

DESK STUDY REPORT ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN IN MANIPUR



2022

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Amrit Mahotsav





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Director, ICAR- Central Institute of Post-Harvest Engineering and Technology (ICAR-CIPHET), Ludhiana in collaboration with Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), New Delhi

UNDER THE PROJECT

'Mechanized System for Making Hawaijar- a Traditional Fermented Food of North-East India' funded under Technology Development & Utilization Program for Women (TDUPW) of DSIR.

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डॉ. शेखर चिं. मांडे

एफएनए, एफएएससी, एफएनएससी

सचिव

वैज्ञानिक और औद्योगिक अनुसंधान विभाग तथा

महानिदेशक

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वैज्ञानिक तथा औद्योगिक अनुसंधान परिषद

वैज्ञानिक और औद्योगिक अनुसंधान विभाग

Government of India

Ministry of Science and Technology

Council of Scientific & Industrial Research

Department of Scientific & Industrial Research



Message

The Government of India is committed to ensure focused development of North East Region through various developmental measures. The North East Region has immense natural resources and is strategically located with access to the traditional domestic market of eastern India as well as neighbouring countries. In India, Women of the North East Region have played very important role and have immensely contributed to strengthen the socio economic fabric of the region. The desk study report "Social & Economic contributions of Women in Manipur" is being released under Technology Development and Utilization Programme for Women (TDUPW) programme of DSIR, on the occasion of International Women's Day on 8th March, 2022. It is a way to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women of Manipur. The present study is an attempt to share an insight into the gap, and scope for inspiring, supporting and creating opportunities which can enable women of Manipur to earn their living and also empower them as individuals to participate in the development of the North Eastern Region. I congratulate A2K+(TDUPW) Team of DSIR and ICAR-CIPHET, Ludhiana for undertaking this study, which is of immense significance in the current scenario.

I am sure this report will serve as an important document and will pave the way for many more such reports on role of women in society.

7th March-2022

New Delhi.

(Shekhar C. Mande)

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PREFACE



Women in India in general, play crucial role in various domains of life, from being in the major workforce, in all agricultural activities; be it cultivation, animal rearing, post-harvest management or marketing, house makers, running small scale businesses, and so on. North East India is known for its women entrepreneurs who take their fair share in economic activity and contributing to society.

ICAR-Central Institute of Post-Harvest Engineering and Technology (ICAR-CIPHET) has been developing and transferring various technologies related to post-harvest handling and processing of agricultural crops among various sections of population, including women farmers and entrepreneurs. ICAR-CIPHET including AICRPs on PHET and PEASEM has developed 17 gender friendly machineries/ equipment, 11 processes/ products and 8 value added products for post-harvest processing and value addition to agricultural produce. ICAR-CIPHET provides hands-on trainings/ demonstrations to farmers, entrepreneurs and self-help groups including women engaged in agriculture and related activities and also licenses post-harvest related technologies to many women who are now taking up entrepreneurial activities in large scale.

ICAR-CIPHET appreciates the effort of DSIR- Technology Development and Utilization Programme for Women (TDUPW) that help cater the specific needs of women and to enhance the contribution of women towards technology capability building. The institute is also thankful to DSIR for the collaboration made through the TDUPW programme for the project 'Mechanized system for making Hawaijar- a traditional fermented food of North-East India'. The programme will be immensely benefitted by the women stakeholders of North East India who are already into it or willing to take entrepreneurial activities in Hawaijar making.

Further, this bulletin “**Desk Study Report on Social and Economic Contributions of Women in Manipur**” would serve as a piece of information and motivation to prospective entrepreneurs to take up such activities in the near future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nachiket".

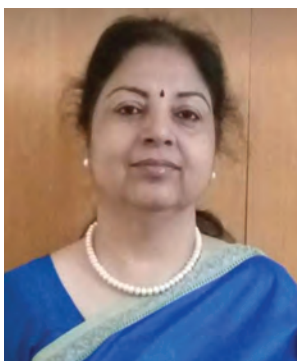
Dr. Nachiket Kotwaliwale

Director

ICAR-CIPHET, Ludhiana Punjab-141004



FOREWORD



The North East region of India, which comprises of Mizoram, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland, is blessed by Mother Nature and is fondly called as the “Seven Sisters States”. The region is one of the bio-diverse regions of the country and is rich in terms of forest wealth, exotic flowers and aromatic plants, other flora and fauna, mineral resources etc. From geographical point of view, the region is surrounded by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and China.

Women constitute nearly half of the total population and their contribution in various fields is very important. Women are capable of contributing significantly to the socio- economic sphere of the country. However, women often experience barriers to participate in economic activities. Socio-economic participation of women at regional, national and international levels means effective use of human potential. Therefore, one of the valuable aspects of inclusive growth is involvement of women in development process in an active way.

Women of North East have played a significant role in the socio economic space. The women of this region have not only taken the responsibility of household chores, but have also shared the work on the field and are helping in generating income for their families along with their male counterpart. The present study portrays the current status of women in Manipur. The contribution of women in Manipur has been highlighted in the report. The report has also documented a few success stories of women from Manipur.

