



## Full Length Research Article

### GENDER DISPARITY IN DEVELOPING RURAL AREAS AN EVALUATIVE STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KUHUBOTO RD BLOCK, DIMAPUR, NAGALAND

<sup>1</sup>Lilika K Zhimomi and <sup>2,\*</sup>Papiya Dutta

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Rural Development, University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Rural Development, University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya

#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article History:

Received 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2017

Received in revised form

04<sup>th</sup> April, 2017

Accepted 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2017

Published online 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2017

##### Key Words:

Human-Centred,  
Fundamental,  
Human Beings,  
Development,  
qualitative and Quantitative.

#### ABSTRACT

To live with dignity at all times is the fundamental right of all human beings. Development is a human-centred process where people are the both the ends and means. Participation of all people in building their society is a prerequisite for development and so the privilege to enjoy the benefits for the common effort should be given to all. Development is both qualitative and quantitative in nature, in fact it is a multidimensional process that entails social, economic, political, material, legal, administrative, psychological, and cultural values on which the full development of human behaviour and self-respect of man in the society depends. Many have defined development based on their own views and understanding. It is viewed as an essential process craved by all. Therefore to understand development one should see it from several angles. Gender equality and development of women are recognised globally as the key elements to achieve progress in all areas as women represent half the human resources and half the potential in all the societies. Efforts to promote equality between men and women can contribute to the overall development of the human society and the nation's progress.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Gender discrimination is a multi-dimensional in nature that has its roots in history and culture. Discriminatory socialisation is practiced in India consciously or unconsciously. Girl who do not get married are looked upon with suspicions. They are restricted to move alone, sometimes they are restricted in the pattern of dressing also, they do not have freedom in selecting their partner, and they are not involved in any decision-making. Though the law has endured property rights to both son and daughter it is not practiced in reality and the daughters do not fight for it legally for fear of spoiling the relationship with the brother and parents. In Indian society, a girl child is considered as an economic liability and as a 'paraya dhan' (other's property as she goes to other house after marriage). Therefore, the parents are reluctant to spend on her education as she has to be married off with a dowry. The participation of women in economy is undermined as it is rendered invisible due to the failure of quantifying their work inputs, especially in the agriculture and unorganised sector. There are basically two kinds of work: work for which payment is received and work for which no payment is made.

Women are known to work longer hours than men and to participate in the workforce to a far greater extent than is measured by the data gathered in the census. But a lot of work they do is unrecognised, leave alone rewarded with equal remuneration. Traditionally men spend most of their time on tasks for which payment is received, while women are indulged in works which do not include in economic activity and in the calculations of National Income in any country but are considered as necessary for survival. Housewives are not treated as workers because they don't directly contribute economically to the family. They work day and night behind the four walls and take care of those who either economically contribute to women in present situation or those who are supposed to do this in future. But such contributions are invisible and therefore unacknowledged. The understanding of the historical perspective of women is crucial if one needs to understand the issues involved in the development of women. According to the historians, the early Vedic period women had the same educational and social opportunities as men. Women were treated as an equal to men; they enjoyed a position of high status and respect. The status of women was lowered in the 'Pauranic' period, child marriage came to be practised, widow remarriage was prohibited, education was denied to women, sati and 'purdah' system came to be practiced, and property rights were denied to them and so on.

*\*Corresponding author: Papiya Dutta,*

Assistant Professor, Department of Rural Development, University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya.

Women in Buddhist period had an honourable place in social field but their political and economic status remained unchanged. From the first invasion of India by the Muslims till the middle of the eighteenth century, when the established their rule in the country, women continued to hold low status in the society. During the British Period while the political movement threw off splinter groups and provoked other parties the social movement gave rise to Women's movement. Out of sustained attempts grew the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) which stirred clear off politics and concentrated mainly on educational and social work. Mahatma Gandhi's political work brought into public life. The Second World War with its introduction of rationing and increased secretarial work opened up employment opportunity to the women of middle class and their responses was quite enough. It took the British authorities more than thirty years to abolish Sati.

Lord William Bentinck passed regulation XVII on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1829 declaring the practice of Sati for burning the widows of Hindus illegal and punishable by criminal codes. In 1795, female infititude was declared by Bengal Regulation XXI to be murdered and the Regulation was extended to the new provinces in 1804. In respect to child marriage, the fast step was the Act of 1860 which dealt with the age of consent of marriage ceremony. In 1929, the Child Marriage Restraint Act known as Sharda Bill was passed were a penalty to the parties of a marriage where the girl was below 14 or the boy was below 18 years of age. The agitation for widow's remarriage which Ram Mohan Roy started culminated later in a legislation brought by Ishwar Chandra Vidhyasagar.

Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act was passed in 1856, where widow has the right to remarry if she wishes. Women in India continue to suffer social and physical cruelties despite successive decades of activism, number of movements, legislations, policies and programmes and the developmental efforts at improving the status of women. Though many women have successfully established their social status still many are yet to be uncovered. Economic development is expected to show a positive impact on women's control over resources and their participation in decision-making. The changing socio-cultural values are gradually cutting the values of the traditional value system. The introductions of technology, scientific innovations and industrialisation have brought sweeping changes into the way of life and the traditional social order of India. These social changes have not left the women untouched and the position of women in the Indian society is clearly in the process of transformation and will have an important impact on the future development.

## STATUS OF GENDER EQUITY IN INDIA AND NAGALAND

The UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Right to Development in 1986. The Declaration defines development as a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the improvement of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and the distribution of benefits from development fairly to everyone. The World Bank looks at development as a process that ends with freedom from poverty and from other socio-economic deprivations. L.P. Vidhyarthi (1981) says, "Development means growth plus change" that involves both material and human factors.

