WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE INFORMAL MARKET ECONOMY - A STUDY OF IMA KEITHEL IN IMPHAL WEST, MANIPUR

A Dissertation submitted

to

Sikkim University

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the

Degree of Master of Philosophy

by

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Date: 7/2/2020

DECLARATION

I, Kripashree Bachaspatimayum, hereby declare that the research work embodied in the dissertation titled "**Women's Role in the Informal Market Economy- A Study of Ima Keithel in Imphal West, Manipur**" submitted to Sikkim University for the award the degree of Master of Philosophy, is my original work and it has not been submitted earlier to this or any other University for any degree.

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All the assistance and the help received during the course of investigation have been duly acknowledge by him.

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stances where selected sources appear:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF MAPS & CHARTS

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Chapter 1

WOMEN'S INFORMAL WORK IN AN URBAN ECONOMY

1.1 Women's Roles in Economic Development - An Introduction

Economic development is a process that expands the capabilities and opportunities that can be availed by people. What is necessary for development is *economic agency* - meaning the ability of individuals or collective groups to make effective economic choices and to transform their choices into desired economic outcomes. Agency is therefore understood as the process through which women and men use their given endowments to take advantage of economic opportunities to realise desired economic objectives (World Bank 2007). In the case of women's development, agency becomes the key to understanding the emergence of gender outcomes that may be converge or diverge between different societies and countries.

The ability of women to choose and act at any given point in time partly reflects the foundations that were laid down in their early lives, commencing with childhood. The expressions of agency include women's ability to move freely to earn and control income and to own, use, and dispose of any of their own material assets. Women's agency also gives them the ability to decide on when and whom they shall marry, the number of children to have, and whether or not to leave a failing marriage. Agency frees women from the risk of domestic or gender violence and gives them an influential voice in society.

The present study analyses how economic growth interacts with formal and informal institutions and markets in enabling or constraining women's agency. Economic growth alone cannot eliminate gender differences in agency, which are shaped also by existing social norms. Social norms constrain women's agency when they act as a hindrance to egalitarian laws, services, and incomes that would benefit women and men equally. Increased women's agency can in fact directly alter social norms by shifting the balances of power within the household and society. Also, the collective agency of women acting together can serve as a transformative force in society. Women's collective agency determines and in turn is determined by individual agency. While women influence their social and economic environments through their participation in informal associations and collective actions, their success depends on how their individual ability is harnessed to make effective choices.

The study also examines the question of how influential women's agency has been in shaping economic development in Manipur, and conversely how economic participation in market activities by Manipuri women has shaped their collective ability to realise desired economic

outcomes. As explained in the next section, the economic aspirations and roles of women in Manipur have been historically determined, and thus differ considerably from women's roles and aspirations that are found in many other regions of the world and India. By exploring women's economic roles from the perspective of feminist economics, the study endeavours to inform future policy-making exercises that seek the removal of the gender disparities which have so far perpetuated the subordinate positions given to women by most developing societies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This research study examines the economic roles played by women in the urban economy of Manipur, in the particular context of their active participation in market trade in the Imphal Valley.

Although rural women in many developing societies are informally engaged in paid and unpaid work, women market traders have been participating in the informal street trade in Imphal for well over a century for various historical and socioeconomic reasons. As women's participation in trade has expanded, women's economic engagement has also increased in Manipur. Women's employment ranges over various work-categories, from highly skilled artisanal labour to unskilled labour. In Manipur, women's artisanal labour is performed by skilled craftswomen who are artistic and creative and possess special weaving and sewing skills. Other unskilled urban women workers sell daily provisions as well as skilled products to consumers in the urban market.

The interest of the present researcher in pursuing this research topic is to demonstrate how women's participation in market trade makes them self-employed, self-reliant and financially independent, increasing women's agency. By acquiring economic agency through their participation in independent market trade, women traders in Manipur's unique *Ima Keithel* or Khwairamband market are ultimately able to make decisions on their own and in their own voices. This form of women's participation in Manipur has enhanced gender empowerment and women's economic status considerably in the state.

1.3 Review of Literature

1.3.1 WID/WAD/GAD Approaches to Women's Work

Three dominant approaches in the literature on women's linkage with a developing economy are identified by separate sub-discourses on

(i) '*Women in Development'* [WID], i.e. the *integration of women* globally into processes of development;

(ii) *'Women and Development'* [WAD], i.e. the *impact of development* on women's empowerment; and

(iii) *'Gender and Development'* [GAD], i.e. the consideration of *gender rights in development*.

The three approaches are reviewed in the sections below.

1.3.1.1 Women in Development

By systematically analysing gender divisions of labour in agrarian economies on a global scale, Ester Boserup's seminal work on women's roles in economic development (Boserup, 1970) revealed the gender-differentiated impact of modernisation strategies and development outcomes. By comparing women's roles in development, Boserup was able to conclude that the widely prevalent gender hierarchies of labour in agrarian developing countries had led to differentiation between 'male-based' and 'female-based' farming systems (Beneria & Sen, 1981). Although the growth of farm-work could be correlated to landholding and population density, commercial cash-cropping through application of modern technology was widening productivity gaps between men's and women's work. Wage-differentials between men and women in developing economies were directly attributable to the character of labour markets and the differential preferences of employers for male labour instead of female labour. While capital accumulation had ensured the gradual induction of some men into the ruling classes, women's work had become concentrated increasingly on subsistence cropping. As land alienation and class differentiation worsened, women preferred home-based work to work in large enterprises.

The discourse on WID was created by feminist advocacy of the need for institutional changes in development administration to ensure women are integrated into economic systems (Jaquette 1982). The male experience of development cannot be replicated by women who with lower levels of education, are relegated to low-paying monotonous jobs in industry as supplementary earners rather than acting as principal earners. Anticipating the failure of 'trickle-down' development under the modernisation paradigm, WID emphasised that strategic action is required to reduce discrimination against women in production activities. WID research was focused on women's perceptions and experiences, evolving strategies to lighten women's workloads (Stamp 1989). The WID approach however overlooked the impact of class, race and culture on the economics of work (Mbilinyi 1984; Nijeholt 1987).

1.3.1.2 Women and Development

Rather than narrowly focusing on integrating women into development, the WAD discourse examined the relationship of women to the development process. Although women working inside and outside households have always played an integral part in society, preservation of societal relations sustains existing structures of inequality. According to WAD, women's economic positions can only be strengthened through greater equity in societal structures. Bypassing the overriding influence of patriarchy, the WAD discourse views women's economic situations as being shaped by international and class inequalities.

As the WID/WAD approaches focus exclusively on development of income-generating activities in the productive sector for women, they ignore other aspects in women's work such as the growing time burdens placed by such strategies on women. This has been a reflection of the tendency of both modernisation and dependency theorists to utilise exclusively economic or political economy analyses and to discount the insights of the so-called "softer" social sciences.

1.3.1.3 Gender and Development

Emerging in the 1980s as a socialist alternative to WID, the GAD approach bridged the gap between modernisation theory and other holistic aspects of women's lives (Jaquette 1982), by questioning the validity of the gender roles ascribed to men and women in different societies. Rejecting the distinctions between public and private work commonly used to undervalue women's work within their households, GAD analyses the joint character of the work performed by women within and outside the household. Attention is thus drawn to the oppression that women face within the family. Although improvement in income stimulates women's economic activity, the increased earnings from women's activity is often claimed by men. Confusion is created by the coexistence of customary and statutory legal systems which are manipulated by men to create disadvantages for women. GAD goes further than WID and WAD in questioning existing social, economic and political structures. Gender relations can only change when women are emancipated and become full economic partners in development.

Several constraints obstructing the achievement of gender equity for women have been identified by international development agencies working in the LDCs. These include

- traditional attitudes and prejudices against women's participation
- legal impediments to women's participation
- women's lack of access to land, credit, modern techniques and equipment
- limited traditional roles of women as economic partners

- time-consuming women's ‘chores’
- high female illiteracy and limited access of women to formal education
- additional health burdens of malnourishment and frequent pregnancy
- inadequacy of research on women and work (Maguire 1984).

Most developing societies have resorted in some form to the subordination of women in order to ensure the social reproduction of labour. This meant that the prevailing gender division of labour and the patriarchal relationship between men and women had evolved from the system of social control. The prevalence of polygamy in Africa depended economically on the greater access to land and labour resources that each new wife provided to their common husband. In Boserup’s approach, nondomestic production is seen as a determinant of women's position in society. The solution to women's subordination would have to be found in women’s empowerment in social and economic relations outside the sphere of the household. From the feminist viewpoint however, women’s empowerment does not address the root causes of patriarchy. These depend instead on domestic work, economic production and social reproduction of the gender division of labour. The dominance of women in domestic work can be explained by the formation of job ladders and work clusters that create labour hierarchies within capitalist labour markets. Patriarchy has been sustained by gender stereotyping. It can only be weakened by making jobs equally accessible to men and women.