Dr. Sujata Chaklanobis
*Sc-G & Head – CRTDH, Pace & A2K+
Department of Scientific & Industrial Research,
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INTRODUCTION

Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim are eight states located in the North East of the country that are unique for their distinct landscape, variety of ethnic communities, and geographical and ecological diversity. **On the eastern boundary of North-east is the beautiful state of Manipur.** The state has been famous for a history of mythical narratives and culturally advanced kingdoms. In recent times, the state has been in news for the contribution of its women in sports.

Few days back while announcing the creation of an All India Institute of Medical Sciences, AIIMS in Manipur, **Hon'ble Prime Minister of India** has stated that "This decade is the decade of development and progress and Manipur is moving fast in this direction today". Enhanced level of gender equality and women participation in the economy has been an important contributor in the growth and development story of Manipur.

The government of India has placed North-East India at the forefront of India's development priorities towards achieving the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development. The government aims better integration of national policies and central programmes with North-East region. Economic empowerment of the women and closing gender gaps are key to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5, to achieve gender equality, and Goal 8, to promote full and productive employment.

Against this backdrop, Technology Development and Utilization Programme for Women, (TDUPW) of Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) convened series of outreach activities to facilitate the engagement of stakeholders specially those of North-East region for achieving the Nations agenda of Sustainable Development with participation of women.

The program mandates empowering women by promoting capacity building of rural, sub-urban and urban women through S&T Interventions- Showcasing of appropriate technologies developed by scientific establishments and organizing demonstration/training programmes for diffusion and adoption of these technologies by women. The programme also aims for technology up-gradation of micro, small and medium enterprises run by women Self Help Groups (SHGs)/ entrepreneurs.

The program operates with a vision that access to technology and ability to use it greatly enhances the economic opportunities for women. The innovative solutions that technology brings with it, enhances the quality of lives of women and are steps taken towards bridging the gap between skills and jobs. Similarly technology if applied in providing gender-friendly tools and equipment reduces the drudgery for women and increases productivity while addressing safety and comfort issues.

TDUPW program has been implemented across India and covers 17 states benefitting women regardless of age, caste, creed or religion through SHGs, Institution, societies etc. It has generated employment for large number of women beneficiaries' consequent to the trainings/technological skills imparted to them under the programme. Some of the beneficiaries have turned into entrepreneur and are engaged in businesses of their own.



As an outcome of TDUPW Program's outreach activity, few projects have been initiated committed towards women of North-east region. One such project supported under the program is – 'Mechanized system for making Hawaijar- a traditional fermented food of North-East India' by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR-CIPHET) -Ludhiana in collaboration with Central Agricultural University (COA), CAU, Imphal, Manipur. The project aims capacity building of women of Manipur in food processing sector through skill training on mechanization process of preparation of their ethnic food product and also training on broadening of the market base.

This report prepared under the above project of ICAR-CIPHET, Ludhiana is a brief compilation of social, political and economic role played by women of Manipur in past and in current times. The report also gives a brief glimpse of the women entrepreneurship in Manipur while mentioning the enterprises based on innovative technologies and products. The report aims to realize the priorities and potential of women of Manipur and identify the scope for Science and Technological interventions in fulfilling the dreams of the women of the region towards economic and social empowerment.

Dr Vandana Kalia

*Scientist E & Member Secretary, TDUPW
Department of Scientific & Industrial Research,
Government of India*

MANIPUR: THE JEWELLED LAND

The word “Manipur” is made-up of two Sanskrit words (Mani), which means jewel and (Pur), which means land/place/abode, Manipur is translated as “Jewelled land”. It is one of the states of the north-eastern region (NER) of India that covers eight states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura (Figure 1). The state Manipur, has an area of 22327 sq. km which covers 8.0 % of the total geographical area of North eastern states. Total population of the state is 2855794 which comprises 5.65% of the total NE population and 0.21% of country’s population (NECS 2015). The decadal population growth rate of Manipur is 18.65% with population density of 125 per sq. km

