



Work Participation of Tribal Women in Tripura: Are they treatedequally as Main Worker?

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Abstract:

This study is an attempt to analyze the status of work force participation of tribal women of the state Tripura with a focus on gender sensitivity of the issue. The main goal of the study is to examine whether tribal female gets equal opportunity as per tribal male as main workers. The study is based on secondary sources of data and the basic aims of the study are to investigate gender based status of workforce participation of tribal women, construction of disparity index to understand the extent of gender disparity in workforce participation of them and to understand the tribal male female variation across different kinds of works in the study area. The study found that, females are more dominant as marginal worker and less dominant as main worker compared to males. Sopher's disparity index reveals that, extent of gender disparity is highest in case of agricultural labour and lowest in case of household industry workers in North Tripura and Dhalai districts respectively of Tripura. The study concludes with suitable policy suggestions based on findings.

Keywords: *Main Worker, Marginal worker, Workforce Participation, Sopher's Disparity Index, Gender Disparity*

Introduction:

In tribal community, women play a vital role to earn livelihood for the family by engaging them in informal sector characterized by employment in low level activities, casual labour, low paid works etc. (Chakrabarty, 2013, 26-40). Generally it is found that, women with less education and experience are engaged as marginal workers compared to the educated tribal women. Two positive impacts emerge due to workforce participation of tribal women. First of all it raises quality of living and exerts positive impact on effective control on family size and growth of population (Kar, 2002, 68-142; Gummadi, 2014, 35-38). In Tripura, women are also entrusted the responsibility of processing and adjusting live stocks and other animals as these are the backbone assets for development of their

communities. (Jaweed & Khan, 2015). Among the various disadvantages faced by tribal women important are low levels of literacy rates, limited employment opportunities and poor access to loans and private sector assistance for self development. (Chandrakar & Chandrakar, 2016, 272-278). Tribal women contribute more to economic development compared to their male counterparts in a more substantial way. (Islam et al, 2014, 305-313).

Recent studies support the increasing work participation rate of tribal women. on account of low level of education of tribal women, their status in work force is particularly low (Naresh, 2014, 35-38). Women of tribal community are mainly engaged in informal activities characterized by low level of organizational working status, low paid employment, casual labour, less bargaining power etc. (Chakrabarty, 2013, 26-40). Marginal workforce participation has been inclining among tribal women in overall India with a good percentage of literate tribal women found engaged as marginal workers (Bango & Kashyap, 2018, 53-70). Majority of tribal women have been found to be engaged in hunting, shifting cultivation, settled agriculture and rural crafts. Percentage of male main workers has been found to be substantially reduced (Chandrakar & Chandrakar, 2016, 272-278). The reasons so far detected are low level of education, gender discrimination in education and negligence of education among tribal girls (Islam et al, 2014, 305-315). Level of education is not a significant variable in affecting workforce participation of women belongs to Tiwa tribe comprising of both married and unmarried women in Assam (Mazumder & Saikia, 2015, 380-386). The women of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram are more able to perform physical works (Dewangan et al, 2008, 90-100). Naga women possess a greater range of responsibilities from domestic works to agricultural works (Shimray, 2004, 1698-1711). Tribal women in national context in India are found to be hard working and contribute significantly in family earning. However, their income generating sources is very limited (Chatterjee & Puja, 2014, 55-60); (Das et al. 2015, 15-55). Increasing workforce participation particularly of tribal women encouraged them to wear modern clothes, accessing good health care and participating in family planning and decision making (Lal, 2016, 407-415). Women of tribal communities are much deprived segment in employment perspective (Singh & Upadhyay, 2017, 27-32). The occupational patterns of tribal women have been shifted from pastoralists to agricultural labourers in recent times (Jaweed & Khan, 2015). Realizing the importance and significance of tribal women's workforce participation in overall betterment, this study has been undertaken in the context of Tripura state of north east India. This paper attempts to investigate the gender based disparity in tribal women's work

participation status in Tripura along with construction of a gender disparity index to investigate the extent of gender disparity in work participation. Moreover, examination of the male female variation across different categories of works is another objective of the paper.