**Table 1. Top Ten Indian States with Highest Sex Ratio**

RANK	STATE	Sex ratio 2011	Sex ratio 2001
1	Kerala	1084	1058
2	Puducherry	1038	1001
3	Tamil Nadu	995	987
4	Andhra Pradesh	992	978
5	Chhattisgarh	991	989
6	Manipur	987	974
7	Meghalaya	986	972
8	Odisha	978	972
9	Mizoram	975	975
10	Himachal Pradesh	974	968
19	Nagaland	931	900
-	North -East region	050	929
-	All India	943	933

Source: census of India 2011 & 2001

**Table 2. Child sex ratio of India**

Rank	States/UT	2011	2001
1	Mizoram	971	964
35	Haryana	819	830
13	Nagaland	964	944(10 <sup>TH</sup> )
-	North-East	944	964
-	All India	914	927

Source: census of India 2011 & 2001

**Table 3. Child sex ratio of Nagaland**

District	Child sex ratio 2001
Mon	975
Tuensang	978
Mokokchung	1004
Zunheboto	949
Wokha	999
Dimapur	981(3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Kohima	979
Phek	934
All Nagaland	944

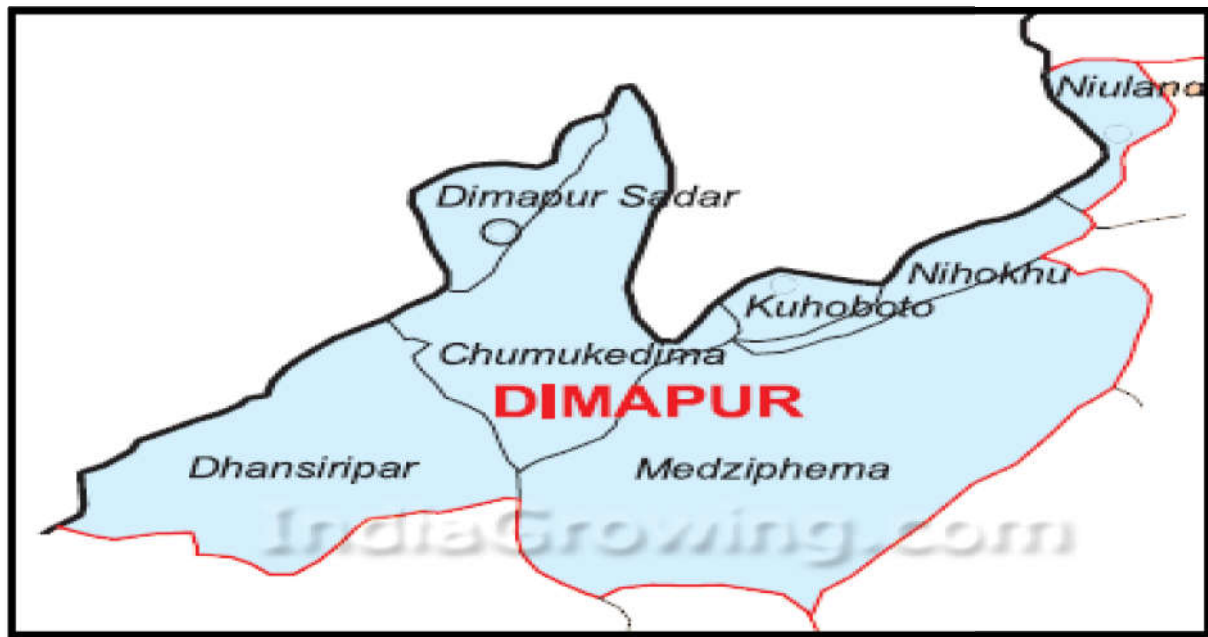
Source: census of India 2011 & 2001

**Table 4. Literacy Rate of India**

Particulars	2011	2001
Male	82.14%	75.26
Female	65.46%	53.67
All India	74.04%	64.84

Census of India 2011 & 2001

Anjali Kurane (2005) says, "development means increase in material wealth through productivity, increase in social well-being through education, health, improvement in social content of the human life, feelings, music, art, safety, freedom, opportunity sense of participation in local, regional and national affairs, depending on the individual interest and preferences". Lalitha K. Sami and Shahida (2001), in their study quoted Amartya Sen, who observes, "seven types of inequalities the women often suffer from such as mortality inequality, natality inequality, basic facility inequality, special opportunity inequality, professional inequality, ownership inequality and household inequality". According to R.P. Misra (1985), development means increase in human and social welfare through increase in productivity, education, health, freedom, safety, opportunity, participation in national, regional and local affairs, rich family life, and community feeling art, music and so on. For instance, it would be a piece of land and a pair of bulls to till the land for a poor landless agricultural labourer, a piece of bread for a hungry man, employment for unemployed youth, and two cars for a person having one car.



Source: www.indiagrowing.com

Fig 1. Map of Dimapur

Table 5. Unit of the study

Name of the village	Total population	Total Households	Households surveyed	Respondents
Khuboto	3826	1000	5	10
Suhoi	716	123	5	10
Ghokito	329	123	5	10
Pukhato	650	127	5	10
Nizhevi	500	100	5	10
Lotovi	800	325	5	10
Khughovi	600	116	5	10
Khehokhu	750	170	5	10
Kughato	240	80	5	9
Hoito	530	125	5	9
TOTAL	8985	2289	50	98

Source: Data compiled from field survey 2015.