1.3.2 Theories of Informal Work

The term ‘informal sector’ was first used in the early 1970s by the anthropologist Keith Hart and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in reference to urban self-employed workers in African countries. Despite existing debates on its meaning, the concept has been useful in demonstrating that an important part of the global workforce works beyond the reach of stable full-time employment opportunities continues to be important and that the share of the informal workforce has been increasing over time. Labour markets in South Asia also show dualistic characteristics, where the relatively small, privileged and well-protected workforce in the formal sector works alongside a large unprotected informal workforce.

However, labour markets in South Asia also show considerable dynamic complexities:

(1) Along with large private firms, the public-sector units (PSUs) and public enterprises have outsourced production and downsized employment on a large scale, increasing the rates of entry of new and retrenched workers into informal self-employment. This has informalised many jobs that had once existed within the formal sector.

(2) The informal labour-market has become highly heterogeneous, combining wage workers and self-employed workers as well as several other intermediate worker-categories such as industrial outworkers and unpaid family workers.

(3) Through interdependent employment trends and commercial relationships, the growth of the informal economy has often been linked to existing trends in the formal economy.

Economic globalisation in many countries has led to the growth of a large informal workforce. Globalisation has created new job opportunities that are not 'good' or stable. Many new markets created by globalisation are not accessible to small producers. Four theoretical explanations are usually offered for the informalisation of work.

1.3.2.1 The Dualistic Explanation

Under dualism, a developing economy includes a technologically-backward traditional sector, along with a growing modern production sector. However, the vast majority of workers in LDCs only engage in traditional activity and may never hold a formal job. This reflects the mismatch between the rate of population growth and growth of modern employment, when the skillsets of people do not fit in with the structure of modern economic opportunities.

The informal sector has been viewed as comprising marginal activities, which are distinct and unrelated to the formal sector (Hart 1973; ILO 1972; Sethuraman 1976; Tokman 1978**)**. Informal activities provide income to the poor and also form an economic safety net for the poor during times of crisis. With few links to the formal economy, self-employed informal workers operate in a disadvantaged sector within the segmented labour market.

1.3.2.2 The Structuralistic Explanation

Structuralist thinking views informal work as a temporary safety net that appears during times of recession and economic crises. Thus the informal economy comprises subordinate economic micro-enterprises, with lower input and labour costs, which allow large capitalist firms to remain economically competitive (Moser 1978; Castells & Portes 1989). In structuralist thought, the formal and informal economy are seen as interlinked, with informal enterprises and workers providing cheap goods and services to the capitalist sector.

It is thus argued that capitalist development and growth will inevitably be accompanied by informalisation, as firms in the formal sector strive to maintain their competitiveness by reducing labour costs. As regulated formal firms quickly come into conflict with state

regulation and organised labour demands, they cannot respond efficiently to the threat from global competition. Structural adjustments inevitably take place through outsourcing, offshoring and subcontracting to small unregulated producers.

1.3.2.3 The Legalistic Explanation

To the legalist school of thought, the appearance of the informal economy represents a flexible 'new economic response' by micro-entrepreneurs who choose operate informally to avoid the time, effort and costs of securing formal status, while converting their economic investment into legally recognised assets (de Soto 2001).

In the globalised economy, informal employment is created by the rigidities of the legal system. Formal mercantile firms often collude with government to set the bureaucratic 'rules of the game'. The growth of the informal sector weakens legal governance and leads to relative neglect of informal workers. However, informalisation within an economy allows the self-employed to operate informally on their own, outside existing legal norms.

4.2.4 The Voluntarist Explanation

The voluntarist school believes that the choice of certain entrepreneurs to work informally is made voluntarily (Maloney 2004). Such informal entrepreneurs deliberately stay beyond regulations and taxation procedures, regardless of the legal procedures involved. Instead, their decision is based on the costs and benefits of informality versus formality. Informal enterprise avoids formal taxes and regulations, and lower costs of production. Informal enterprises are not linked directly to formal enterprises, but represent a competing economic sector.

1.3.3 Women in the Informal Economy - International Experiences

Although human existence is defined by the conditions of social reproduction and work define, women's engagements in productive and reproductive activity are treated as marginal treatment, since their work is 'invisible' from the point of view of the market. The economic contributions of women thus remain largely undervalued (Ghosh 2004). However, after market integration, the relatively high share of goods and services contributed by women to overall production activity in developing countries is becoming visible. Women additionally bear the responsibility for performing unpaid activities like housework and childcare. Women in higher income groups can hire women servants to take over these household responsibilities as paid work, working women in lower income groups find it difficult to find paid outside help to perform house-based work. They thus bear joint workloads of paid work outside their home and unpaid work within the home.

The issues of women's employment differ qualitatively from those of male employment (Elson 1987). The unemployment-poverty link that exists for men in developing countries is not so evident for women. Women are fully employed in terms of time-scale and yet are poor in absolute terms. Thus, additional workloads for women will not improve their economic condition. Increases in visible women's employment may in fact increase their overall burden of work because of their obligations to the household. Greater attention therefore has to be focused towards improving the quality, recognition and remuneration for women's work in developing countries.

Unlike developed countries in the West which had encouraged women to enter into work roles to fill in for shortages in male labour during wartime, etc., the majority of women informal workers in developing countries are either home-based workers or street vendors (Chen, Sebstad, & O'Connell, 1999). Home-based work can be part of service activity, rather than of manufacturing and simple processing. In service activities, two work-types that dominate among women are self-employment and personal services. Greater entry of women into the paid work sphere in Asia has led to gains in social recognition of women's work, and their need for greater social protection. Greater awareness of women's unpaid household work, has come in the form of public support for social services.

Government regulatory frameworks substantively affect the bargaining positions of women workers, and their wages and conditions of work. Regulations should apply equally to all sectors, including agriculture and manufacturing, as well as rural and urban work. Loose regulation weakens the bargaining positions of workers and their working conditions.

The limitations of existing labour databases limitations affect public knowledge of women's work (Nuss *et al* 1989). Labour data fail to distinguish adequately between seasonal work versus current work; full time work versus part time work; and paid work versus unpaid work, all of which are very relevant for women. Women's work is undercounted by ignoring the work of unpaid family helpers, and the nature and character of household work. Typically, the informal sector is a residual, catch-all sector, for all economic activities falling outside the 'formal', 'organised' or 'registered' sectors (Horton *(ed)*(1996). The early perception was that informal activities existed because of the failure of the organised sector to generate adequate employment. A more formal definition from ILO in 1972 described the main characteristics of the informal sector interns of ease of entry; ownership, technology and operational scale, and level of work-skills, etc.

Urban informal microenterprises in Latin America can be viewed as analogous to the voluntary small-firm sector in advanced countries, where relaxed enforcement of labour codes has allowed informal participation of labour in formal institutions (Maloney 2004). By implicitly subsidising workers who leave secure formal jobs voluntarily to take up informal entrepreneurship, social support schemes have constrained labour supply to the formal sector and raised formal wages. New economic opportunities for informal job-seekers in Latin American economies have made their participation informal work a conscious choice instead of a residual choice. Provisioning of formal sector benefits in most developing economies is frequently inefficient and of poor quality. When social benefits fall short of tax payments by formal workers, an incentive exists to operate informally. Informal employment in low-technology firms has also been attractive because labour productivity in the formal sector is also low. Increasing the size and productivity of the formal sector probably offers the largest hope for raising the standard of living of workers throughout the economy over the longer term.

Among informal workers, poverty is largely the result of low levels of human capital. Both in advanced developed economies in the past and in Latin American developing economies at present, the shift from the informal to formal work has been gradual and prolonged. Productivity of formal work can be best improved through investment in education and human capital. Neither formal or informal work may offer an immediate exit from poverty. However, the informal sector offers informal entrepreneurs a degree of dignity and autonomy not found in formal work.

Women routinely encounter roadblocks in their aspirations for economic advancement. The contribution of women's work is excluded from GNP computations, because of traditional male prejudices on the nature of productive and unproductive work. Women are also left out in definitions of the workforce, and thereby excluded from policies for industrialisation, wage employment and education. Many societies in Africa do not recognise women's rights to legal ownership over land and cattle, which are their basic means of livelihood. Inequalities between men and women in Africa are rooted in oppressive customs and laws that deny women the right to land and property and the opportunity to acquire new livelihood skills through egalitarian education.

Following the end of the colonial era, the African countries have been characterised by largescale informalisation. Wide prevalence of the informal sector throughout Africa is attributable to

(a) the lack of economic development in general, compounded by low economic growth
and poor employment generation from the 1970s
(b) structural reforms in economic policy.

Meanwhile, agricultural productivity has been stagnant. Urbanisation and growth of the urban labour force has consequently been high, with high work participation among women. Privatisation of the economy has caused formal employment in public sector to shrink. Many new women entrants to the labour market are therefore unable to secure formal employment, and have to depend on low-age work in the informal economy. Progressive integration of the African economy into global trading systems has created a wave of cheap imports, displacing indigenous production (Rogerson & McCormick 2004). African women workers mainly congregate in informal enterprise which place them at significant disadvantage within the labour market. Because of high costs of economic formalisation, African women's enterprises operate informally.