Sources of Data and Methodology:

Data used in this study are purely secondary data published from time to time. The major source of data used in this paper is taken from District Census Handbook of four districts of Tripura- census of India, 2011; Series-17 Part XII-B, Village & Town Wise Primary Census Abstract published by Directorate of Census Operations, Tripura. However, in order to fulfill the proposed objectives of the study in a more technical way, other data sources used are- Tripura at a Glance-2018, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, Agartala. Achievement of Tribal Welfare Department at a Glance-2014, Tribal Welfare Department, Government of India; Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India-2013, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Statistical Division, Government of India; Basic Statistics of North Eastern region, 2015, NEC Secretariat, Shillong.

The methodology used in this paper is basically descriptive statistics composed of tabular as well as graphical presentations. Moreover, in order to address the objectives of the study regarding construction of gender disparity index, Sopher’s disparity index is used. Investigation of the extent of gender disparity in work participation among tribal people in Tripura has been examined across different dimensions through t- test: two sample assuming equal variances. The Sopher’s disparity index was developed by David Sopher(1974, 389-392) and used by Chaubey & Chaubey, (1998, 22-37) and redefined for the present study as given below-

$$Ds = \log \left(\frac{E2}{E1} \right) + \log \left(\frac{e1}{e2} \right) \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where, *Ds* = Sopher’s Disparity Index,

*E*₁= Ratio of work participation in section *S*₁ (here, tribal Female Section)

*E*₂= Ratio of work participation in section *S*₂ (here, tribal male Section)

*e*_{*i*} = (1 – *E*_{*i*}) =Number of tribal people not participated work in section *S*_{*i*}

Results and Findings of the Study

(A) Gender Based Disparity in Tribal Women's Work Participation Rate in Rural Tripura

In this sub section, district level disparity in tribal male-female work participation rate as main and marginal worker in rural area of Tripura is analyzed with the help of tabular and diagrammatic presentations.

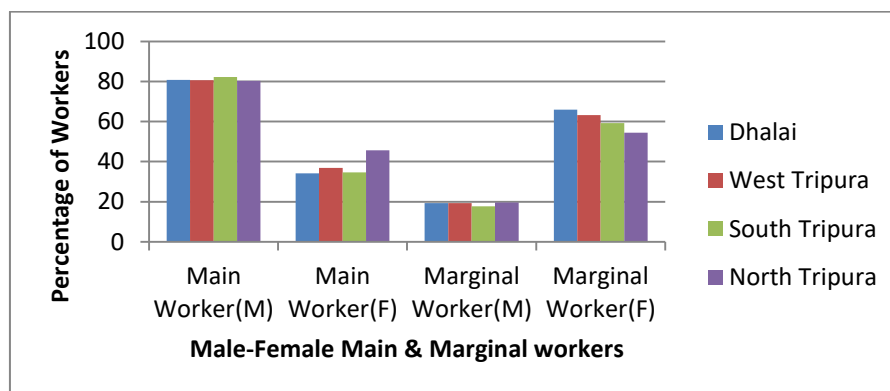
Table: 1 Gender Based Disparity in Tribal Women's Work Participation- Rural Tripura

(Figures in percentage)

Districts	Main Worker(M)	Main Worker(F)	M-F Disparity	Marginal Worker(M)	Marginal Worker(F)	M-F Disparity
Dhalai	80.72	34.1	46.62	19.28	65.9	-46.62
West Tripura	80.67	36.82	43.85	19.33	63.18	-43.85
South Tripura	82.28	34.61	47.67	17.72	59.21	-41.49
North Tripura	80.31	45.59	34.72	19.69	54.41	-34.72

Source: District Census Handbook of four districts of Tripura- census of India, 2011; Series-17 Part XII-B, Village & Town Wise Primary Census Abstract published by Directorate of Census Operations, Tripura ; Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India-2013, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Statistical Division, Government of India ; M- Male, F- Female

As seen from table 1, percentages of male main and marginal workers are highest in South Tripura district and in north Tripura district. Again, percentages of female main and marginal workers are highest in North Tripura district and in Dhalai district of Tripura. It is evident from the table that, male-female disparity is positive in case of main workers and negative in case of marginal workers. This indicates that, in overall context, in rural Tripura, percentage of male main workers dominates female main workers but percentage of female marginal workers dominates male marginal workers. Gender based disparity in main and marginal worker is lowest in North Tripura district though male are dominant as main worker and female are dominant as marginal worker in the same district. This table can also be presented in the figure 1.