Meera Chatterjee (1989) points out that while women are in a commanding position over the household resources that determined individual nutrition, they are themselves quite malnourished, often more so than other family members. In many Indian societies, the labour of women is highly exploited in the kitchen room but no important is given to their diet. Shiv Kumar Saini (1980: 13-14) reports: "Educational backwardness is a major reason for the women lagging behind. Of the world's one billion illiterate adults, two-thirds are women. Two-thirds of the 150 million children who are not in school are girls worldwide."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "Freedom depends on the economic conditions even more than political. If a women are not economically free and self-earning, she will have to depend on her husband or someone else and dependent are never free." The Fourth World Conference on women, Beijing (1995) clarifies that women's development cannot carry in isolation. Women are required to be treated as equal partners in development practices and planning. Mira Seth (2001) points out that women's economic empowerment is absolutely essential for raising their status in society as women's employment leads to better education, health and skill development of the family and certainly better opportunities for the girl child. And that would, directly or indirectly, link to the development of a country.

Therefore, the present study also inquires the economic issues involved in women's development.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Nagaland is one of the "seven sisters" of the Northeast India. It borders the state of Assam to the west, Arunachal Pradesh and part of the Assam to the north, Burma to the east and Manipur to the south. It offers rich incomparable tradition and cultural heritage. The state capital is Kohima, and the largest city is Dimapur. Located between 93°30'E 95°15'E longitudes and 24°30'N and 27°0'N latitude. It has an area of 16.579 square kilometres with a population of 1,980,602 as the per 2011 census of India, making it one of the smallest states of India. The state is inhabited by 16 major tribes-Sumi, Ao, Angami, chang,Khiamniungam, konyak, Bodo-Kachari, lotha, chakhesang, Phom, Rengma, Sangtam, Yimchunger, Thadou, Zeliang, and Pochury. Each tribe is unique in character with its own distinct customs, language and dress. English is the official language as well as the medium of education in Nagaland. Nagamese, a Creole form of Indo-Aryan Assamese is the main local lingua franca of the people of Nagaland. Nagaland became the 16<sup>th</sup> state of India on 1 December 1963. Agriculture is the most important economic activity .Other significant economic activity includes forestry, tourism, insurance, real estate and miscellaneous cottage industry. The people living in Nagaland are called Nagas.

According to the anthropological classification, the Nagas belong to Mongoloid stock and Tibetan - Burman linguistic group. The districts of Nagaland are Dimapur(combination of every tribes), Kohima(homeland of Angami tribes), Mokukchung(homeland of Ao tribes), Wokha(homeland of konyak tribes), Zunheboto(homeland of Sumi tribes), Tuensang(homeland of chang and yimchunger tribes), Phek(homeland of Chakhesang tribes), Longleng (homeland of Phom tribes), Mon (homeland of Konyak tribes), Kiphre (homeland of Sangtam tribes), and Peren (homeland of Zeliang tribes). Dimapur is a district of Nagaland with its headquarters at chumukedima. According to the 2011 census Dimapur is the most populous district of Nagaland with a population of 379,769 which has emerged as the main commercial centre of the state. Dimapur has a sex ratio of 916 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 85.44%. The district has a heterogeneous population with the majority comprising Naga tribes from all over Nagaland. Dimapur has 8 blocks i.e., Nuiland, Kuhuboto, Medziphema, Dhansiripar, Chumukedima, Dimapur sardar, Aghunaqha and Nihokhu Kuhuboto R.D block is located 4 km away from its district head quarter. Kuhuboto R.D Block constitutes 24 villages out of which 10 villages were surveyed. Sumis are the predominant tribe inhabiting the area. Majority of the population belong to Christian community. The 10 villages surveyed under Kuhuboto block has the similar socio-economical, political and religious phenomenon, located within a range of 5 to 8km surrounding Kuhuboto town. Agriculture is the predominant occupation of the people of the region. The size of the present study is 98, out of which 49 were male and 49 were female. In the present study simple random method was used. An average of 10 respondents was interviewed from each village. The investigator developed and used structured schedule as the main tool for collecting information for the study.

- **Primary data:** The primary data were collected through personal interview with the respondents by the investigator using the help of a structured schedule.
- **Secondary data:** The secondary data were collected from books, internet, published articles, and other published information.

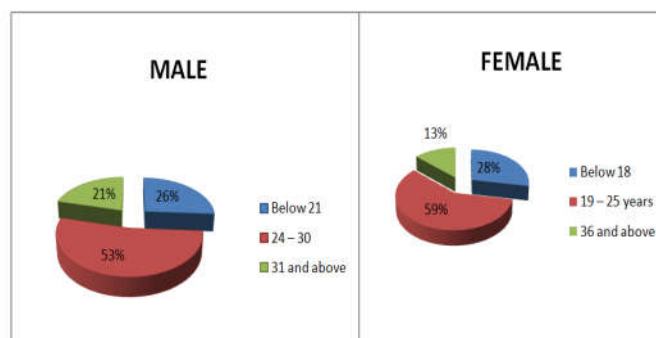
In the backdrop of the literature, the present paper focused to study the following objectives:

- To study the societal perspective towards gender equity.
- To find out which gender is contributing more to the development.