Commercial enterprise by women traders in Kenya's rural markets are intimately bound with the socioeconomic lives of rural Kenyan families. While augmenting food supplies, women's trading activities also provide financial resources for housing & asset acquisition, and children's health & education, etc. Kenyan women market traders are active contributors to economic and human development.

Globalisation has greatly widened disparities within regions and between countries, leading to failures in convergence, and stubbornly persisting poverty in spite of national growth. With the growing domination of financial capital and capital mobility, there has been a net transfer of resources from less developed to developed countries. Semi-industrial developing countries with "emerging markets" have also been subject to cyclical economic volatility. Growing concentration of ownership in international production and distribution chains has compelled the takeover of domestic producing units he emerging markets by large multinationals at times of economic crisis.

Because of the widening of value chains, the worldwide tendency has been to rely less on direct production at a given location, and to subcontract a growing part of production activity to outside agencies (Carr & Chen, 1999). Several major 'manufacturers without factories' now dominate international markets by providing design knowhow and tight quality control to outsourced production systems. Subcontracting adds additional flexibility, and is used by

intensely competitive exporting sectors like garments that outsource production to Bangladesh, China and Latin America. Home-based workers working either on their own account or on subcontracting basis, also make a vast range of products under value chain systems.

The subcontracting producers in turn vary in manufacturing size and capacity, from to pure middlemen collecting the output of home-based workers to medium-sized factories (Bonacich *et al.* 1994). The crucial contribution of women workers in the value chain of to international production activity, either as piece-rated home-workers supplying goods to middlemen or as wage labour in subcontracting factories, is being increasingly recognised in the complex production chain. [Beneria and Roldan, 1987; Mejia, 1997]

General decline in the employment elasticities of production in developing countries reflects the impact of international concentration in export-led production. In poor Asian economies, underemployment remains a significant concern. Poverty has persisted because of the failures of government intervention and low employment generation. With recent decline in organised employment in South Asia, the unorganised or informal sector has grown as a major "low wage-low productivity" employer. The share of women's employment in export industries in Asia had increased throughout the 1990s in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Myanmar, and at newer sectors and locations like the garments industry of Bangladesh. Between 1980 to 1995, the share of women in total employment in the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and export-oriented manufacturing industries typically exceeded 70 per cent.

Three main macroeconomic factors have contributed to changes in the patterns of women's work. Trade liberalisation of trade and emphasis on export production with greater capital mobility created a new regional division of labour, requiring more labour market flexibility with lower wages flexible labour contracts. This made the hiring of women workers more attractive. Technological changes facilitated the decentralisation of work skills and manufacturing work. Substantial growth of in ancillarisation through decentralised manufacturing units constructed a new base for complex production and value chains.

Table 1.1: Sectoral Composition of Employment in South Asia by Gender

(in percentages)

	BANGLADESH		*INDIA*		*NEPAL*		*PAKISTAN*	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture & Fisheries	54.3	75.7	53.1	74.8	67.1	85.2	36.0	64.2
Mining	0.4	1.1	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.0	<0.01	<0.01
Manufacturing	7.2	7.7	11.5	10.1	7.7	3.9	14.0	14.6
Utilities	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.0	<0.01
Construction	2.9	0.5	5.7	1.7	6.2	1.1	7.5	0.3
Trade, Hotels & Restaurants	18.0	2.5	13.1	4.3	7.3	3.7	17.3	1.9
Transport, Storage & Communications	7.2	0.4	5.2	0.4	2.7	0.1	7.3	0.4
Finance & Business	1.0	0.2	1.6	0.5	0.9	0.2	1.1	<0.01
Community, Social & Personal Services	8.8	11.9	8.7	7.9	7.5	5.6	15.7	18.4
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: *World Bank (2004)*

Feminisation of employment in Asian countries reflected the employers' need to find cheaper and more 'flexible' sources of labour, coinciding with shifts to part-time work or piece-rate contracts, and greater freedom for hiring and firing over the economic cycle. The practice was euphemistically described as 'labour market flexibility'. Women employees were

(a) less prone to form organised unions,

(b) more willing to accept lower wages because of lower aspirations, and

(c) easier to dismiss using life-cycle criteria such as marriage and childbirth.

Paradoxically, the feminisation of production activities led to greater recognition and remuneration for women's work, improving the relative status of women within their households, and contributing to their empowerment.

The persistence of gender divisions of labour in Bangladesh has been related to economic causes like low wages and unequal access to land, credit and infrastructure, and to existing sociocultural gender norms about production and women´s mobility (Hossain, Bose & Ahmad 2004). Increasing women's participation in non-agricultural trade reflects improved education and has lowered earnings disparity. Gender empowerment has been defined in terms of the 'ability to make choices'. However, the credible measurement of women's economic roles becomes difficult in agricultural households where women's wage work overlaps with unpaid work and consequently remain invisible (Kabeer 1999). Women's empowerment rests on increased economic participation, growing control over resources, enhanced decision-making roles, and resulting welfare dividends.

Research on economic roles of women has been important in Bangladesh (Abdullah & Zeidenstein 1982). Bangladeshi women in low-income households contribute longer hours than men to agricultural work than to non-agricultural activities, mostly as unpaid family workers. However, they exercise little decision-making power. Most institutional

development programmes only address men most institutional development programmes only address men to whom the ownership of productive resources is confined. Even in Bangladesh's successful micro credit programme that target lending to women, women usually become a facade for continuing male economic control of resources. Because of prevailing cultural norms, women remain at a disadvantage in Bangladesh, mostly contributing to production in the service sector. However, as most Bangladesh gender studies are village-based, it is difficult to generate a country-wide picture.

While the burden of household responsibilities on Bangladeshi women has increased with growing outmigration of Bangladeshi male household heads, women have also achieved relative gains in empowerment. In Bangladesh, like other developing countries, increased women's participation in informal trade has been the result of an unfavourable economy with low growth and widespread unemployment. Increased participation of Bangladeshi women in the informal economy has thus reflected their desperate attempt to escape rural poverty traps.

In South Asia as a whole, women's work participation rates rank among the lowest in the world, at Pakistan (16%), Bangladesh (23%), India (25%), against higher levels for Sri Lanka (40%), and Nepal (78%) (World Bank 2004). Male work participation rates, ranging from 69% in India to 85% in Pakistan and Nepal are more comparable to other regions of the world. Women in South Asia are more likely to work in agriculture, and far less likely to work in trade. Also, a far higher share of women workers than of men workers are engaged in the informal economy.

The non-homogeneous labour markets found in developing countries dichotomise the nature of work from the manner in which work is created. Governed by prevailing labour regulations, formal employment is only created by government and private non-corporate enterprise. However, in the developing labour markets that prevail in South Asia, the vast majority of the working population has to generate employment using its own ingenuity, capital and skills. Unlike standard homogeneous labour market models with inelastic labour supply, where wages are determined solely by demand conditions (Mazumdar 1997), developing labour markets in South Asia are ruled by dualistic dichotomies between 'formal' and 'informal' labour. In a developing economy therefore, the concept of national average productivity of labour is misleading. In highly segmented labour markets, vast productivity differences will persist between alternative labour market segments.

1.3.4 Gaps in the Literature

Many existing studies reviewed above have explored the gender roles of women in economic and unpaid work in countries and regions across the world. Although informalisation of women's work has been viewed as a major problem in such studies, and the invisibility of women's work is attributed to the strength of existing patriarchy in society, not many studies have focused on the positive aspects of women's economic participation in changing the character of society. Globalisation has been studied as a force that is devaluing women's work in many countries and contexts, ranging from the developed world to Latin America, Africa, and South Asia. The GAD approach makes the recognition of women's economic agency a priority. However, as most studies on this line span entire continents and countries, little topical information is generated on how success can be generated by women economic participants on their own. With too much attention being given to the need for Government and other outside interventions, the role of women's agency in their own empowerment has not been explored adequately. Even the cited study of Manipur's Khwairamband Bazar looks at independent women traders as street vendors and catalogues their harassment and other difficulties. Hence the nature of women's economic agency that has been created by Manipuri women in the Imphal Valley has not been looked at closely. Nor are there many other localised studies of urban women traders in other parts of the world and India.

1.4 Research Design

The design of the present research study is outlined below through the set of research objectives, research questions and research hypotheses to be tested.

1.4.1 Research Objectives

The main objectives of the present research study were

1. to study the consequences of women's independent participation in market trade on their social and economic status
2. to assess the impact of women's economic roles in market trade on women's employment patterns in the Imphal Valley
3. to assess the impact of women's economic participation on growth of the urban economy in Imphal
4. to examine how women's participation in economic trade is contributing to their financial independence
5. to examine how incomes earned by women traders in the *Ima Keithel* Market contribute to subsistence and their standard of living.
6. to define the determining factors that affect urban women's decisions to join economic trade or to stay out of economic activity.

7. to examine whether women's participation in informal trade at *Ima Keithel* has been able to reduce the gaps between the rich and the urban poor along racial and ethnic lines.