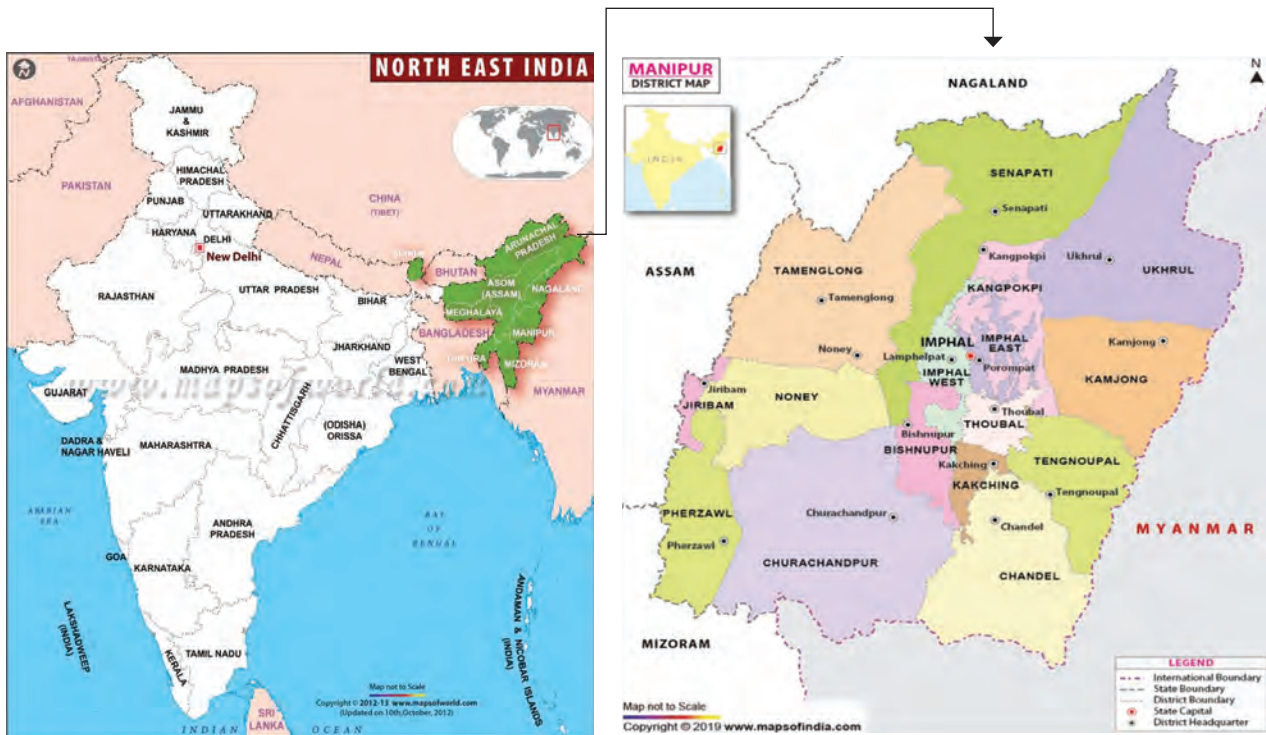


Fig.1. Geographical area and boundary of state, Manipur (Source: Internet platform)

MANIPUR WOMEN POPULATION AND GENDER PARITY:

Manipur has an almost even balance of the population between males and females. Manipur's sex ratio is better than that of mainland India. When compared to the rest of India, a higher gender disparity score indicates that the state has less gender inequality (Table no. 1 & 2).

Table No. 1. Manipur population as per 2011 census
(Distributed as male, female, literacy, rural and urban)

Item	Year 2021
Total Population	2,855,794
Male Population	1,438,687
Female Population	1,417,107
% of Male' Population	50.38%
% of Female' Population	49.62%
Literacy	76.94%
Male Literacy	83.58%
Female Literacy	70.26%
Population Rural	2,021,640
Population Rural Percentage	70.79%
Population Urban	834,154
Population Urban Percentage	29.21%

Table No. 2. Gender Disparity Index, India and Manipur

State/Country	1981	1991
Manipur	0.802	0.815
India	0.620	0.676

(Source: National Human Development Report 2001; Adapted from Sophia 2020)



(Source: <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/manipur.html>)



PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL & SOCIAL PLATFORM:

Women of Manipur are active participants in human rights and justice initiatives in civil society. In comparison to other sections of the country, they encounter less discrimination. Furthermore, social standards allow women to have less pressure to marry, more flexibility in their movement, choice of employment, and choice of life partner, allowing them to participate actively in economic sectors

It is important to highlight the role of Manipuri women in social movements. Their social change initiatives may be traced back to the pre-British period, when Manipur was a monarchy. They played an important and active part in eradicating societal stigmas. Women's social movements, on the other hand, began to take shape in the early twentieth century and are praiseworthy.

MANIPUR'S WOMEN ARE WELL-KNOWN FOR THEIR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY, INCLUDING FINANCIAL, POLITICAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND SPORTING ACTIVITIES.



Nupi Lal memorial statue, a tribute to courageous Manipuri Women



NUPILAN (WOMEN'S WARS OF 1904 AND 1939 AGAINST THE BRITISH ARMY)

In 1904, the Nupilan, which literally means “women’s war,” arose in opposition to the oppressive British authority. Many administrative reforms were enacted as a result of their tenacious effort, and women leaders emerged in Manipur’s historically female-dominated spheres of business, trade, and commerce. In 1939, another Nupilan took place in response to the artificial scarcity of rice, as well as irregularities and malpractices, which were exploiting the economic situation through colonial measures (Chingtham, 2016). Rice exports from the state were eventually prohibited by the government.

Women’s movement developed in the late 1970s with its origin attributed to Meitei women activism combating alcoholism and drug addiction. Their actions lead to the introduction of prohibition laws in the state.