Source: Plotted on the basis of table 1

Figure 1: Gender Based Disparity in Tribal Women's Work Participation- Rural Tripura

(B): Gender Based Disparity in Tribal Women's Work Participation rate in Urban Tripura

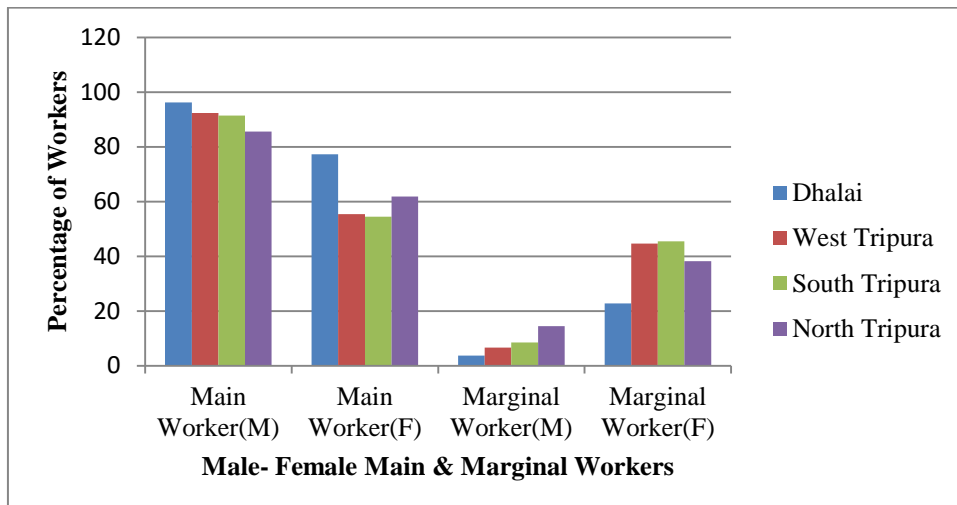
In this sub section, district level disparity in tribal male-female work participation rate as main and marginal worker in urban area of Tripura is analysed with the help of tabular and diagrammatic presentations.

Table: 2: Gender Based Disparity in Tribal Women's Work Participation- Urban Tripura.

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Main Worker(M)</i>	<i>Main Worker(F)</i>	<i>M-F Disparity</i>	<i>Marginal Worker(M)</i>	<i>Marginal Worker(F)</i>	<i>M-F Dispar</i>
Dhalai	96.25	77.22	19.03	3.75	22.78	-19.03
West Tripura	92.32	55.39	36.93	6.68	44.61	-37.93
South Tripur	91.46	54.51	36.95	8.54	45.49	-36.95
North Tripur	85.6	61.83	23.77	14.4	38.17	-23.77

Source: District Census Handbook of four districts of Tripura- census of India, 2011; Series-17 Part XII-B, Village &Town Wise Primary Census Abstract published by Directorate of Census Operations, Tripura ; Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India-2013, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Statistical Division, Government of India ; M- Male, F- Female

As seen from table 2, percentages of male main and marginal workers are highest in Dhalai district and in north Tripura district. Again, percentages of female main and marginal workers are highest in Dhalai district and in South Tripura district of Tripura. It is evident from the table that, male-female disparity is positive in case of main workers and negative incase of marginal workers. This indicates that, in overall context, in urban Tripura, percentage of male main workers occupies dominant positionbut female workers occupy the dominant position as marginal workers. Gender based disparity in main and marginal worker is lowest in Dhalai district though male are dominant as main worker and female are dominant as marginal worker in the same district. This table can also be presented in the figure 2.



Source: Plotted on the basis of table. 2

Figure: 2 Gender Based Disparity in Tribal Women's Work Participation - Urban Tripura

(C) Result of Sopher's Disparity Index

In this subsection, the results obtained from Sopher's disparity index in the context of investigation of extent of gender disparity in work participation rates among tribal people of Tripura are presented in a tabular form in table3.