1.4.2 Research Questions

The study was undertaken to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the principal contributing factors and hurdles that affect women's work participation?
2. How do women in market activities divide their time between economic and domestic responsibilities?
3. What is the extent of economic and family responsibilities that are shouldered by women in market trade market?
4. How does women's economic participation increase women's socio-political roles in governance and empowerment?
5. Has the longtime women's participation in market trade in Manipur led to improvements in the socioeconomic status of Manipuri women?
6. How has women's economic participation in trade affected the economic participation of males?

1.4.3 Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested by the present research study included the following:

1. Women's economic participation in informal trade increases economic growth.
2. Increased women's work participation enhances women's empowerment.
3. Increased women's work participation elevates the sociocultural status of women.
4. Women's participation in trade does not improve their standard of living.
5. Women's economic participation has restricted male participation rates in trade.
6. As women traders commit more time to working activities, their attention to children and the family declines.
7. Increased women's participation in market trade lessens the hurdles and obstacles women encounter in life.

1.5 Methodology of the Study

The methodology for the research study was survey-based. A detailed questionnaire- survey was be carried out on selected women traders who were already engaged in market activities in the Khwairamband Bazar area of Imphal. Khwairamband is also popularly known as *Ima Keithel* ('Mothers' Market') because of the high volume buying and selling operations wholly carried out there by women. As preliminary survey has shown, the experienced women

traders mostly in the middle age-group meet the entire urban demand in Imphal for vegetables, fish and fruit, besides trading in garments, clothing, etc. As such, the 'Mother's Market' is a major link in the commodity distribution chain for Imphal.

Five sub-samples of Khwairamband women traders were surveyed in the study These were grouped into women vendors who were licensed to trade in household furnishing, textiles and woven cloth, and various manufactured goods, and other temporary or unlicensed women vendors who traded primarily in household necessities, perishable vegetables and preserved food items. Each group was subject to different capital-scales and different orders of risk. Based on the research issues earlier raised by the literature on women in economic roles, the structured questionnaire explored

(a) the socioeconomic background of the Manipuri women who had opted for urban market trade occupations,
(b) the actual scale and scope of their trading operations, including capital requirements and financial turnovers,
(c) their exercise of agency in their social positions and economic responsibilities within their families, and
(d) their collective agency, empowering them as women working and acting in solidarity together, in defending their economic rights in urban economic space.

1.6 Chapterisation of the Study

Based on the present research study and its survey findings, this dissertation is presented in the seven chapters described below:

Chapter 1: WOMEN'S INFORMAL WORK IN AN URBAN ECONOMY

After exploring the changing roles played by women in the development process, the chapter introduces the research problems and its background. The justifications for conducting an intensive study of women's involvement in informal trading in Manipur are laid out. A detailed review of the received literature on theoretical approaches to women's work follows, with explorations of the theories of informal work, and the international and domestic experiences of women working in the informal economy. The research design is then outlined, along with the research objectives, the research questions to be explored and the research hypotheses to be tested.

Chapter 2: GENDER DEMOGRAPHY OF NORTH EAST INDIA AND MANIPUR

The fundamental point of interest for development studies in the North East region is its frontier location. While strategic locational features have left some impact on regional

development features, the impact on all states has not been equal. The regional distribution of population and gender across the North East states is therefore explored to obtain a general idea of how Manipur compares to the rest of the North East region in this respect. Differences between different regions and district of Manipur are also noted. groups of states are noted

Chapter 3: WOMEN'S WORK PARTICIPATION IN NORTH EAST INDIA AND MANIPUR

The character of the women's workforce and women's work participation in North East India is explored in the next chapter, noting inter-district and intra-district differences in work participation as they appear. When compared with women in the rest of India, considerable differences exist in the main work and marginal work involvement of women in the North East region, which is been widely ascribed to differences in the construction of tribal society and general society. From the perspective of the present study, gender differences should be attributable to differences in the construction of society and the levels of women's empowerment. These are seen to differ, even between the states of the North East region.

Chapter 4: MANIPUR AND ITS ECONOMIC HISTORY

As a base for the study, the chapter presents an exploration of the economic history of Manipur from secondary sources that outline the process of evolution of the Manipur economy. Along with a description of the principal landscape features and communications linkages that determine the pattern of development in Manipur, the evolution of land tenure and agrarian relations in the region is explored with principal focus on regional labour systems. The effects these have had on the evolution of the subsistence economy, and on the artisanal economy and the development of tradecrafts are outlined subsequently. The historical evolution of women's economic roles in Manipur is explored in this context, prefacing empirical examination of women's roles in the informal trading economy of the Imphal Valley.

Chapter 5: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MARKET TRADE - FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

After describing the defining features of the Khwairamband market-site, the results of the vendor-survey conducted there are analysed with respect to ethnicity, language, age and education, family characteristics and living conditions of vendor households. Capitalisation patterns and work-profiles of women vendors are also analysed.

Chapter 6: WOMEN'S VENDING TRADE ANALYSIS - FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

The vendor-survey results are analysed further in terms of licensed and unlicensed vendor-categories, the commodities traded and the respective vending specialisations of women vendors in different sub-markets, and the seasonality of sales turnover. A detailed analysis of

the nature of commodity trade is also made with respect to capitalisation, seasonal turnover and profit, in order to determine the incentives and barriers to women's enterprise.

Chapter 7: PROMOTING WOMEN'S INFORMAL ENTERPRISE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - SUMMARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A summary review is made of insights gained from studying women's vending enterprise in Manipur and its effect on women's economic status and agency. Based on the review, generalised principles and economic policy recommendations are generated, which can aid in replicating the Manipuri women's experience in broader settings outside Manipur.

Chapter 2

GENDER DEMOGRAPHY OF NORTH EAST INDIA AND MANIPUR

2.1. Regional Population in North East India

The eight states of North East India together comprised just under 8 percent of the total Indian land mass, but held only 3.8 percent of the country's aggregate population in 2011. Because of multiple factors like regional topography and political history, etc., the North East region is much more sparsely populated than the rest of India. In 2011, the North East had an aggregate population of 4.58 million persons living within a combined regional area of 262,179 sq.km. In terms of land extents, Arunachal Pradesh (83,743 sq.km) is the largest of the eight North East states, followed by Assam (78,438 sq.km), Meghalaya (22,429 sq.km), Manipur (22,327 sq.km), Mizoram (21,081 sq.km) and Tripura (10,486 sq.km). Sikkim (7,096 sq.km) was the smallest North East state, holding a population of 6.11 lakh persons within its rugged mountain terrain. Within a territory comprising 7.98 percent of India's land area spread over eight states, the North East region (NER) held 3.78 percent of the aggregate Indian population in 2011. The density of population settlement for the region as a whole amounted to 175 persons per sq.km. However, since Arunachal Pradesh and Assam incorporate over 60 percent of the NE land area and over 70 percent of its population, the remainder of the North East is still relatively empty compared to India as a whole.

Table 2.1: Population of North East States in India 2011

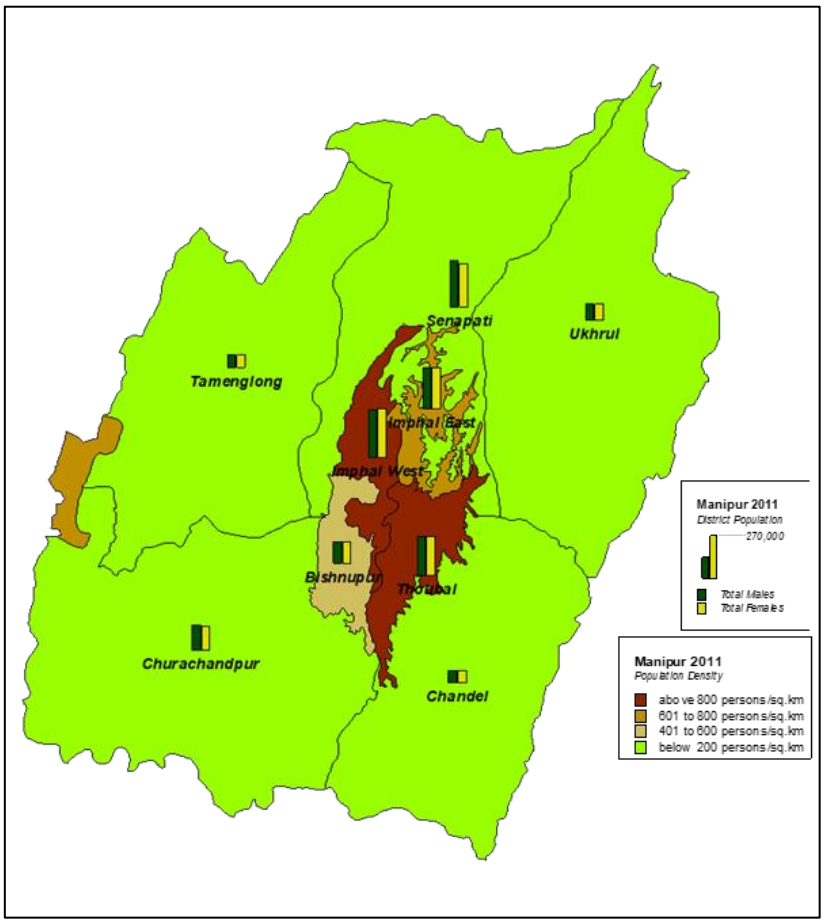
State	Area sq.km	% India Area	2011 Population	% India Population	2011 Males	2011 Females	2011 FMR
Sikkim	7,096	0.22	6,10,577	0.05	3,23,070	2,87,507	890
Assam	78,438	2.39	3,12,05,576	2.58	1,59,39,443	1,52,66,133	958
Meghalaya	22,429	0.68	29,66,889	0.25	14,91,832	14,75,057	989
Arunachal	83,743	2.55	13,83,727	0.11	7,13,912	6,69,815	938
Nagaland	16,579	0.50	19,78,502	0.16	10,24,649	9,53,853	931
Manipur	22,327	0.68	28,55,794	0.24	14,38,586	14,17,208	985
Mizoram	21,081	0.64	10,97,206	0.09	5,55,339	5,41,867	976
Tripura	10,486	0.32	36,73,917	0.30	18,74,376	17,99,541	960
Total NER	**2,62,179**	**7.98**	**4,57,72,188**	**3.78**	**2,33,61,207**	**2,24,10,981**	**959**
Total INDIA	**32,87,469**	**100**	**1,21,08,54,977**	**100**	**62,32,70,258**	**58,75,84,719**	**943**