Sunil, Oinam (10 January 2013). “TOI Social Impact Awards: Lifetime contribution – Meira Paibi”. Times of India. Retrieved 10 March 2016:

Meira Paibis is a women’s local body social movement referred to as “Guardians of Civil Society”. Meira Paibis are being formed for each locality, with at least one woman from each home participating. They get together whenever it is required to address social and political challenges, human rights struggles, alcoholism, drug misuse, polygamy, and family disagreements, among other things

Every year on December 12th, Manipur commemorates the 1939 women’s rebellion by celebrating Nupilan Day.

Women activists in Manipur are reconized as powerful political force. Manipuri women are not left behind in state and national politics. Smt. Apabi Devi, Hangmila Shazia, Smt. W. Leima Devi, Miss Kim Gangte, Smt. A.K. Mirabai Devi, and Smt. O Landhoni Devi are among the women who hold seats in the State Legislative Assembly and demonstrate their political competence.

MANIPUR WOMEN IN CULTURE & SPORTS:

Manipur has a vibrant and rich cultural past. The Manipuri Dance, also referred to as the Manipuri Raas Leela, is an integral part of its rich culture and is one among eight major Indian classical dance forms. Manipur culture has women playing an important role; which is shown in the very specific costumes worn by women dancers in Raas Leela and their equal involvement in other traditional and cultural events with males.

Traditional Manipur art forms like dance and music as well as dramas and other forms of performance have received widespread recognition from universities and governments both within and outside the state. These culture rich activities provide equal opportunities for women artists aiding them in establishing their own careers within and outside of the state.



Rise and dominance of Manipuri women's in sports at National and International level is remarkable and have won the country high international acclaim. They are dominant in sports such as hockey, football, cycling, boxing, and weightlifting. Mary Kom, Mirabai, Surjalata and Tingongleima, Sarita Devi, Sushila, Kunjarani Devi, and others are some of the outstanding international female athletes who have brought medals and accolades to the country.

Success of Manipuri Women in sports has been shaped by the unique position of Manipuri women in Society, where they enjoy much more freedom and commend respect and honor.



EMPOWERED WOMEN

Social standards allow women to have less pressure to marry, more flexibility in their movement, choice of employment, and choice of life partner, allowing them to participate actively in economic sectors (Sophia, 2020).

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC SECTORS:

Manipuri women are large part of Manipur economic workforce. They are not only politically aware but equally participate in trade and commerce which is praiseworthy.

The active engagement of Manipuri women in trade praiseworthy, as evidenced by *Ima keithel* (which translates to 'mother's market') which is thought to be Asia's largest all-women market. Women from Manipur's rural, town, and hilly regions sell their wares in the market, which include vegetables, clothes, rice, fruits, flowers, and a variety of other necessities for everyday life. As a result, they play a distinctive position in the state's marketing sector. They also have there on trading centre Imphal city, Nupi Keithel (Women's Market)



Women labors in organized as well as unorganized sectors and participate in a variety of occupations ranging from professional sectors like doctors, engineers, lawyers to skill crafts such as weaving, silk production, yarn production, embroidery, ceramics, handicrafts and handloom, fishing, and in the agricultural sector, women contribute more than males. Some of the women also own pan shops, tea and snack stalls, and work as domestic servants on building sites, however now number of women entrepreneurs in specialized fields are increasing with education and support of Government initiatives

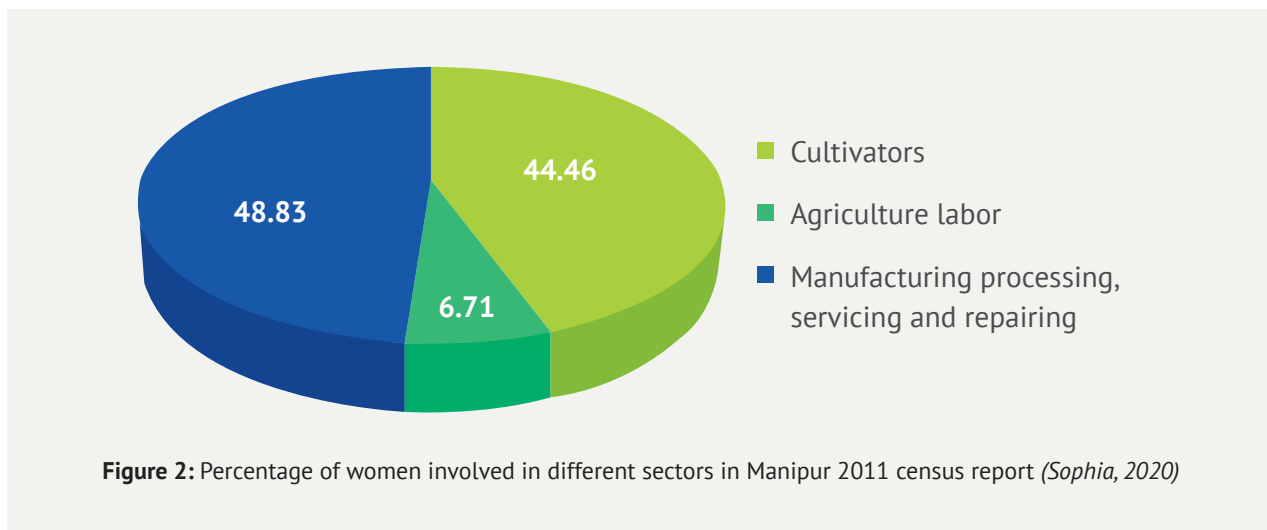
"A man who does not go to Loishang and a woman who does not go to the market are worthless" - Meitei proverb (Meitei is the state's most populous ethnic group, accounting for around two-thirds of the population)



