

A Study on the Prevalence of Gender Disparity in Mawlynnong Village

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ABSTRACT

The differences in women's and men's access to resources, status and well-being, which generally favour men and are often institutionalised through laws, justice and social norms is termed as gender disparity. Despite several efforts gender disparities have remained deep and persistent in Indian society. The study aspires to throw light on the persistence of gender disparity in Mawlynnong village of Meghalaya, a state in North East India. The existence of gender disparity is exhibited by taking certain indicators like education, participation of women in politics, decision making process in the family and many more. Both primary and secondary data are considered for the study. The study is qualitative as well as quantitative in nature.

Keywords: Women; Men; Gender Disparity; education; participation; Decision making

INTRODUCTION

Gender like all other social identities is socially constructed and represents a hierarchical, asymmetrical, and unequal division between men and women. In the social ranking men typically inhabit higher statuses than women. Gender disparity has always existed in our society, it usually favour men and are institutionalised through laws, justice and social norms. Despite several efforts gender disparities have remained deep and persistent in India. Lack of gender equality not only limits women's access to resources and opportunities, but also imperils the life prospects of the future generation. Traditional patriarchal customs and norms have relegated women to a secondary status within the household and workplace. The division of labour according to "sex-roles" usually limits women to domestic work and restricts their access to material and social resources and participation in political, economic and

social decision making. *This study throws light on the persistence of gender disparity in Mawlynnong village of Meghalaya.*



The land and the People

Mawlynnong is a medium size village in Meghalaya. It is located in Pynursla Block of East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya, a state in North East India. The total population of Mawlynnong is 414 of which 204 were males while 210 were females

with total 77 households as per Population Census of India 2011.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The persistence of gender disparity in the village were exhibited by taking certain indicators like education, participation of women in politics and decision making process in the family. Both primary and secondary data were considered for the study. The study is qualitative as well as quantitative in nature. Availability sampling method was used for the purpose of the study. 40 households were selected for the study which is around 52% of the total household.

Analysis and interpretation of data

The quantitative data gathered in the field are presented in the tables below.

Table-1: Sex-wise distribution of the respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	19	47.5%
Female	21	52.5%
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Data Collected from Mawlynnong village in March 2019.

Discussion: Table 1 shows the sex-wise distribution of the respondents. In the study majority of respondents i.e., 21(52.5%) are female and rest are male.

Table2: Age-wise distribution of the respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21-30Yrs	3	7.5%
31-40Yrs	10	25%
41-50Yrs	15	37.5%
51-60Yrs	9	22.5%
61-70Yrs	3	7.5%
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Data Collected from Mawlynnong village in March 2019

Discussion: Table 2 exhibits that respondents taken for the study are divided into five age group intervals, ranging from (21-30)years, (31-40)years,(41-50)years, (51-60)years and (61-70)years, of which 7.5% belong to the first age group i.e.(21-30), 25% respondents are in the age group of (31-40)years, 37.5% respondents are in the group of (41-50) years. Further 22.5% and 7.5% respondents are in the age group of (51-60) years and (61-70) years respectively. Thus, highest numbers of

respondents (37.5%) are in the age group of (41-50) years.

The respondents were also asked regarding the age of their partner, to find out the age gap between the two partners. The age gap between husband and wife range from 1year to a maximum of 13 years. The study divulges that in most of the relationship between husband and wife, husbands were elder than their wife. In almost 33(82.5%) relation husbands were elder than their wives and only in 7(17.5%) matrimonial relations wives were elder than their husbands.

Table 3: Educational Qualification of the respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lower Primary (1-4)	4	10%
Upper Primary (5-8)	16	40%
Secondary (9-10)	8	20%
Above HSLC	8	20%
HSSLC	1	2.5%
Graduate	3	7.5%
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Data Collected from Mawlynnong village in March 2019.

Discussion: Education is the agency by which an individual is encouraged and armed to develop his or her potential. It is a lifelong and continuous process which aims for all round development of an individual, so the respondents were asked regarding their level of education. The distribution of respondents according to the level of education presented in the above table shows that 10% respondents passed lower primary, 40% respondent passed upper primary, 20% respondents passed secondary, 20% were above HSLC, 2.5% respondents were HSSLC and 7.5% respondents were Graduate. Thus, highest numbers of respondents (40%) have studied upto upper primary (5-8).