Source: Census of India, 2011

Among the North East states, population is much denser in the large valley state of Assam (holding 2.39% of India's area and 2,58% of India's population), but is less crowded in North East hill states like Nagaland (with 0.5% of India's area and 0.16% of India's population) and Mizoram (with 0.64% of India's area and 0.09% of India's population). Manipur (with 0.68% of India's area and 0.24% of India's population) thus held an intermediate position compared to the other hill states. Covering an area of 2,230 sq.km equivalent to 8.5 percent of the aggregate area of the North East region, Manipur in 2011 held 6.4 percent of the region's

aggregate population. Besides Assam, the only other North East state with a denser population than Manipur was Tripura, with 4 percent of the combined area and 8 percent of the combined population of North East India. As in Tripura, fast population growth in the North East states over the last six decades has been driven by in-migration.

MAP 2.1: Population Densities in Manipur Districts in 2011



The pattern of population settlement across different North East states has been radically affected by regional topography, land relief and land availability, and also the presence of large sub-regional areas reserved for indigenous tribal settlement. Because of snow-covered highland and vast forests, as well as the existence of several protected tribal areas, the largest state in the North East, Arunachal Pradesh, is also the least settled state with average settlement of only 17 persons per sq.km in 2011. In contrast, the second-largest valley state of Assam is also the most populous state in the North East, with settlement of 398 persons per sq.km in 2011, exceeding the all-India figure of 368 persons per sq.km. As hill states ringing the Assam Valley, the similarly-sized states of Meghalaya and Manipur had very similar populations of 29.67 lakh and 28.56 lakh respectively, and population densities of 132 and 128 persons per sq.km in 2011. Within a more compact land area, Nagaland in contrast had a fair-sized population of 19.79 lakh persons, raising settlement density to 119 persons per

sq.km. Because of the large extent of land under permanent snow-cover, high-altitude pasture and riverine forests, the Himalayan state of Sikkim had a compact population and low population density of 86 persons per sq.km in 2011.

2.2 Long-run Population Growth in the North East

Decennial population growth in the North East states between 1901-2011 may be traced from long-term figures provided in Census 2011. Population in the North East region, comprising the eight modern-day states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim has grown faster over this 110-year period than that of India as a whole, and now comprises 3.8 percent of the all-India population of 1210.6 million persons in 2011, compared with 1.82 percent of the all-India aggregate population of 238.4 million persons in 1901. In 1901, the present territories of Assam had contributed 76 percent to total population of the North East. By 2011, the state share of Assam in the aggregate North East population fell to 69 percent, indicating faster increase in the population shares of the other North East states including Manipur.

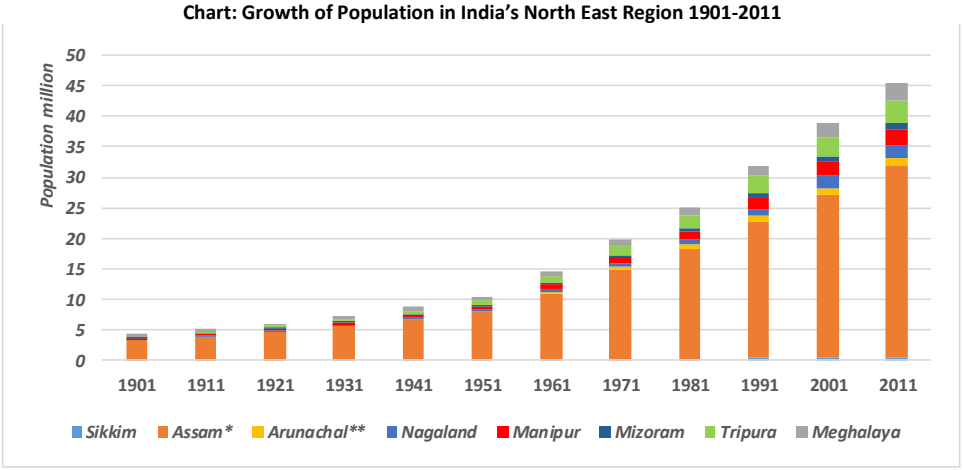
Table 2.2: Population Growth in the North East Region 1901-2011

(000 Persons)

	Census Years											
State	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Sikkim	59	88	82	110	122	138	162	210	316	406	541	610
Assam	3,290	3,849	4,637	5,560	6,695	8,029	10,837	14,625	18,041	22,414	26,656	31,205
Meghalaya	341	394	422	481	556	606	769	1,012	1,336	1,775	2,319	2,966
Arunachal	na	na	na	na	na	na	337	468	632	865	1,098	1,383
Nagaland	102	149	159	179	190	213	369	516	775	1,210	1,990	1,978
Manipur	284	346	384	446	512	578	780	1,073	1,421	1,837	2,294	2,570
Mizoram	82	91	98	124	153	196	266	332	494	690	889	1,097
Tripura	173	230	304	382	513	639	1,142	1,556	2,053	2,757	3,199	3,673
Total NER	**4,331**	**5,147**	**6,086**	**7,282**	**8,741**	**10,399**	**14,662**	**19,792**	**25,068**	**31,954**	**38,986**	**45,482**
Total INDIA	**2,38,396**	**2,52,093**	**2,51,321**	**2,78,977**	**3,18,661**	**3,61,088**	**4,39,235**	**5,48,160**	**6,83,329**	**8,46,303**	**10,28,737**	**12,10,569**

Source: Census of India, 2011

Chart: Growth of Population in India's North East Region 1901-2011



Long-run population growth trends in the North East states have been far sharper than the population growth rates witnessed by India as a whole. While the country's population multiplied five-fold from 238 million to 1,210 million between 1901-2011, the aggregate population of the North East states increased more than ten-fold from 4.33 million to 45.48 million over the same period. Because of geographical distinctness and regional isolation, the states of North East India had been the traditional homes for tribal populations of various ethnicities. Since the colonial administration had restricted outside settlement through inner-line regulation, the normal course of migration and economic evolution had been arrested. As these regulations have gradually eased after 1951, there has been growing urbanisation and resettlement within the states along with growth in size of the regional economy. This has generated new population growth after 1951 across all North East states. After 1951, population growth in the North East underwent a spike that has been attributed to migration and population resettlement of after Partition. The two states where this effect is said to be most noticeable are Assam and Tripura. However, given the low base populations of 1901, the order of increase in population has been remarkably high also in border tribal states like Nagaland and Mizoram, where the 2011 population has increased well over 13 times compared to 1901. In Meghalaya and Manipur, long-run population growth has been closer to the regional average, with the order of population increase at 8.7 times in Meghalaya and 9.0 times in Manipur.

Gender distributions within the North East population differ quite significantly compared to the rest of the country. These appear to bear direct relationship to the relative status accorded to women in society. For the North East as a whole, the female-to-male ratio (FMR) of 959 females per 1,000 males in 2011, stood considerably ahead the all-India FMR of 943. Among the North East states, the best FMR of 989 was found in Meghalaya, followed by Manipur with 985. Social structures in both states are less restrictive, therefore favouring women. In Meghalaya, Khasi society is built around the system of matriliny, where family inheritance passes down the female line from mother to daughter. This creates entitlement, economic proprietorship and empowerment among women in Meghalaya. Women in Manipur too play active work-roles in many independent and skill-based productive activities, giving a sense of economic and gender autonomy to them. While this is true also for tribal society in Mizoram, the institutions of patriarchy are stronger in Arunachal and Nagaland where men have a more dominant role in decision-making.