Gender			Age(in years)			Marital status	
Male	Female	Total	Below 20	21 – 40	41 and above	Yes	No
49	49	98	3	57	38	49	49
50%	50%	100%	3%	58%	39%	100%	100%

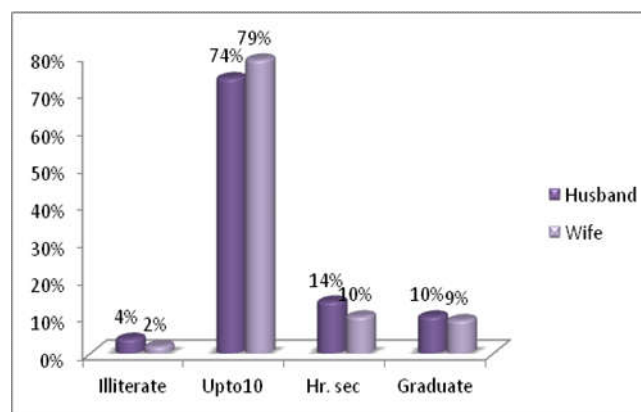
**General information of the respondents**

The above table shows the gender, age and marital status of the respondents. Out of the total respondents 50% were male and female respondent constitute 50% as well. While majority of the respondent were from the age group 21 – 40 years. Further, the respondents interviewed were all married. The above figures show that the trend of age of marriage is high between the age group 24 – 30 among the male and 19 – 25 among female respondents. While 21% male and 13% female respondents got married after attaining maturity. Further, it was found that 26% male and 28% female respondents got married below the legal age of marriage as per the Indian law.



**Fig 2. Age at marriage of the respondent**

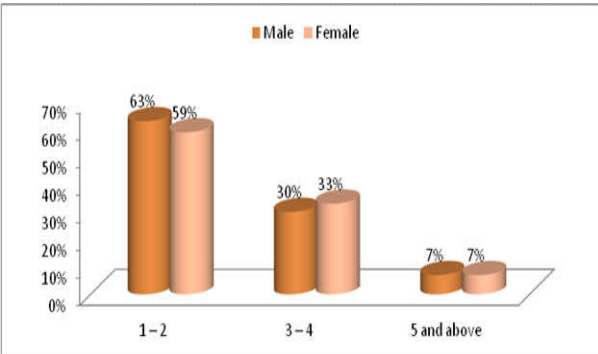
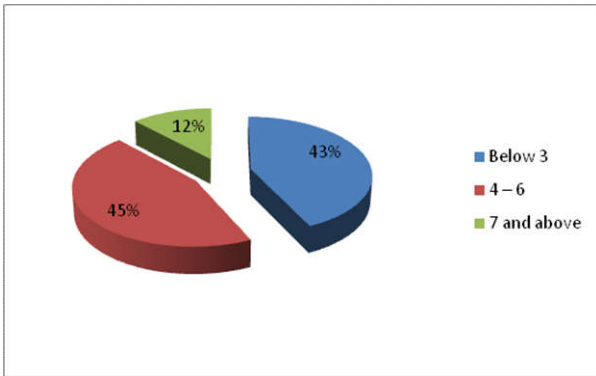
When asked the reason behind the early marriage 62% male and 69% female responded that since they dropped out of school at an early age the family insisted them to get married while 38 % male and 31% female married on their own terms.



**Fig 3. Education level of the respondent**

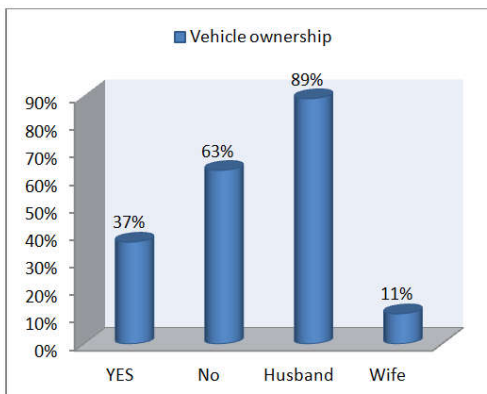
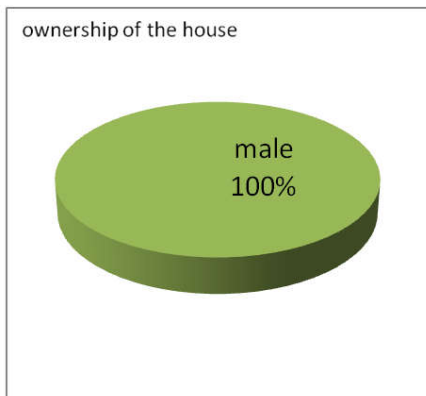
The field graph shows that both male and female respondents constitute 2% illiterate, while majority of both the respondents below or up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard. The table also shows that the trend in the level of education of female respondents is quite lower than the male respondents when compared. The average number of children among the respondents’ family was found to be 4 – 6, here we can see an inverse relationship between the number of male and female children, and this is due to the fact that people tend to want what they don’t have. When they get consecutive male child they keep on reproducing till they get female child and vice-versa. The figures indicate the possession of house and vehicle as an asset of the household. In all the households the male folk owned the house.

Out of the total household surveyed a majority of 63% do not possess a vehicle, while out of 37% who possesses a vehicle, 89% is owned by the husband and only a few of 11% is owned by the wife. Majority of the male respondent is concentrated in a primary sector (agriculture and allied activities) while only few female indulge in this sectors i.e., 41% and 2% respectively, while male constitute 21% and female constitute 10% in the secondary sector that include business, carpenter, grocery shops, etc., followed by 30% male and 25% female on service sector. Further a majority of female respondent i.e., 63% are unemployed or in other words housewives and a few of male respondent i.e., 4% falls under this category.



