

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS OF EMA MARKETS MANIPUR, INDIA

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra11197>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra11197

ABSTRACT

The paper discussed the socioeconomic status of the women entrepreneurs of Ema keithel of Manipur with the use of the modified Kappuswamy socioeconomic scale 2019. The socioeconomic condition is determined by three important indicators: the income of the head of the family; the occupation of the head of the family; and lastly, the educational qualification of the head of the family. In the present study, 600 women entrepreneurs from Ema keithel were considered for study. A random sampling of the respondents was used for the survey. Based on the reference of Kappuswamy SES Feb (CPI 328) 2021, the analysis was done. It shows that women entrepreneurs are from single-headed households, and many of them live below the poverty line. The data shows that illiterate and unskilled households with unemployment problems in the state forced these women to struggle for a living in the market as street vendors.

KEYWORDS: Women Entrepreneurs, Socioeconomic Scale, Ema market, Manipur, India.

INTRODUCTION

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a combined economic and social aggregate measure of an individual's work experience and family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When comparing household income to an individual, along with their own characteristics, household income, education, and employment are also taken into account. Socioeconomics plays a significant role in determining people's livelihoods because it has an impact on their level of education, skill set, and financial situation. Manipur is a beautiful place surrounded by natural hills and one of the northeastern states of India.

A market in Manipur, in northeastern India, is named Ema Keithel after Ema, the mother who manages and supervises all of *Keithel*. Only women manage the sole indigenous market in the entirety of Asia. Approximately 22,327 km² make up the state's size representing 0.7% of India's total land area. The state has 28.56 lakh people, giving it a population density of 128 people per km², according to the final census results from 2011.

The population has increased by 5.62 million in the ten years from 2001 to 2011. Of the 28.56 lakhs of the population, 3.41% are enlisted caste communities and 40.88% belong to enlisted tribes. According to the 2011 census, Manipur had a population density of 128 people per km², up from 103 people per km² in the 2001 census. The state's overall sex ratio has increased from 974 women to every 1000 men in 2001 to 985 women to every 1000 men in 2011. While it increased for women from 60.50% in 2001 to 70.26% in 2011, it increased from 80.30% for men from 2001 to 83.58%. According to the 2011–12 NSS reports, there are 7.45 lakh (38.8%) and 2.78 lakh (32.59%) people living below the poverty line in rural and urban Manipur, respectively.

The study was analyzed using the results of the research data collected on education, occupation, and income with reference to the Kappuswamy's Classification of Socioeconomic Status scale. Kappuswamy's SES scale has been used as a crucial parameter to measure the SES of families in both rural and urban areas. The five socio-economic classes are linked on the basis of score values of the SES, viz., upper, upper middle, lower middle, upper lower, and lower.

The score of the Kappuswamy scale modified (Feb2019) with CPI at 328 is given in table 1.

TABLE 1

Sr. No.	Education of the Head		Score
1	Profession or Honours		7
2	Graduate		6
3	Intermediate or diploma		5
4	High school certificate		4
5	Middle school certificate		3
6	Primary school certificate		2
7	Illiterate		1
Sr. No.	Occupation of the Head		Score
1	Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers		10
2	Professionals		9
3	Technicians and Associate Professionals		8
4	Clerks		7
5	Skilled Workers and Shop & Market Sales Workers		6
6	Skilled Agricultural & Fishery Workers		5
7	Craft & Related Trade Workers		4
8	Plant & Machine Operators and Assemblers		3
9	Elementary Occupation		2
10	Unemployed		1
Sr. No.	Monthly Family Income in Rs. (1976)	Updated Monthly Family Income in Rs. (2019)	Score
1	≥ 2000	≥ 50,587	12
2	1000–1999	24,294–49,586	10
3	750–999	18,970 –24,293	6
4	500–749	12,647–18,969	4
5	300–499	7588–12,646	3
6	101–299	2555–7587	2
7	≤ 100	≤ 2554	1
Sr. No.	Score	Socioeconomic Class	
1	26–29	Upper (I)	
2	16–25	Upper Middle (II)	
3	11–15	Lowe Middle (III)	
4	5–10	Upper Lower (IV)	
5	< 5	Lower (V)	

Education

Education plays an important role in determining income. as average income increases with every level of education. So, higher levels of education are associated with better economic and psychological outcomes (i.e., more income, more control, and greater social support and connectivity). Education plays an important role

in job qualifications and in specific qualities that distinguish people with higher SES from those with lower SES.