Over the colonial era, tribal areas in the states of Tripura and Assam were not under inner-line protection. Because of considerable in-migration and resettlement since the independence and partition of India, these have more complex gender situations, where the gender norms that

prevail in tribal society have been overlaid by the economic rules of migrant societies. As a result, the FMRs for these two states are almost similar, at 960 and 958 respectively. In the small state of Sikkim, where work-related male in-migration has played a strong role in the recent growth of population, the low FMR of 890 women per 1,000 men indicates a very high female deficit.

2.3 Longterm Growth of Manipur Population

The growth of population in Manipur from 1901-2011, which presented in more detail below, is tied up intimately with the political history of Manipur. Manipur was ruled as a kingdom under British protection till 1949, with constitutional governance being established in 1947 under a separate State constitution. Under the Instrument of Accession signed by the Maharaja in 1949, the erstwhile kingdom of Manipur merged into India as a Part C state under the direct administration of the Central Government. Following state reorganisation in India, Manipur was redesignated as a Union Territory (UT) in 1956, eventually becoming a full-fledged State of the Union of India on 21 January 1972.

Growing slowly from 2.84 lakh persons in 1901 to 5.78 lakh persons in 1951 just after integration of Manipur with India, the population of Manipur began to expand much more rapidly after 1951 in a similar pattern to that seen across the other NE states. The sharpest decennial population increase in Manipur of 37.6 percent occurred between 1961-71. Thus until the period 2001-11, when decennial growth abated to the present 12 percent, decennial population growth in Manipur between 1971-1991 ranged between 24.9 percent to 32.4 percent per decade. Sharp decennial increases in population also occurred in the other NE states through the same period.

Table 2.3: District Population of Manipur Districts in 2011

District	Total Population	Total Males	Total Females	*Decennial Growth 2001-11*	*FMR*	*Density/ sq.km*	*% Total State Population*	*% Total Male Population*	*% Total Female Population*
Tamenglong	1,40,143	71,762	68,381	*25.69*	*953*	*32*	*5.15*	*5.24*	*5.06*
Senapati	3,54,972	1,83,081	1,71,891	*25.16*	*939*	*109*	*13.04*	*13.37*	*12.71*
Ukhrul	1,83,115	94,013	89,102	*30.07*	*948*	*40*	*6.73*	*6.86*	*6.59*
Chandel	1,44,028	74,543	69,485	*21.72*	*932*	*43*	*5.29*	*5.44*	*5.14*
Churachandpur	2,71,274	1,37,748	1,33,526	*19.03*	*969*	*59*	*9.97*	*10.06*	*9.88*
Imphal West	5,14,683	2,53,628	2,61,055	*15.82*	*1029*	*992*	*18.91*	*18.52*	*19.31*
Imphal East	4,52,661	2,25,130	2,27,531	*14.63*	*1011*	*638*	*16.63*	*16.44*	*16.83*
Thoubal	4,20,517	2,09,674	2,10,843	*15.48*	*1006*	*818*	*15.45*	*15.31*	*15.59*
Bishnupur	2,40,363	1,20,185	1,20,178	*15.36*	*1000*	*485*	*8.83*	*8.77*	*8.89*
MANIPUR	**27,21,756**	**13,69,764**	**13,51,992**	***24.50***	***987***	***135***	***100***	***100***	***100***
MANIPUR HILLS	***10,93,532***	***5,61,147***	***5,32,385***	***23.96***	***949***	***49***	***40.18***	***40.97***	***39.38***
MANIPUR VALLEY	***16,28,224***	***8,08,617***	***8,19,607***	***15.33***	***1014***	***728***	***59.82***	***59.03***	***60.62***

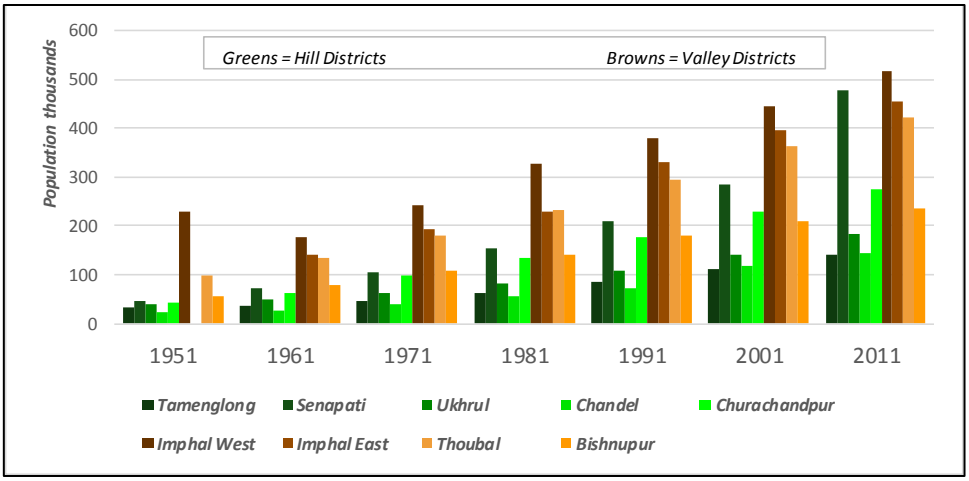
Source: Computed from Census of India, 2011

Till 2016, Manipur was geographically divided into nine districts, with Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal and Bishnupur districts defining the densely-populated lowlands of the Imphal

Valley, and Tamenglong, Senapati, Ukhrul, Chandel and Churachandpur defining the outer ring of hill districts. The seven new districts of Noney, Kangpokpi (Sadar Hills), Kamjong, Tengnoupal, Pherzawi, Jiribam and Kakching were created in December 2016, by bifurcating the erstwhile districts of Tamenglong, Senapati, Ukhrul, Chandel, Churachandpur, Imphal East and Thoubal. This raised number of Manipur districts from to 9 to 16. However, since the present analysis is based primarily on data from the 2011 Census, the previous 9-district classification is adhered to in this study, for the sake of inter-censal comparability.

Till 1951 the growth of population in the state was gradual, and the population of Manipur doubled over this period. Over the period since 1951, as settlement increased in the hill districts, the proportionate share of the population that resides in the Valley to the total Manipur population has declined from 67.1 percent in 1951 to 57.2 percent currently. With population growth accelerating sharply after 1961, the state population has increased by nearly three times over the subsequent period. Population growth of this high order reflects the spillover impact of Naga and Kuki migration into Manipur, as population in Nagaland has also been growing sharply during the period. As seen from the table, much of the increase in the state's population has been absorbed by accelerated urbanisation, particularly in the Imphal region, from under 9 percent urban population in 1961 to nearly 30 percent urbanisation in 2011. Shortly after Manipur's merger with India, a lull and momentary contraction in urbanisation did occur in between 1951-61, as urban definitions in Manipur underwent change. Thereafter, the urban population in the state has risen nearly six times between 1961-2011. The impact of in-migration and urban growth has also been felt in increasing density of population in the state, which rose from a mere 13 persons per sq.km in 1901 to 128 persons per sq.km in 2011.

Chart: Population Growth in Manipur Districts 1951-2011



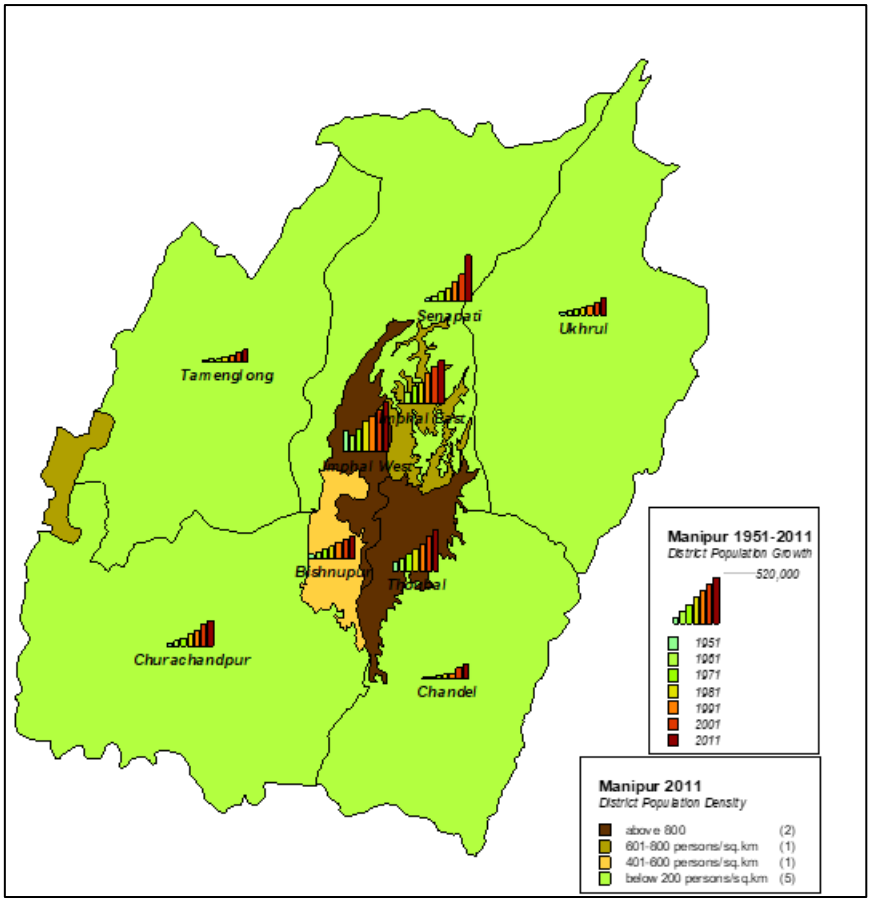
From the inter-district distribution of population in Manipur in 2011, the four Imphal Valley districts of Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal and Bishnupur can be seen to have higher population densities averaging 1014 persons/sq.km, compared to the five surrounding hill districts of Tamenglong, Senapati, Ukhrul, Chandel and Churachandpur which averaged a density of 949 persons/sq.km. Thus with 90 percent of the total state area, the Manipur hill districts held just over 40.2 percent of the state population in 2011. On the other hand, the crowded Imphal Valley held nearly 60 percent of the state population in 2011, while covering 10 percent of the state area. Because a significant area of the Imphal Valley is covered by Loktak lake, intense settlement pressure has led to rapid urbanisation in the valley.