Table: 3Sopher's Disparity Index for Gender Based Work Disparity of Tribal of Tripura

Work Types	Ds
Total Main workers	0.55
Cultivators	5.24
Agri. Labour	5.56
HH industry Workers	-0.14
Total Marginal workers	-0.31
Cultivators	-0.32
Agri. Labour	-0.27
HH industry Workers	-0.65

Source: Researcher's own calculation based on secondary data

It is seen form table 3 that, highest level of male female disparity exists in work participation of tribal male and female in case of main workers as agricultural labour and lowest in case of household industry workers of the same group. The negative D_s value indicates the dominancy of female tribal workers as marginal workers. It is evident from the result of this index that, tribal female workers are mainly engaged as marginal workers which is a negative sign to towards their earning and empowerment

(D) District Level Variation in Tribal Male-Female Workforce Participation in Tripura

In this subsection, District level variation in tribal male-female work participation in case of various types of works across four districts of Tripura is analysed and presented in tabular form.

Table: 4 Variations in Tribal Male-Female Work Participation across Different Districts

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>t-Value</i>
Dhalai	13.23(16.67)	8.74(8.49)	2.14
West Tripura	12.43(15.46)	9.19(8.94)	2.14
South Tripura	12.51(15.91)	9.07(8.30)	2.41
North Tripura	12.02(16.23)	7.86(7.72)	2.43

Source: Researcher's own calculation based on secondary data;

Figures in the parentheses indicate Standard Deviation

As seen from table 4 in Dhalai district, on an average 13.27 percent tribal male participated works as main and marginal compared to 8.74 percent female participated works in the same categories. There is no significant variation in gender based work participation found in the Dhalai district of Tripura. It is evident from the value of Standard Deviation in the table that, more variation exists in case of tribal men's work participation compared to their female counterparts. In the West Tripura district also the mean work participation rate of tribal men is more than that of tribal female. Although there is no significant variation found between male-female work participation rates in the district but there exists more variation as indicated by standard deviation value in work participation of male compared to their female counterparts. This table also reveals that, 12.51 percent tribal men are participated in work compared to 9.07 percent female participated work as main and marginal workers. As like the cases of other districts, in South Tripura district also no significant variation found between male and female work participation rates in tribal community. However, the extent of variation in work participation rate is far more in case of tribal male and it is low in case of tribal female. It is evident from the table that, work participation rate in North Tripura district as main and marginal workers in case of tribal male is more on an average compared to their female counterparts. The value of standard deviation indicates that, relatively more variation exists in work participation of male compared to female in the district.

Conclusion:

From the study it is found that, tribal male occupies a dominant position as main worker compared to tribal female. In both rural and urban area of Tripura, positive male-female disparity among tribal people has been found

in case of main worker which indicates the dominant position of tribal men as main worker. (refer to table 1 and table 2). From Sopher's index, highest extent of male-female workforce participation disparity as main worker has been found in case of Agricultural labour and lowest extent of the same has been found in case of household industry workers. (refer to table 3).

However, the reverse finding is that, tribal are in dominant position as marginal worker. This finding of the study necessarily rejects the view that, tribal women are involved in more physical works compared to their male counterparts. However, this long standing issue is true partially in the sense that, though tribal female are in advantageous position as their engagement as marginal workers but it is basically a discouraging factor to their earning and empowerment. Major percentages of tribal male and female are involved in casual works like agricultural labourer, cultivators, household industry workers and female are in the most disadvantageous position.

Hence, for betterment of tribal people of Tripura, educational opportunities in terms of opening schools and colleges in remote tribal areas of Tripura must be undertaken by government. As a result, shift of tribal people from casual worker to better jobs and business will be expanded. Moreover, the teaching learning process of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) especially made for ST girls in Tripura must be made qualitative so that girls can approach to higher studies for betterment of their lives. More and more employment opportunities for tribal people must be given by government so that, tribal can leave the traditional activities and join the other occupations in the line of modern era.

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