Occupation

Occupational prestige as a component of socio-economic development includes both income and educational attainment. Job-status reflects the level of education required to attain job and income levels, which vary by job and within job ranks, and also shows achievement in the skills required for the job. Job-status measures social standing by describing job characteristics, decision-making ability and control, and the psychological demands of the job.

Income

One of the key factors of income is related to wages, salaries, profits, rents, remittances, and all other income received. Income is also in the form of unemployment or employee compensation, Social Security, pensions, public interest, or family financial support. Income is generally used to measure socioeconomic status because it is relatively easy to figure out for most individuals.

Several studies have shown that the Ema keithel is a symbol of women's economic empowerment and a place of social status. While studies by Sophia (2020) suggested a lack of women in the labor force, which is comparatively lower than men, the reason being that women's household roles are still unnoticed and not counted in the official data. The work of Premmi (2022) shows women in Ema keithel are finding challenges in balancing work and family life that come with many compromises and sacrifices. Yet similar findings by Shijagurumayum et al. (2017) suggest that males had significantly higher levels of empowerment across all four of the empowerment indicators, including access to and control over productive assets; access to and control over economic resources; autonomy and mobility; and time. While Elangbam (2021) views that social structures based on caste, class, race, traditions, and culture are just a few of the social structures that invariably have an impact on them, the social environment has a big impact on how people socialize and how they think about gender. The attitudes and behaviors of people toward gender have become deeply ingrained. Men and women are given gender-specific roles based on the social roles that femininity and masculinity play in society.

Overall, based on secondary data and a few field studies, it has been asserted by many academics in a variety of fields that social norms, customs, and patriarchal mindsets pose challenges for women in the Ema market and women generally. The society of Manipur is diverse, with many different ethnic groups, socioeconomic classes, and religious backgrounds, and it straddles the lines between tradition and modernity. During this transition period, women face a variety of challenges. Therefore, the goal of the current study is to examine the socioeconomic profile of women entrepreneurs using a standardized scale of measurement.

The significance of the study

For academic purposes, the study will provide accurate data based on the variables of occupation, education, and income.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In *Women and Work in Manipur* (2020), Sophia A. describes how Manipuri women have contributed to the economy of the nation as workers, working in a variety of fields despite social, cultural, and professional barriers and maintaining a strong presence in the nation's economy since ancient times. The paper investigates the employment situation of women in Manipur. The study examines secondary data sources to examine how much women engage in activities necessary for survival. It draws data from the National Sample Survey Organizations' (NSSO) employment-unemployment surveys, the periodic labor force surveys (PLFS), other reports, books, and online articles. According to the study, women play a significant role in the Manipur economy, and information on employment is gathered for all workers (usual status and subsidiary status in the NSS; total workers in the Census). Even though women actively participate in business, politics, and society, official data indicates that, as in all patriarchal societies, their labor force participation is still lower than that of men. The primary explanation for the underrepresentation of women in the workforce is the unique gendered division of labor, which relegates women to the position of homemakers. In the workplace, boredom and time spent on housework can reduce women's productivity.

The purpose of Premmi W.'s study on the "Women Vendors of Manipur" from 2022 is to determine whether or not female market street vendors are free from the constraints of patriarchy and other social obligations. The traditional gender roles and positions of women in society are examined in the article. The market is a symbolic display of cultural fusion, mutual respect, religious tolerance, and unity. The results show that the women are finding challenges in balancing work and family life that come with many compromises and sacrifices. From the above interviews, it is clear that most of the market women are middle-aged and the market

is a way to provide food. Women's empowerment is only possible when women come out and help empower themselves. The study brings out the need for a revival of primitive traditional value systems so that women are more involved in the public eye.

D. Ram et al. (2013) "Entrepreneurship Behaviors of Women Entrepreneurship in Imphal, Manipur, India." In this paper, the authors found that women entrepreneurs were found to have medium levels of decision-making ability and also managerial activity. Some of the variables that had an effect on the women were education, family size, and socioeconomic status. These variables influence the entrepreneurial behavior of these women. They are economically more powerful. With ownership and control over assets, her freedom to take decisions uplifts her status in society. From the research, it came to light that not all women came for money, for some of them are engaged in recreational activities and a majority of them are obliged to support their families.