Table 2.4: Growth of District Populations in Manipur 1951-2011

	CENSUS YEARS						
District	**1951**	**1961**	**1971**	**1981**	**1991**	**2001**	**2011**
Tamenglong	33,519	36,518	44,975	62,289	86,278	1,11,499	1,40,651
Senapati	46,608	72,039	1,04,175	1,55,421	2,08,406	2,83,621	4,79,148
Ukhrul	41,182	48,590	62,229	82,946	1,09,275	1,40,778	1,83,998
Chandel	24,049	27,679	38,723	56,444	71,014	1,18,327	1,44,182
Churachandpur	44,496	62,418	98,114	1,34,776	1,76,184	2,27,905	2,74,143
Imphal West	2,30,810	1,78,235	2,41,155	3,27,418	3,80,801	4,44,382	5,17,992
Imphal East	*	1,40,781	1,93,305	2,28,728	3,30,460	3,94,876	4,56,113
Thoubal	99,631	1,34,924	1,81,771	2,31,781	2,93,958	3,64,140	4,22,168
Bishnupur	57,340	78,853	1,08,306	1,41,150	1,80,773	2,08,368	2,37,399
MANIPUR	**5,77,635**	**7,80,037**	**10,72,753**	**14,20,953**	**18,37,149**	**22,93,896**	**28,55,794**
MANIPUR HILLS	***1,89,854***	***2,47,244***	***3,48,216***	***4,91,876***	***6,51,157***	***8,82,130***	***12,22,122***
MANIPUR VALLEY	***3,87,781***	***5,32,793***	***7,24,537***	***9,29,077***	***11,85,992***	***14,11,766***	***16,33,672***

Source: Census of India, 2011
Note: In Census 1951 records, Imphal was treated as an undivided district. Formal bifurcation took place in 1997.

MAP: Population Growth in Manipur Districts 1951-2011



In the meantime, as the Manipur state population has grown nearly fivefold between 1951-2011, the population of the Manipur hills has increased by well over 6.4 times compared to the growth of the Valley population by 4.2 times. Still, the aggregate population of the four Valley districts in 2011 amounted to 16.34 lakh persons, well over the population of 12.22 lakhs living in the six Manipur Hills districts. Thus the state of Manipur presents stark contrasts between the dense populated Valley (2011 density 730 persons/sq.km) and the sparsely-populated hills (2011 density 42 persons/sq.km).

2.4 Gender Population Trends in Manipur

The bulk of the state population has traditionally been held by the Valley districts of Imphal West, Imphal East and Thoubal. Because of the large extent of area covered by Loktak Lake, Bishnupur holds a smaller population. In the hill districts, the largest population is held by Senapati district, which also has the smallest area. Hence, settlement pressure is also relatively high in Senapati district. A particular feature uniformly in the Imphal Valley districts is the excess population of females over males in the districts. This leads to high female-male ratios (FMRs i.e. number of females per thousand male) exceeding 1000 in all these districts. The Manipur hill districts in contrast have an excess of males over females in their population.

Table 2.5: Growth of Urban and Rural Population in Manipur 1901-2011

Census Year	Total Population	Urban Population	Rural Population	*Density/ sq.km*	*% Urban-isation*	*Overall FMR*	*Urban FMR*	*Rural FMR*
1901	2,84,465	72,234	2,12,231	*13*	*25.39*	*1037*	*1036*	*1038*
1911	3,46,222	74,650	2,71,572	*15*	*21.56*	*1029*	*1051*	*1023*
1921	3,84,016	80,003	3,04,013	*17*	*20.83*	*1041*	*1091*	*1029*
1931	4,45,606	85,804	3,59,802	*20*	*19.26*	*1065*	*1137*	*1048*
1941	5,12,069	99,716	4,12,353	*23*	*19.47*	*1055*	*1102*	*1044*
1951	5,77,635	2,862	5,74,773	*26*	*0.50*	*1036*	*633*	*1039*
1961	7,80,037	67,717	7,12,320	*35*	*8.68*	*1015*	*985*	*1018*
1971	10,72,753	1,41,492	9,31,261	*48*	*13.19*	*980*	*980*	*980*
1981	14,20,953	3,75,460	10,45,493	*64*	*26.42*	*971*	*969*	*971*
1991	18,37,149	5,05,645	13,31,504	*82*	*27.52*	*958*	*975*	*951*
2001	22,93,896	5,75,968	17,17,928	*103*	*25.11*	*974*	*1009*	*963*
2011	28,55,794	8,34,154	20,21,640	*128*	*29.21*	*985*	*1026*	*969*

Source: Census of India, 2011

The sharpest decennial population growth in the Imphal Valley districts stood at over 37 percent between 1951-61. Ever since then, the rate of growth of the hill tribal population has exceeded the population growth rate in the Valley. During the maximal growth decade 1961-71, as the Manipur State population increased by nearly 36 percent, the decennial growth of population in the Valley districts lingered at 36 percent against 41 percent decennial population growth in the Hill districts. Accompanying sharp growth in the State population, such varying decennial growth trends appear to indicate strong migration trends within Manipur. While in the sparsely-populated hills, there has been a steady migration of the outstate tribal populations into the Manipur hill districts, decennial growth of population in the Valley districts appears to have been characterised strongly by rapid rural-urban migration and settlement into the rapidly expanding Imphal urban area. As much of the Valley migration is economically driven by the search for viable livelihoods in the face of the lack of arable land, the focus of this study on livelihoods, particularly women's urban livelihoods, as an indicator of growing women's economic agency seems justified.

On the evidence of changes in FMR ratios in the population over the period 1901-2011, Manipur had a surplus of females in its rural and its aggregate population till 1961, and in its urban population till 1941. Continuous lowering of FMR ratios between 1941-91 indicates that urbanisation in Manipur had been based for a long time on increasing male migration from rural areas. While urban FMRs have improved from 2001, rural FMRs have also improved. This appears to indicate that family migration has risen in recent years in both rural and urban Manipur.

2.5 Regional Distribution of Manipur Population

Manipur in 2011 comprised nine modern districts, of which four were located in the Imphal Valley and five were in the surrounding Manipur hills. The populations of the hill and valley

regions are ethnically distinct, with the majority Meitei community being concentrated in the valley districts, while the tribal Naga and Kuki-Chin groups reside in the hill districts. According to the 2011 Census, the Manipur Valley districts (2,238 sq.km, 728 persons/sq.km) are much more densely populated than the Manipur hills (20,089 sq.km, 49 persons.sq.km), even though the Manipur hill districts span a much larger territory than the Imphal valley.

With a population of approximately 5.15 lakhs in 2011, Imphal West was the most populous of Manipur's nine districts, followed closely by Imphal East with 4.53 lakh persons, and Thoubal with over 4.20 lakh persons. Of the valley districts, only Bishnupur had a population of under 2.41 lakh despite having an area of 496 sq.km. This is because a large part of Bishnupur included within the Loktak region is water-bound. The Valley districts thus had a combined population of 16.28 lakh, amounting to nearly 60 percent of the Manipur population. Within the Manipur hills, Senapati district (3,271 sq.km), through which Manipur is connected to Nagaland, had the largest population. Senapati district lies on the migration path from Nagaland into Manipur. Churachandpur (4,570 sq.km) followed, with 2.71 lakh persons. District areas and populations in the other three Manipur hill districts were relatively similar.

Interestingly, on the evidence of FMR ratios, the Manipur Valley districts all had an excess of females over males, while the Manipur Hill districts had female deficits. While the female-deficit FMRs in all hill districts would partially reflect the legacy of male migration from adjoining Naga areas in other states, the female-surplus FMRs found in the Imphal Valley would suggest that migration pressure into Manipur has been absorbed through economic resettlement of entire families, rather than of single males. The reason for this would be the greater access provided to economic opportunities in the Valley, because of rapid urbanisation in the Imphal region.