The Imas are shapers who mold not only the state's economy but also their children into better human beings.



In comparison to the rest of India, Manipuri women work at a comparatively high rate. Women make up 42.59 percent of Manipur’s workforce. The main female workers accounted for 60.88 percent of the total female workers, while marginal workers accounted for 39.12 percent. According to the 2011 census, 44.46 percent of female workers are cultivators, 6.71 percent are agricultural laborers, and 48.83 percent work in manufacturing, processing, domestic, and other services as depicted in Figure 2.



The labor force participation rates (per 1000) for people aged 15 to 59 years conducted by the National Sample Survey (NSS) and the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) of the National Sample Survey (NSS) for Manipur rural and urban areas during 2018-19 revealed that the percentage of working male and female were 77.3 percent and 26.8% in rural and 73.9 percent and 29.8% in urban areas, respectively. Despite women’s proactive engagement in the economy, polity, and society, this data revealed that the number of working males was significantly higher than females, implying that female-based disadvantages also exist in Manipur (Sophia, 2020).

LANDSCAPE of Women
Entrepreneurship is dominated by traditional handloom and handicraft.

There are about 15 small food processing units around Imphal, mostly organized under women self-help groups (NSDC Skill Gap Study of the North East – Manipur, 2012)



Table 3: Distribution of Usually Working Persons (PS+SS) by Broad Industry Division (Male and Female) Manipur (in percentage) during 2018-19

	Rural Area		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture	39.1	28.7	13.2	6.9
Mining & quarrying	1.0	0.5	0.6	0.7
Manufacturing	6.8	25.4	9.6	23.9
Construction	9.2	2.1	12.0	1.1
Trade	6.5	12.4	15.3	18.4
Transport	7.3	0.2	7.0	0.4
Services	29.1	30.5	40.2	47.8

Source: PLFS and NSS Report 2018-19. (Agriculture includes agriculture, forestry, and fishing; Trade include wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; Services includes only the categories sections 1 to 5 of NIC 2008).[Adapted from Sophia, 2020]

The role of Manipuri women has been growing as a result of improved education and a higher literacy rate among women, and they now hold positions of responsibility in all elements of the state, central, and private sectors. In a nutshell, Manipur’s women constitute the state’s economic backbone.

WOMEN LED-ENTERPRISES IN MANIPUR

Women owns about 44 per cent of total businesses, which is about 2.5 times the national average. Besides education and higher literacy rates among Manipuri women, the state’s societal structure, geopolitics and historical background has supported emergence of female entrepreneurs who are in turn providing employment to a large number of young people.

Women owned business and enterprises are focused towards traditional agricultural and food products with high demand in local market or handloom and traditional fabrics. However, new entrepreneurs are merging external market ideas with local businesses and bringing in value added agricultural and food processing products and modern designs to ethnic textiles and crafts.

In addition, the emergence of self-help groups among women has been popular, and they participate in the production of various daily consumables items, which aids in the state’s economic efficiency by substituting import products. Self-help groups (SHGs) play a vital role in providing training and revenue generation avenues for the women folk, mostly, working from home in the cottage industry segment (Table 4).



Table 4: SHG's under NRLM (Under district and state level)

District	Block	SHG Types				Total Member
		New	Revived	Pre-NRLM	Sub Total	
Churachandpur	Lanva	71	0	0	71	682
	Saikot	77	0	0	77	849
	Singngat	37	0	1	38	392
Imphal East	Heingang	398	1	15	414	4760
	Imphal East II Keirao	426	2	9	437	4727
	Imphal East I Sawombung	510	2	11	523	6020
	Khetrigao	569	3	3	575	6367
Imphal West	Hiyangthang C D Block Imphal West II	28	2	0	30	347
	Imphal West I Haorangabal	57	0	0	57	664
	Imphal West II Wangoi	59	0	0	59	669
	Patsoi C D Block	58	0	0	58	657
Jiribam	Borobekra	38	0	1	39	468
	JIRIBAM	54	12	0	66	695
Kakching	Kakching	23	0	0	23	252
	Langmeidong	56	0	0	56	612
Pherzawl	Tipaimukh T D Block	51	0	0	51	542
Tengnoupal	Machi	196	0	2	198	2203
	Tengnoupal	175	0	4	179	1689
Thoubal	Lilong	121	0	0	121	1390
	Thoubal	108	0	0	108	1306
	Wangjing Tentha	101	0	0	101	1170