Source: field survey 2015

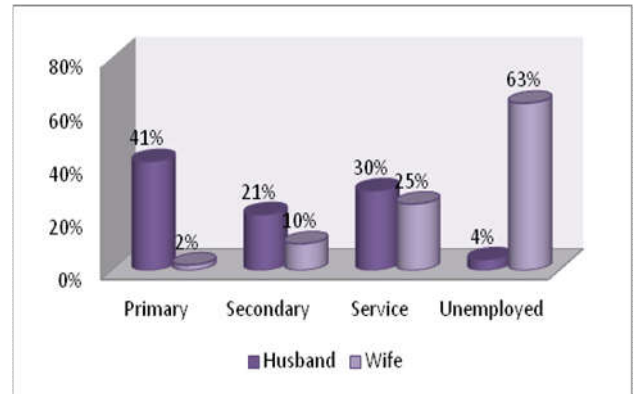
Fig 4. Number of children in the respondents' family



Source: field survey 2015.

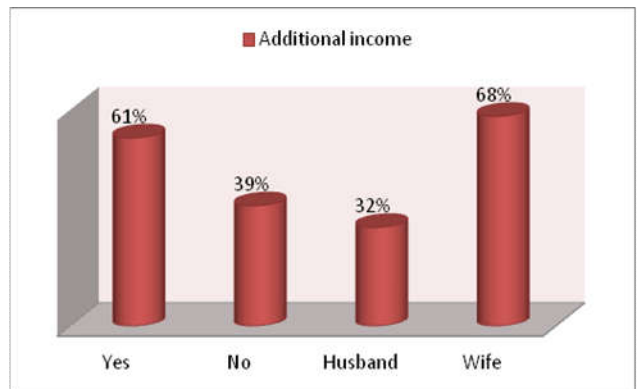
Fig 5. Ownership of assets (house and vehicle)

Apart from the main source of income, 61% household have additional or alternate source of income, where womenfolk constitute the majority with 68% contributing to the household income through additional sources such as weaving, gardening, livestock rearing like piggery, poultry, vegetation, etc. while only 32% men folk indulge in additional source.



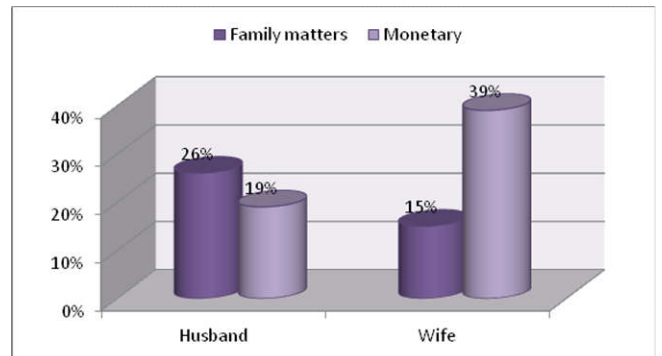
Source: field survey 2015

Fig 6. Educational level of the respondents



Source: field survey 2015

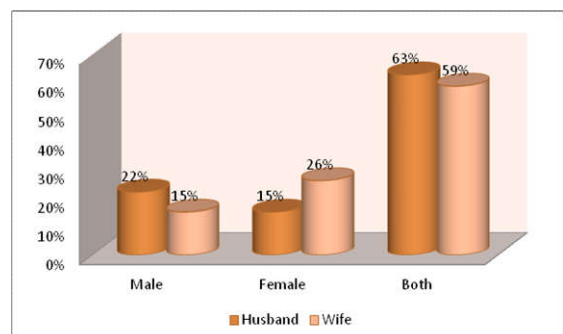
Figure 6. Additional income of the family



Source: field survey 2015

Figure 7. Decision making

When it comes to decision making regarding family matters as well as monetary management, it was found that in majority of the household, both the husband and wife has equal say i.e., 59% and 42% respectively, while in 26% households the decision is taken by the husband and in 15% households the decision is taken by the wife.

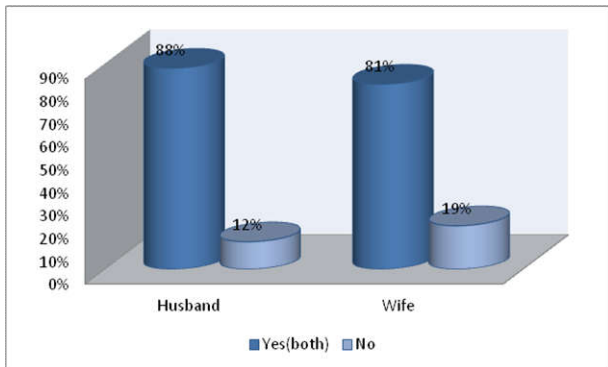


Source: field survey 2015.

Figure 8. Child preference

In regard to monetary management in majority of the household it is the wife who manages the money in regards to household needs as well as children's needs.

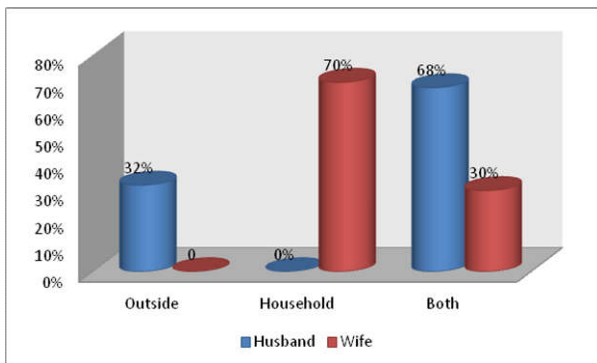
- The majority of both the husband and wife of the surveyed household revealed that they would be contented with either gender. While 22% male favours male child followed by female child by 15%. Further 26% of female respondent revealed the desire for female children followed by male child by 15%.