The respondents were asked about the educational qualification of their partners. Among the 40 households taken for the study it was found that in 18 households, husbands were more educated than their wives, while in 12 households wives are more educated than their husbands and in 10 households both

husbands and wives have equal educational qualification.

Table 4: Head of the family

Head of your family	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self	20	50%
Husband	17	42.5%
Father	1	2.5%
Father-in-law	2	5%
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Data Collected from Mawlynnong village in March 2019.

Discussion: Out of the total respondents 20(50%) have said that they themselves are the head of the family, out of those 20 respondents who said that they are the head of the family, 19 respondents are male, 17(42.5%) respondents have asserted that the husband is the head of the family, 2(5%) respondents have said that the head of the family is any other person (i.e., father-in-law) and 1(2.5%) respondents depend on their father. Thus, it clearly shows that though it is a matrilineal society, majority of the family is headed by the male.

Table 5: Principle earner in the family

Principle earner in your family	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self	19	47.5%
Husband	18	45%
Father	1	2.5%
Daughter	1	2.5%
Any Other	1	2.5%
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Data Collected from Mawlynnong village in March 2019.

Discussion: In Mawlynnong village, 47.5% respondents have said that they themselves are the principle earner of the family, out of those 19 respondents who said that they themselves are the main earner in the family 18 are male and one is female. 45% respondents have said that the husband is the principle earner in the family, followed by 2.5% respondents who said that the father is the bread earner in the family, 2.5% respondents have said that their daughter is the principle earner of the family and 2.5% have said that any other person (i.e., father in law) in the family acts as the main earner of the family.

Table 6: Main Occupation of the Principle earner

Main Occupation of the Chief Earner	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cultivator	23	57.5%
Govt. Servant	7	17.5%
Business	10	25%
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Data Collected from Mawlynnong village in March 2019

Discussion: Table 6 shows the main occupation of the principle earner in the family, 57.5% respondents are cultivator, 25% respondents have said that they do business in order to run the household and 17.5% of the respondents are government servant.

Table 7: Decision maker in the family

Decision maker in the family	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self	22	55%
Husband	17	42.5%
Any other	1	2.5%
Total	40	100%

Source: Field Data Collected from Mawlynnong village in March 2019.

Discussion: Out of the total respondents, 55% have said that they are the decision maker in the family, out of 22 respondents who are the decision maker in the family, 21 respondents are male and only 1 respondent is female. 42.5% of the respondents have asserted that the husband takes the decision in the family and 2.5% of the respondents have said that any other person in the family are the decision maker in the family.

The respondents were asked regarding their political participation. Out of total respondents 19 male respondents i.e., 47.5% male respondents have said that they cast vote in all the elections, on the other hand 21(52.5%) female respondents have asserted that they cast vote in General elections and in the elections of the State Legislative Assembly but don't cast vote in the election of the Village Council as a part of Khasi Customary Law. It means that customary law is acting as a barricade in the equal participation of both the genders. When the respondents were asked if their partners cast vote or not, female respondents have said that their husband cast vote in all the elections, while 19 male respondents have added that their wife are

debarred from casting the vote in the election of Village Council.

The respondent were asked regarding their believe in gender equality. All the respondents have expressed that they believe in gender equality and have also shared that they haven't experienced any gender inequality in the society. Thus the study brings to light the fact that the respondents particularly the women are unaware about the existence of gender disparity in their society. They are not given the right to vote in the election of Village Council but they don't regard it as gender disparity.

All the respondents believed in some stereotypes role about women that women are supposed to cook and do house-hold work. Women are better at raising children. Women are better suited for jobs like teachers, nurses, secretaries and so on. Women always need to ask men for help around the house because they aren't handy with tools. Women are not as strong as men. Women aren't physically capable of carrying heavy objects. It is very likely to cause problems if a woman earns more money than her husband, and women are supposed to make less money than men.

CONCLUSION

Thus from the above discussion, it can be said that there is gender disparity in Mawlynnong village and majority of the respondents' family is headed by male and only a few family are dependent on female. Gender difference is also visible in the political dimension as women are debarred

to participate in the election of Village Council. Besidesthese, it is observe that only male family member takes decisions in their family. Disparity is also visible in the level of education as male respondents are more educated then female respondents. Thus, the issue of gender disparity must be dealt with serious concern, so that equality in the gender relation can be established in the society.

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