(Source: NRLM)



SUCCESS STORIES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP



SHUBHRA DEVI

Meira Foods is now a well-known brand in Manipur. Shubhra Devi founded the packaged food company in 2004. Shubhra earned her master's degree in food and nutrition from Rajasthan's Banasthali Bidyapith. She took the plunge into the packaged food industry after working in the development sector for more than ten years. Meira Foods' products are now accessible in small shops across Manipur, where she began with only a few hundred rupees. Meira's major goods are pickles, sweets, and salted dry fruit. Meira's products are unusual in that they are made entirely of Manipur's indigenous fruits and veggies. In 2004-05, the turnover was Rs 30,000, which climbed to Rs 75 lakh in 2012-13, and then to Rs 1 crore in 2013.



KSHETRIMAYUM INDIRA DEVI

Kshetrimayum Indira Devi, a woman entrepreneur from Manipur, received the 'Woman Transforming India (WTI) Award 2018' at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, Chanakyapuri in New Delhi. Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu presented her with the Nari Shakti Puraskar for her work with handloom weaving at the third edition of the Women Transforming India Awards. With the use of contemporary weaving technology and qualified weavers, Indira's company Chanu Creations has been successful in restoring Manipur's ancient handlooms.



HANJABAM RADHE DEVI

On January 26, 2021, Hanjabam Radhe Devi received the Padma Shri, the country's fourth highest civilian award. Devi's commitment to the preservation of the art of manufacturing 'potloi' (a traditional wedding attire of the Meitei community in Manipur) and as a 'potloi setpi' is recognised with the award (bridal dresser). She decided to learn Potloi dressing from her teacher when she was 28 years old. Radhe's husband, however, was adamant against it, claiming that she needed to handle other responsibilities at home in addition to maintaining the tea booth at the market. She, on the other hand, persuaded her husband to try Potloi dressing and learn the technique. She manufactures and sells dolls and costumes for the Meitei community's Lai Haraoba event, in addition to bridal clothing.



**SHRIMAYUM
GITA DEVI**

Shrimayum Gita Devi, a young widow, sells vegetables at the local market to make ends meet. She later joined Sericulture Potlam, a local non-profit organisation, to learn more about silkworm raising and silk production. In September 2007, she was inspired by a training session hosted by the Central Sericulture Research and Training Centre in Mysore. Gita used mulberry silk cocoons to produce decorations, drawing inspiration from the traditional styles used by Manipuri women in the past. As a result, traditional handicrafts were successfully revived. She earns between Rs 30,000 and Rs 50,000 each month and receives around 90-100 orders per month. Her annual income is close to Rs 5 lakhs. Gita is also a member of the state's sericulture department, where she extracts silk threads and makes shawls and other silk garments. She claims she is saving to start a small sericulture business now that she has the industry knowledge. She has won various honours, including Manipur's Directorate of Commerce and Industry's best craftsperson in the handicraft division award in 2013-14 and the state craftsperson award in 2017.

SUCCESS STORIES: MANIPURI WOMEN AND INNOVATION



GEETASHORI YUMNAM AND DR ASEM SUNDARI

Co-founders of Green Biotech EcoSolutions which is the first bio-fertilizer company in Manipur. In 2016, they became a part of Green Business Challenge and collaborated with Assam Agricultural University for technology transfer for making bio-inputs to manufacture and sell the concentrate in the market. Now, Green Biotech EcoSolutions manufacture and distribute their own products and with funding support of 67000 EUR had set up state of art infrastructure which tripled their production. Earlier the production capacity was only 1.5 MT and now it is 4 MT. Until now, they are able to reach out to 10000 farmers, while earlier it was only 3500 farmers (<https://iccoindia.org/story/manipuri-women-entrepreneurs-scripting-the-organic-future-of-the-state/>).



**BIJIYASHANTI
TONGBRAM**

Graduate in Botany, Bijiya owns a start-up by the name of 'Sanajing Sana Thambal' few kilometers from Loktak, the largest freshwater lake in the Northeast famous for its numerous unique floating islands known as "Phumdis" and blooming Lotus. She was selected in the Idea Stage and got a loan of rupees 1.5 Lakhs under Start-up Manipur, 2018-19 for using lotus stems for spinning yarn and to weave delicate mufflers and stoles.



JINA KHUMUKAM

Jina Khumukam is one of the state's most successful female entrepreneurs, and she credits her success entirely to her handcrafted soaps. 'Ma- ngal' is the brand name. Ma-ngal soaps are made with extracts of locally available fruits such as Lemon, Xylosma, Aloe-Vera, Citrus latipes, and Cucumber. Jina has established herself as a businesswoman, producing 80–90 soaps per day with the assistance of her two daughters and one daughter-in-law. Her monthly income is approximately Rs 10,000. **Her innovation was recognized by the National Innovation Foundation of India in 2007, and the Grassroots Innovations Augmentation Network (GIAN)** has recently offered to assist her in starting large-scale production and expanding her consumer base not only in Manipur but throughout the Northeast. Jina also hires people from the margins of society, such as widows and HIV/AIDS patients.