Seepana P. (2013) In his study of the socioeconomic standing of street vendors in Chandigarh, he claims that although there has been an extraordinary rise in the number of migrant street vendors in Chandigarh's cities, the government's attitude is negative and out of proportion to their unique needs. They are regarded as being in illegal status, and the police and municipal officials target them as illegal traders. The paper points out that caste and class are distinct but closely related measures of one's place in the social and economic hierarchy. Their relationship shifts over time due to various factors, including shifts in production relations. Overall, we can observe change as well as continuity in these relationships. Out of 500 vendors, 234 (46.8%) are illiterate (i.e., 53.2% are literate), which is a very depressing indicator of the educational status of street vendors. The illiteracy rate among women is 72 (82.75%), which is more than twice as high as the illiteracy rate among men, which is 162 (39.22%). The paper suggested that interdependency of the stakeholders, i.e., producers, street vendors, and consumers, legal safeguards, and social security measures are to be provided to the street vendors to uphold the right to work for maintaining social harmony and to achieve inclusive growth.

There are many complicated debates surrounding gender (2021) in Lakshmi Elangbam's works on "Gender Dynamics in Manipur" studies. This notion of the distinctions between men and women frequently contributes to gender inequality in society. To comprehend the status of women in Manipur, this study explores the various facets of women's status and participation in the workforce, education, politics, and health. They undoubtedly put in a lot of effort and are politically active. They actively participate in a range of social issues and problems and are not afraid to publicly voice their worries. Many times throughout history, the women of Manipur have protested and agitated. However, the study found that Manipur women face a variety of challenges simply because they are female and have less social advantages than their male counterparts.

In the study "Gender differences in the level of economic empowerment of farm households of Manipur" by M.S. Shijagurumayum et al. (2017), the objective of the present study is to determine differences between male and female household members in terms of their level of economic empowerment. The research was conducted in the Imphal West district of Manipur and included a random sample of 69 farm-households. Interviews were conducted with the primary male and female occupants of each household. A gender-neutral economic empowerment index with six indicators was developed for the study. It shows that male respondents had significantly higher levels of empowerment across all four of the empowerment indicators, including access to and control over productive assets; access to and control over economic resources; autonomy and mobility; and time. The study found that the overall level of empowerment of male respondents (0.71) was significantly higher than that of female respondents (0.57). A significant correlation between land ownership and the level of empowerment among female respondents was also found. The results of the comparison analysis point to the fact that women in a household are constrained by the roles, expectations, and obligations of a woman who is robbing them in society. The findings also disclose the need for gender sensitization over issues like sharing of household activities and care work.

The research title "Measuring the socioeconomic status of urban status below the poverty line in families in Imphal city, Manipur: a Livelihoods study" by RATHOD G.R., & NINGSHEN A., (2012) The study was limited to the Imphal Municipality only, which represents the administration of the East and West districts of Imphal. In the study, 370 household sample sizes were selected for the study as a whole. The main objective of the study was to understand the socio-economic livelihood status of the urban families below the poverty line in the city of Imphal. Secondary data was collected on the city data, reports, surveys, and initial consultations with stakeholders and government officials to understand the skills, assets, and activities required for subsistence. Data collection was conducted on various parameters, followed by fact-finding surveys, field visits, etc., using a structured interview plan. Socioeconomic status is used to understand how people in poor urban areas survive and make a living.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out among the female entrepreneurs of *Ema Keithel*, which is based in Imphal, Manipur. The women who make up *Ema keithel* come from many different ethnic groups and come from all over the state. The current study used Kappuswamy's socioeconomic scale, a modified scale for examining socioeconomic factors, to analyze the women entrepreneurs of the *Ema* market, which consists of income, education and occupation of the head of the family.