Source: field survey 2015.

Figure 9. Marriage liberty

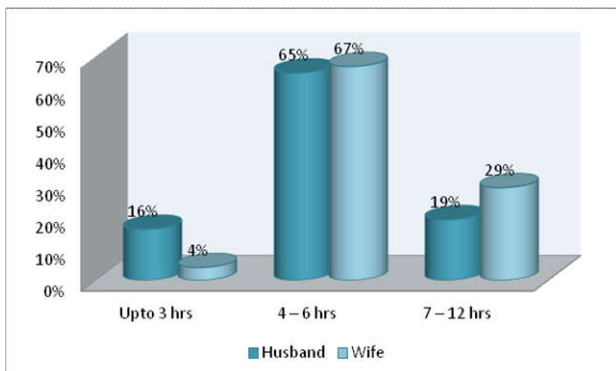
- Regarding the selection of mate for marriage, 88% men and 81% women respondent revealed that their children irrespective of the gender will have the freedom to choose their mate, while 12% men and 19% women respondent revealed that they would select mates for their children.



Source: field survey 2015.

Figure 10. Nature of work of the respondents

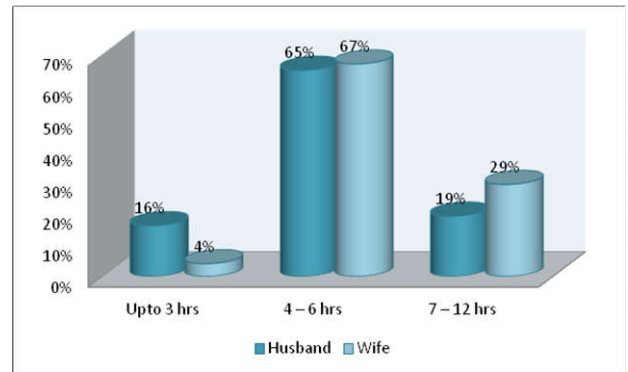
- In 68% households both men and women work outside the house while no men respondent were found to indulge only in household works.



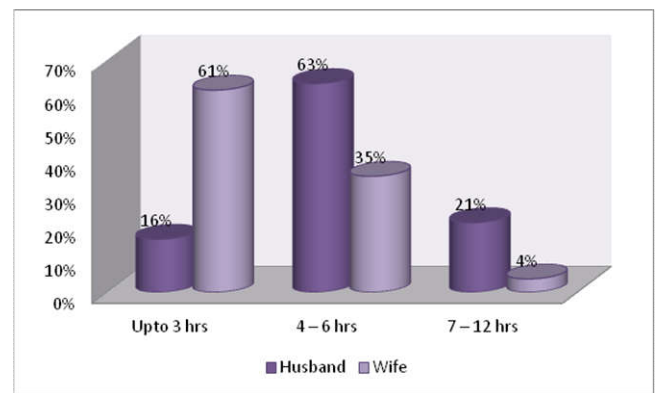
Source: field survey 2015

Figure 11: Working hours of the respondents

Among the women respondent 30% were found indulging in both household and outside works, it is evident from the table that women even if they work outside they have to return to their house where unfinished household chores await her.



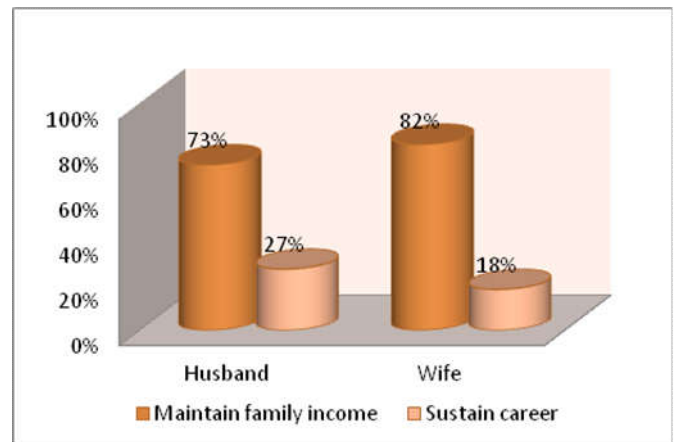
Source: field survey 2015.



Source: field survey 2015.

Figure 12. Rest hours

- From the above data it is seen that the daily working hours of wife is more than that of husband, and the irony is that the duration of rest is less than that of men. This is due to the fact that the only few husband after coming back from their work help out their wife in household chores, while women even if they work outside they come back and indulge in the unfinished household chores that awaits them.

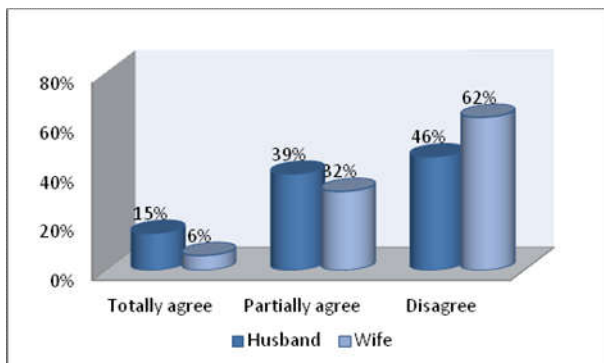


Source: field survey 2015.