MOIRANGTHEM MANGLEMBI DEVI

M Manglemi Devi developed a simple but useful innovation to knit woolen scarves. The device consists of a wooden rectangular base with nails fitted around an inner smaller rectangle. The space between the nails depends on the design of the pattern desired. The desired frill design is made by tying threads to the nails. This device makes knitting very easy for even the unskilled people and faster than traditional hand knitting. It can also make double layer pattern cloth or reversible design with no edge stitching. She has won National and State level awards for her work. Muktamani is not just another successful artisan but also someone who has transformed the lives of many underprivileged women by training them and making them financially independent.



MOIRANGTHEM MUKTAMANI DEVI

Moirangthem Muktamani Devi, an entrepreneur who is in her 60s from Moirangthem Leikai of Kakching district was conferred the Padma Shri on the occasion 73rd Republic Day for her distinguished services in Trade and Industry. She is the proprietor of Mukta Shoes. She did not have a single penny to repair her daughter's school shoes. As a result she took the outsole of her old shoes and knitted the upper portion of the shoes using a woolen yarn. Muktamani is not just another successful artisan but also someone who has transformed the lives of many underprivileged women by training them and making them financially independent.

MANIPURI WOMEN: EDUCATION AND S&T

Many Manipur women are seeking higher education in science and technology, with many obtaining PhD and post-doctoral degrees. State women studying in other parts of the country as well as overseas demonstrates societies' significant interest in improving their social status through higher education. As a step to promote science for the women of Manipur, the 7th Women Science Congress (WSC-2018) was held at Manipur University on the theme "Women and Science - Reaching the Unreached and Women and Health Issues" and featured notable women scientists. **The greatest percentage of women professors (29.41%) is found in NIT Manipur, compared to an average of 17.75 percent across NITs across India (Swarup and Dey, 2020).**





WOMEN FOCUSED INSTITUTES, AND INITIATIVES IN MANIPUR

Higher education infrastructure of Manipur consists predominantly of two universities, 62 general colleges, seven ITIs, a National Institute of Technology and an Institute of Plastics. Among these, there are around 9 institutions dedicated solely to women education as listed in Table 5. According to the Khuntia 2017 report, there is only one women's Industrial Training Institute in the state, with a seating capacity of 80 and one Women Skill Development Center, which is based in Thoubal, Manipur.

Table: 5 List of Women Colleges

Sr. No.	Institution names
1.	GP women college
2.	Ideal girls college
3.	Kakching Khunou college
4.	S. Kulla Womens College
5.	TS Paul Manipur Women College
6.	Thoubal College
7.	Waikhom Mani Girls College
8.	S.K. Women's College
9.	Shree Shree Gourgovinda Girls' College





THE START UP VILLAGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

The Start up Village Entrepreneurship Program is a sub component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) of the Ministry of Rural Development. SVEP aims to support entrepreneurs in rural areas to set up local enterprises.

STARTUP MANIPUR

Many government plans and programmes are being implemented in the state focused towards women’s skill development. The Government of Manipur’s and Department of Social Welfare has launched a number of initiatives for the welfare and upliftment of women, particularly the poor, divorced, and widowed. Various organisations in the state, such as Women Unity SHG Federation, People’s Development Society in partnership with MSME, NABARD, and others, often organize technical skill development programmes and trainings for women of Manipur.

Government of Manipur launched Startup Manipur, to make Manipur, one of the top start-up destinations in the North East by providing the most enabling ecosystems to support and nurture start-up entrepreneurship in the State.

Besides these two programmes promoting entrepreneurship culture across Manipur, there are several schemes run by Government of Manipur and its departments that are focused towards welfare and empowerment of women of Manipur (Table 6).

Table 6: Schemes for Women

Sr. No.	Scheme Name
1.	Swayamsidha project
2.	Support to training and employment programme (STEP)
3.	Setting up of employment-cum-income generating units(norad)
4.	Short stay homes for women and girls (SSH)
5.	Swadhar
6.	Construction / expansion of hostel building for working women with a day care center
7.	Waikhom Mani Girls College
8.	S.K. Women’s College
9.	Shree Shree Gourgovinda Girls’ College

PROJECT FUNDED UNDER TDUPW, DSIR FOR CAPACITY BUILDING OF WOMEN IN MANIPUR

TDUPW, DSIR funded Project for capacity Building of women in Manipur



PROJECT TITLE

Mechanized System for Making Hawaijar- a Traditional Fermented Food of North-East India.



METHODOLOGY

Mechanization of traditional foods. Skill development of stakeholders on mechanized hawaijar making system for a more uniform and hygienic product reducing the drudgery and hazards involve.