The study was carried out over a six-month period, from June 2021 to November 2021, and 600 respondents from the main *Ema Keithel* were interviewed using the Kappuswamy SES 2019 updated questionnaire format. The formulation of research questions will be helpful, and both structured and unstructured questions were used during the on-site visit, which were later used in the final data collection. The use of semi-structured interviews adds flexibility to the interview process while still assisting in the provision of appropriate standard data for all participants. The research questions were all directly related to every interview question. It was given with prior knowledge and informed consent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.1 Education of the Head of the Family

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	15	2.5
Primary/literate	92	15.3
Middle high school	124	20.7
High school	146	24.3
Secondary	98	16.3
Graduate/P.G	125	20.8

Table 1.1, shows the educational qualification of the family head of women entrepreneurs *Ema keithel* which shows that high school qualifications score highest (24.3%), followed by graduate and postgraduate levels scores (20.8%). The least educational level was illiterate with a 2.5% score.

Table 2.1 Occupation of Family Head

Occupation types	Frequency	Percentages
Unemployed	156	26.0
Elementary Occupation	71	11.8
Machine/ Plant operator	70	11.7
Craft related worker	66	11.0
Skilled Agriculture/Fishery Worker	65	10.8
Skilled shops/ market/ sales worker	79	13.2
Clerical	20	3.3
Technicians/Associates	17	2.8
Professional	16	2.7
Legislations/ S.O/ Manager	40	6.7

Table 2.1, shows the types of occupations of the head of the family of these women entrepreneurs of *Ema keithel* with 26% being unemployed were found. Then it was followed by the skilled worker in shops, markets and sales were found to be the highest occupation among the families with 13.2 % which was followed by elementary workers with 11.8% while skilled agricultural and fishery workers with 10.8% among the families. The least was found to be a professional occupation with a 2.7% score.

Table 3.1 Monthly income of the Family Head

Income in Rupees	Frequency	Percentages
≥50,587	37	6.2
24,294-49,586	59	9.8
18,970-24,293	103	17.2
12,647-18,969	98	16.3
7588-12,646	108	18.0
2555-7587	64	10.7
<2554	131	21.8

Table 3.1, shows the monthly income of the family head of women entrepreneurs of *Ema keithel*, the highest score was found to be 21.8% which means families have a monthly income below 2554 rupees. The lowest score for monthly income was found to be 6.2 % which is an income equal to or greater than income of 50,587 rupees.

Table 4.1 Kappu Swamy SES scores

Class score	Frequency	Percentages
Lower	28	4.7
Lower middle	130	21.7
Upper	11	1.8
Upper lower	254	42.3
Upper middle	177	29.5

Table 4.1, shows the Kappu Swamy socioeconomic scores of all the total based on the reference of education, occupation, and income of the head of the family score. Among these women entrepreneurs, most of their families based on scores found that 43.7% of the family belongs to an upper-lower category in SES score while the least was to be 1.8% in the upper SES category.

So, the present data on SES scores support the previous findings that women are facing challenges in balancing work and family life that comes with many compromises and sacrifices (Premmi, 2022) with reference to women from rural areas. These women had to go to the market to make money while also carrying this additional burden due to a lack of financial support or overburden of financial needs. These women are compelled to come out from the house core and participate in the financial support of their families. The market dominance of women is demonstrated by *Ema keithel*. It appears to be very liberating from the outside. The females abandon their families and take an active part in daily activities. However, they continue to be associated with social obligations such as patriarchy. They had to go to the market to make money while also carrying this additional burden. As the educational level is comparatively low from the SES score. It can be suggested that need of increasing investment in the informal sector to support skill formation, it is possible to increase total factor productivity at the macro level and significantly raise these workers' wages. Higher earnings not only improve (capabilities and entitlements) living standards but also enhance their capacity to impart education and skills to their children, which will pave the way for intergenerational upward mobility.

CONCLUSION

In the present study, it was found that the majority of the population belongs to the upper-lower socioeconomic group. The study aimed to know the impact of education, social status, and also economic status on these women. Since all three factors play an important role in determining the individual socioeconomic status. This study among the current population will help to get these women for state and central schemes and aids programs that are not in the government records as well as the street vendors as they are the more vulnerable population being neglected and excluded from governmental schemes and surveys.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank all the *Ema* of *Ema Keithel* and women street vendors for their support, without which this article would not be possible to complete. Special words of gratitude to the President of the Women's Association (*Khwairamband Nupi Semgat Sagat lup*). Words of appreciation to Retd. Pro V.C Prof. P.C. Joshi for his academic guidance and support. Lastly, thankful to the UGC for the financial support.

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