Figure 13. Reason for extra hours of work

- While trying to understand the sense of responsibilities for family the respondents were asked, if ever they fail to get back home in time i.e., later than the usual time then, what would be the reason? Their response shows that

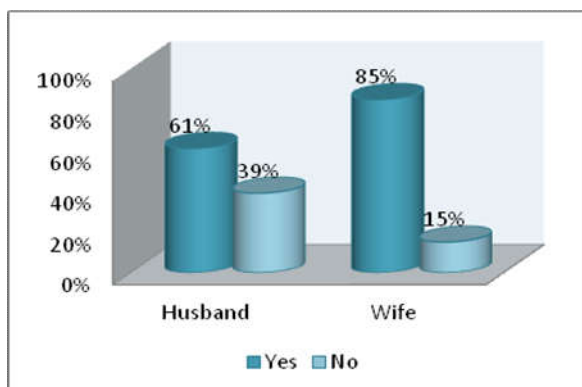
both the respondents give more importance to the need of the family than their work. A slight variation is seen here where comparatively female gives more priority to the family needs than the male. While some were of the view that since extra hours will give them extra credit and so they work late.



Source: field survey 2015.

Figure 14. Women's role as a house maker only

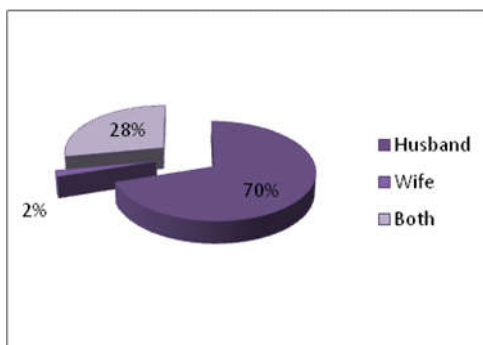
- Majority of both men and women said that women should indulge in both household work as well as work out of the house which will enable them to have a broad mind set and be well versed of the society. While there are still some deep rooted traditionally accumulated respondents who says that woman's responsibilities lies only within the family.



Source: field survey 2015.

Figure 15. Equal pay for equal work:

- The table shows the respondents opinion on the system of wage payment for male and female workers. 61% men and 85% women respondent says that men and women

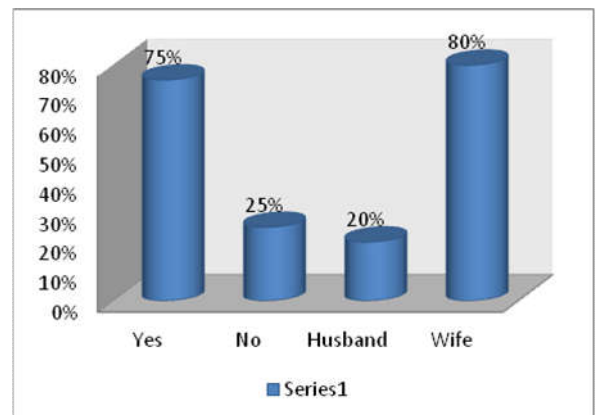


Source: field survey 2015.

Figure 16: Participating in societal meetings and gatherings

should get equal payment for equal work, while 39% men and a few of 15% women responded that men should be paid more than women even if the work is same because men are physically stronger than women, which will allow them to complete the task half the time women takes to complete the same.

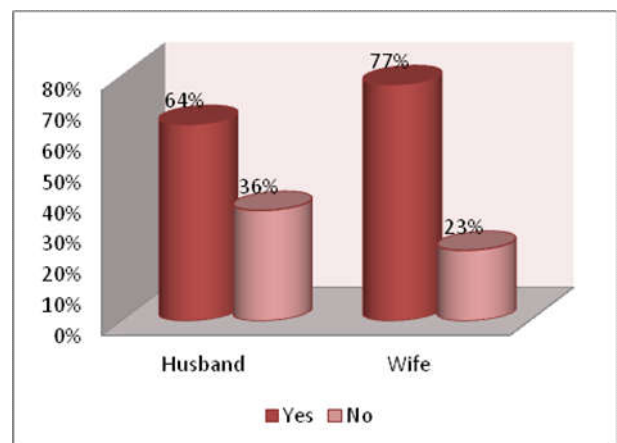
- During a societal meetings or gathering in a majority of household i.e., 70% the participation of men in society is higher than that of women, the above data depicts that. While in 28% household both men and women have equal participation and in only 2% household women alone take part in the societal meetings.



Source: field survey 2015.

Figure 17. Respondents' involvement in SHG

- The above figure depicts the involvement of the respondent in SHG, where 70% households were found to be involved in SHG, women constituting the majority of 80% while only 20% male respondent were found involved in SHG.



Source: field survey 2015

Figure 18: "Men and women are equal"

- The opinion of the respondents on the phrase "Men and women are equal" among the respondents is shown in the above figure, where a majority of both men and women agrees to the phrase while 36% men and 26% women do not agree with the phrase. They have the opinion that men and women may possess an equal intellectual ability but when it comes to physical strength men are stronger and must hold higher position than that of women.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

The survey was undertaken with a view to understand the societal perspective towards gender equity and development for which certain parameters were identified. The study makes a comparative study based on the views and opinions of men and women of each household taking into consideration such factors as educational level, age of marriage, employment status, decision making, work trend and the like. Not much variations were found in the age at marriage as majority of both male and female respondents got married at a desirable age (i.e., after the attainment of legal age of marriage). While the educational level and employment status of male respondents were found comparatively better. The educational level and the age of marriage of the respondents were found to have a direct impact on the employment status of the respondents. Sooner they drop out of the school, earlier they get married hence, lower the employment status. Human needs are unlimited, people instead of being contented with what they have, tend to want what they lack. Similarly, if a couple gets a female child they desire to have a male child and so they keep on reproducing unless they get a male child and vice-versa. Such is the rational attitude of a human, at least in rural areas where illiterate masses are majority.