FLOWCHART

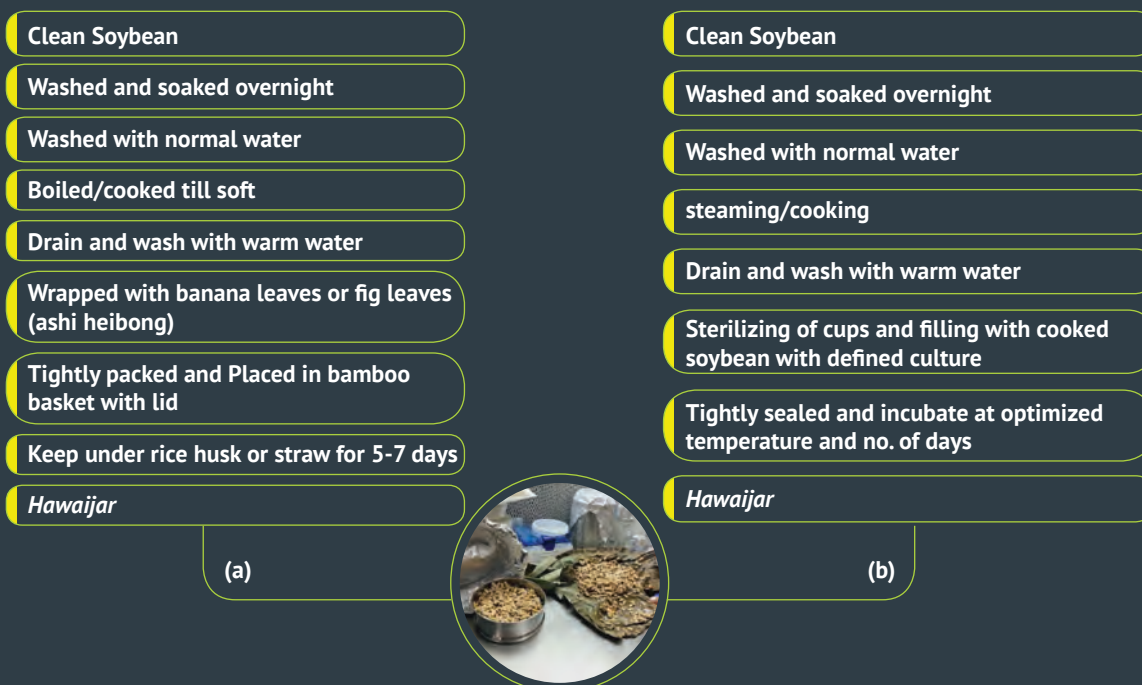


Fig. Process of making hawaijar (a) Traditional method (b) Mechanized method



VISION

Capacity building of women of Manipur, through technology dissemination of mechanized, hygienic practices of making traditional food.



OUTCOME

- Scientific method and hygiene practices for making the traditional food.
- Mechanized, integrated system for making hawaijar.
- Skilled women workforce, working in a mechanized system of preparation of traditional food, reducing drudgery.
- Deployment of mechanized hawaijar making equipment to women SHGs/ FPOs/ entrepreneurs.
- Capacity building on entrepreneurship and market linkages.



Fig. Mechanized system for making Hawaijar

Academic Partners



Funding Agency



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CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Since ancient times, contributions of Manipuri Women to society have been highlighted. The involvement is highly obvious, whether it is for social and economic arenas, or culture and sports. Women's engagement is expanding and noticeable in every domain as a result of improved quality education and literacy rates. Many female entrepreneurs have come up with inventive solutions to the difficulties that the old way of life has created. In a nutshell, Manipuri women are the backbone that holds the state together socially and economically while also assisting the state in becoming self-sufficient. Women of Manipur has strong contribution in raising the family's standard of living by earning money through skilled or unskilled work, entrepreneurship or participation in SHGs.

However, women still face a lot of obstacles in achieving her goals and the interventions provided are not sufficient to address her constraints. Women human resource development and skill development programs, are in nascent stage and yet to be prioritized in order to provide more productive and transformative results. There are a few professional and higher education institutes in the region and fewer active collaborations or initiatives with national or multinational academic & Industry partners.

Science & Technology could play a vital role in further improving the health & livelihood of rural and marginalized women of Manipur. Adoption and diffusion of technological solutions and technical capacity building of grassroots women innovators and traditional knowledge holders can make economic development process more inclusive and sustainable. This could be achieved through Rural Women Technology Parks, Skill Satellite Centers and Business Incubators in the region, capacity building of women in legal and Intellectual Property, Women skill development programmes, and other similar societal missions facilitating technology and innovation based entrepreneurship in the region could provide much needed hand holding to the women of the region.

The geopolitical and geographical nature of the region further limits the scope of growth for women. Though current education and social status of women of Manipur is promising but to truly empower women, it is imperative that an inclusive ecosystem be created with more opportunities for higher and skill based education, innovation & entrepreneurial culture, an expanded access to new market components and financial capital, while ensuring active participation of women.

Such interventions would be extremely beneficial in changing the landscape of women-led enterprises and socio-economic growth of the State in line with the Government vision of growth and progress of North-East India and 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development.



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