

Female Labour Supply in Manipur

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This paper analyses the gloomy nature of female labour forces in Manipur despite having proactive contribution and status in socio-political aspects. It offers an econometric analysis using NSSO: Employment and Unemployment Survey unit level data. Besides estimating economic and demographic effects, it also provides an in-depth investigation on the impact of educational level on the working behaviour of women. Our findings suggest that attaining higher education plays an important role in empowering them to work with dignity. It also focuses on social stigma associated with women working for wages.

I Introduction

Labour supply of women holds a strategic place in labour economics because the nature of their work force participation and working hours are unique. Women's labour market decision, unlike that of males, is influenced by many other non-market factors such as marriage, social norms and fertility (Killingsworth and Heckman 1986). Changes in household's economic conditions may also have a dramatic impact on their participation rate. For example, the participation rates of women in rural India are found to be increasing during widespread anguish in agricultural sector during 2004-2005 (Abraham 2009). Such evidence of smoothening of household income in the time of distress is also reported by Bhalotra and Umana-Aponte (2010).

This paper investigates the labour supply of women in Manipur against the backdrop of their significant socio-political contribution. History has witnessed the defiant Manipuri women's movement against the State popularly known as *Nupi Lan* (Nupi - Woman, Lan - Agitation) in two accounts: first in 1904 against the reintroduction of *Lalup* (forced labour) system by the British government (Sanamani Yambem 1976) and second in 1939 due to the scarcity of rice¹ resulting from unchecked export. The *Ima Keithel*² (Ima - Mother, Keithel - Market) in the heart of capital is also one exemplary site which is run exclusively by women. The persistent record of having lowest infant mortality (IMR) rate in India has much to do with women's capabilities of the state (Kumar, A.K. 1998).³ These are just a

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The author is grateful to UGC-NERO for the financial support provided for Minor Research Project. This paper is an outcome of it.

The author thanks the anonymous reviewer for the valuable comments on the earlier draft of the paper.