In regard to the selection of mate for marriage, the children indifferent of the gender have the freedom to choose their mate for marriage. The decision making system among the surveyed households were found desirable since both men and women have an equal say regarding family matters. Further based on the data majority of the respondents supports gender equity but the interpretation of their response depicts something different. They do not discriminate their children in matters of educational attainment and affection but when it comes to the inheritance of property the priority goes to the male child, some household agrees to the equal distribution while in some households the female child would get a share in the property only if something is left out after distributing among the male children. Moreover since a girl child would leave the family eventually instead of a share in property they would rather give proper education that would enable her to be self-reliant. A high variation was found in the working trend of the respondents, while men gets adequate rest, the working hours of womenfolk do not correspond to that of rest. In case of housewives, after working tirelessly for the entire day they are expected to serve the husband without a word. While in the case of working women, they are not spared either, after the entire day of work outside they have to return to the unfinished household chores that awaits them.

If working outside of the house, attending the community gathering, participating in the social activities or contributing to the National Income is the only way of contributing to the society, then according to the field survey men contribute more to the society as they satisfy the above conditions. But if the smallest of the work done by every individual is taken into account irrespective of acquiring a return in a monetary value or as such, men folk would fall far behind their female counterpart. The efforts of the women remain unnoticed and uncounted. Their works do not get included in the National Income, that does not mean they do not contribute to it, in fact, if womenfolk do not take the responsibility of nurturing and preparing their male counterparts, the men folk would have no choice but to get busy with the household chores for acquiring their basic needs themselves, then who would work and contribute to the society?

Taking charge of another human being is not an easy task; it needs constant effort and a strong dedication to make a person out of somebody. The most notable thing a person can do is uplifting and raising another towards betterment, that's exactly what an unemployed - non-earning - housewife does. In the study area most of the women were found indulging in some income earning activities such as flower and vegetation gardening, poultry, piggery, weaving for self-consumption as well as, as an additional source of income. In every survey unit, an SHG, which is a key instrument for empowering women, was found to be a common activity among women folk. In spite of their heavy hours of continuous work load they manage to find ways to engage in group activities. While only few men folk were found engaged in SHGs. Many people condemn societal gender discrimination without realising their unconscious hand in it.

## RECOMMENDATION

- Education is an effective tool that can change the mind-set of the people. Incorporating the gender related topics in the syllabus of educational system at a high school level would be an efficient way of dissemination the message on the importance of gender equity.
- Society in general and even at times women themselves undervalue and often ignore the role women plays in maintaining and consolidating the rural community. Therefore people need to be constantly made aware of the importance of women's involvement in uplifting the society.
- A full recognition of women's role in household as well as rural development would contribute to rural prosperity which would act as a facilitator for the women. Women's work of raising children and running a household should be fully recognised as a merit and qualification for other jobs.
- Ensuring a better sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between men and women would enable both to have a proper understanding of the importance of each other's responsibilities.
- Promotion and development of personal skills through training courses on leadership, public-speaking, decision making and self ascertain needs to be promoted in rural areas.
- Improve rural women's access to information through social media or by conducting awareness seminars.
- Promote training courses for rural women in entrepreneurship and other income generating activities as well as promote an initiative taken up by the women that would motivate them to work better and encourage other to follow.

## Concluding Remarks

The present research is an effort to study and understand the societal perspective towards gender equity taking into account certain relevant parameters based on which the conclusion has been framed. Unlike most of the rural areas in India, the status of the women in these surveyed villages was found quite desirable. Earlier the decision making power was exercised only by the oldest male member of the family, but with the change in time the role of women goes much beyond the kitchen chores, women were found to have an equal say in decision making. In order to find out which gender contributes more to the developmental process certain parameters such as work culture, societal participation and the opinion of the



respondents on various gender related issues were taken into account. It is difficult to state which gender contributes more because though the contribution of men can be quantified it is not possible to quantify the works of women (housewives). Men are mostly engaged in economical activities while women are engaged in nurturing the members that contribute to the economy. Nevertheless, if only economic activities are taken into consideration then it can be said that men contributes more but if even the slightest un-countable factors are taken into account then definitely it would be women that contributes more to the society. The educational status of the respondents was quite low and therefore their occupational structure was found concentrated more in primary sector. Education is the process that liberates mind from all forms of darkness and ignorance, which has been identified as the most important instrument for improving women's position in society and all over the world. It develops the personality of the individuals, makes them eligible to fulfil certain political, economic and cultural functions and thereby improves their socio-economic status.

Therefore education is an important means to empower women in decision-making in society and to achieve the goals of equality and development. In order to be independent of other forces, one needs to be economically sound. Economic empowerment is the foremost and basic component in the overall development of women. Economic empowerment and social awareness are the two important avenues for the social development of women. An observation of the survey reveals that the status of women who contribute to the income of the family is comparatively better than those who don't. Women's economic empowerment is absolutely essential for raising their status in the society.

Further, the survey validates the hypothesis that was framed in the beginning of the research design, gender inequality definitely has an adverse impact on the development because no society can achieve the ultimate goal of development without taking into consideration the gender factor as women constitute half of the country's population i.e., half of the country's human resources. Swami Vivekananda once said: ". . . a nation would not march forward if women are left behind." The paper portrays the status of the women of the studied area as favourable. Hopefully, the paper would shed some light and enlighten the readers towards the role and the importance of both genders in the process of achieving development.

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