)	2413 (40.02)	3615 (59.97)	2694 (100)	876 (32.52)	1818 (67.48)	775 (100)	288 (37.16)	487 (62.84)	4799 (100)	2598 (54.14)	2201 (45.86)	79914 (100)	36461 (45.63)	43453 (54.37)
4 Central Meghalaya (Khasi Hills)																			
a)	East Khasi Hills	29183 (100)	13691 (46.91)	15492 (53.09)	6522 (100)	2492 (38.21)	4030 (61.79)	10264 (100)	5158 (50.25)	5106 (49.75)	491 (100)	229 (46.64)	262 (53.36)	11906 (100)	5812 (48.82)	6094 (51.18)	268515 (100)	115564 (43.04)	152951 (56.96)
b)	West Khasi Hills	39457 (100)	18353 (46.51)	21104 (53.49)	13683 (100)	5753 (42.04)	7930 (57.96)	16051 (100)	7554 (47.06)	8497 (52.94)	1021 (100)	303 (29.68)	718 (70.32)	8702 (100)	4743 (54.50)	3959 (45.49)	191989 (100)	91452 (47.63)	100537 (52.37)
c)	Ri Bhoi	14849 (100)	6457 (43.48)	8392 (56.52)	4778 (100)	1725 (36.10)	3053 (63.89)	5307 (100)	2475 (46.64)	2832 (53.36)	393 (100)	128 (32.57)	265 (67.43)	4371 (100)	2129 (48.71)	2242 (51.29)	137227 (100)	62321 (45.41)	74906 (54.59)

Note: Calculations are based on Census, 2011 data; Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to total population in each category

Table 6: Difference in Industrial Categories of Main Workers and Marginal Workers in Rural Assam (Patrilineal Society) & Meghalaya (Matrilineal Society)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Assam (Patrilineal society)			Meghalaya (Matrilineal Society)			Difference between Assam and Meghalaya	
		Males (%)	Females (%)	t-value	Males (%)	Females (%)	t-value	Males (%)	Females (%)
1	Total Workers	70.36 (59.978)	29.64 (60.001)	9.106***	57.87 (5.485)	42.13 (5.490)	11.639***	3.781***	-3.780***
2	Main Workers	79.81 (81.215)	20.19 (81.215)	11.459***	63.09 (14.553)	36.90 (14.546)	11.892***	4.184***	-4.183***
a)	Cultivators	86.34 (83.556)	13.66 (83.556)	13.771***	59.53 (16.312)	40.47 (16.334)	8.170***	6.571***	-6.570***
b)	Agricultural Labourers	74.08 (138.94)	25.92 (138.934)	7.076***	61.89 (8.659)	38.11 (8.651)	14.001***	2.457***	-2.457***
c)	Household Industry Workers	65.75 (66.349)	34.25 (66.307)	6.699***	54.23 (103.924)	45.77 (103.986)	1.438	2.162**	-2.162**
d)	Other Workers	77.99 (79.443)	22.00 (79.469)	10.880***	72.44 (29.104)	27.56 (29.115)	14.409***	1.306	-1.305
3	Marginal Workers	48.19 (13.039)	51.81 (13.021)	-1.735	43.13 (12.595)	56.87 (12.571)	-6.709***	2.449***	-2.452***
a)	Cultivators	48.89 (94.181)	51.12 (94.179)	-0.396	38.94 (8.363)	61.06 (8.342)	-13.258***	2.408**	-2.4070**
b)	Agricultural Labourers	47.58 (63.358)	52.42 (63.343)	-1.052	40.88 (63.253)	59.12 (63.221)	-3.972***	1.459	-1.459
c)	Household Industry Workers	28 (33.689)	71.99 (33.697)	-13.129***	35.17 (37.501)	64.83 (37.501)	-8.388***	-2.082**	2.081**
d)	Other Workers	54.29 (18.027)	45.693 (18.027)	3.508***	50.78 (8.730)	49.22 (8.745)	0.915	1.665	-1.666
e)	Non-Workers	39.09 (4.351)	60.91 (4.351)	-18.115***	45.64 (2.769)	54.36 (2.767)	-9.076***	-6.011***	6.014***

Note: Calculations are based on Census, 2011 data ; Figures in parenthesis indicates variance;

*** Significant at 0.05 level of significance, ** Significant at 0.10 level of significance

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