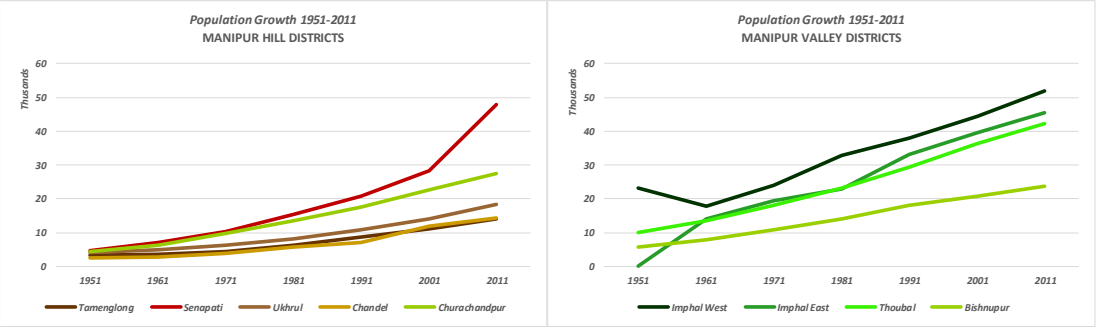
Table 2.6: Decennial Growth of District Population in Manipur 1951-2011

	CENSUS YEARS						
District	**1951**	**1961**	**1971**	**1981**	**1991**	**2001**	**2011**
Tamenglong	33,519	36,518	44,975	62,289	86,278	1,11,499	1,40,651
Senapati	46,608	72,039	1,04,175	1,55,421	2,08,406	2,83,621	4,79,148
Ukhrul	41,182	48,590	62,229	82,946	1,09,275	1,40,778	1,83,998
Chandel	24,049	27,679	38,723	56,444	71,014	1,18,327	1,44,182
Churachandpur	44,496	62,418	98,114	1,34,776	1,76,184	2,27,905	2,74,143
Imphal West	2,30,810	1,78,235	2,41,155	3,27,418	3,80,801	4,44,382	5,17,992
Imphal East	*	1,40,781	1,93,305	2,28,728	3,30,460	3,94,876	4,56,113
Thoubal	99,631	1,34,924	1,81,771	2,31,781	2,93,958	3,64,140	4,22,168
Bishnupur	57,340	78,853	1,08,306	1,41,150	1,80,773	2,08,368	2,37,399
MANIPUR	**5,77,635**	**7,80,037**	**10,72,753**	**14,20,953**	**18,37,149**	**22,93,896**	**28,55,794**
MANIPUR HILLS	***1,89,854***	***2,47,244***	***3,48,216***	***4,91,876***	***6,51,157***	***8,82,130***	***12,22,122***
MANIPUR VALLEY	***3,87,781***	***5,32,793***	***7,24,537***	***9,29,077***	***11,85,992***	***14,11,766***	***16,33,672***
DECENNIAL % GROWTH RATES							

District	% Growth 1941-51	% Growth 1951-61	% Growth 1961-71	% Growth 1971-81	% Growth 1981-91	% Growth 1991-01	% Growth 2001-11
Tamenglong	*na*	*8.95*	*23.16*	*38.50*	*38.51*	*29.23*	*26.15*
Senapati	*na*	*54.56*	*44.61*	*49.19*	*34.09*	*36.09*	*68.94*
Ukhrul	*na*	*17.99*	*28.07*	*33.29*	*31.74*	*28.83*	*30.70*
Chandel	*na*	*15.09*	*39.90*	*45.76*	*25.81*	*66.62*	*21.85*
Churachandpur	*na*	*40.28*	*57.19*	*37.37*	*30.72*	*29.36*	*20.29*
Imphal West	*na*	*38.22*	*35.30*	*35.77*	*16.30*	*16.70*	*16.56*
Imphal East	*na*	*-*	*37.31*	*18.32*	*44.48*	*19.49*	*15.51*
Thoubal	*na*	*35.42*	*34.72*	*27.51*	*26.83*	*23.87*	*15.94*
Bishnupur	*na*	*37.52*	*37.35*	*30.33*	*28.07*	*15.27*	*13.93*
MANIPUR	***26.31***	***35.04***	***37.53***	***32.46***	***29.29***	***24.86***	***24.50***
MANIPUR HILLS	***na***	***30.23***	***40.84***	***41.26***	***32.38***	***35.47***	***38.54***
MANIPUR VALLEY	***na***	***37.40***	***35.99***	***28.23***	***27.65***	***19.04***	***15.72***

Source: Census of India, 2011

Chart: Growth of District Population in Manipur 1951-2011



At the time of its merger with India in 1949, Manipur was declared a single-district Part C state with 10 subdivisions that became its later districts. In 1969, the state was reorganised into 5 new districts, namely Manipur North (Mao and Sadar Hills), Manipur East (Ukhrul), Manipur South (Churachandpur), and Manipur Central (including Imphal East & West, Thoubal, Bishenpur or Bishnupur and Jiribam subdivision) (Census 2011 DCHB). While Thoubal and Bishnupur districts were carved out from erstwhile Manipur Central in 1983, undivided Imphal was bifurcated in 1997 into Imphal East and Imphal West districts. District-level figures based on the growth of population in the modern Manipur districts are available from Census sources after 1951, after Manipur had become a part of the Indian Union till the year 2011. Comparative differences in decennial growth patterns in the Manipur districts between 1950-2011 are analysed below. With further bifurcation of seven of the nine original districts in 2016, the number of districts has now increased to 16. However, the present study confines itself to the district classification that existed during Census 2011.

After growing sharply between 1951-1981, long-run population growth in the Manipur districts has tended to slow down since 1991, primarily because of continuous deceleration in population growth in the Valley districts. In the districts in the Manipur Hills, which had a small population base to start with, sharp acceleration in population growth between 1951-81

partly compensated for slowdown growth in the Valley. As a result, the decennial growth rates in the aggregate population of Manipur remained higher than the corresponding growth rates in the Valley region, despite the decline that set in after 1991.

Population growth rates in Manipur's Hill region after 1951 have been consistently faster compared to the Valley districts. For obvious reasons, Senapati district has experienced much higher population growth than the other districts, undergoing another acceleration because of a spurt of Naga and Kuki migration after 1991 for political reasons. Senapati's location around the National Highway 39 connecting Nagaland to Manipur has been the principal determining factor, since Senapati is the most developed district in the hills, and is part of the migration corridor. Churachandpur, which lies in the southwest hills of Manipur, has also experienced steady population growth because of its location along the major communications link to Jiribam and Mizoram via Tipaimukh subdivision. In the three other hill districts, long-term population has been lower but relatively steady. Chandel has grown because of its location vis-à-vis Moreh, the entry point into the Myanmar hills. Population growth has been slowest in Ukhrul and Tamenglong, which border the southern Naga Hills.

Among the districts in the Manipur Valley, while population growth in Imphal West has been sharp and has been relatively steady in Thoubal over the period, the population of Imphal East district grew in spurts between 1961-71 and again between 1971-2011 after experiencing a slight slowdown in between. Imphal East was created by the bifurcation of Imphal district in 1997. Because of its location amid the water-bound Loktak region, Bishnupur district has on the other hand experienced much slower population growth compared to the other Valley districts.

Chapter 3

WOMEN'S WORK PARTICIPATION IN NORTH EAST INDIA AND MANIPUR

3.1 Regional Workforce in North East India

North East India today is identified by the 'Seven Sister' states of modern Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura that comprised the old administrative region of Assam and its immediate neighbours. After coming under Central administration and being designated as Union Territories, the new provinces have gradually evolved into full-fledged political states. Sikkim has also been classified as the eighth North East state after being made a member of the North East Council in 2002.

During the colonial era, the North East region was kept in comparative political and economic isolation from the remainder of India. Following the British advent into the region, colonial frontier policies effectively sealed off these territories through restricted entry and inner-line regulations. Provisions were also made for initially declaring entire tribal homelands as *'Scheduled Districts'*, to be shielded from the baleful gaze of outside influences. Redefinitions of these areas were also made to preserve the indigeneity of the ethnic populations still surviving in semi-nomadic and semi-settled conditions, amidst more evolved agricultural communities in the region. Such exceptions were enforced by declaring the tribal areas of erstwhile Assam as *'Backward Tracts'*.

The Government of India Act, 1935, introduced provincial governance in British India. However, the Act had provisions under which much of the North East was administered directly by the Provincial Governors. The applicability of the new land and revenue laws brought in by provincial legislatures was thereby limited in the *'Excluded Areas'* and *'Partly-Excluded Areas'* of North East India. Following independence, autonomous governance of tribal-dominated regions in the North East was guaranteed via Articles 244(2) and 275(1) in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. These modern Constitutional provisions thus form a continuum with the erstwhile colonial legislations that provided legislative exclusion for the region.

These legacies of British colonial policy have had far-reaching consequences for the political evolution of the North East. While provision of education, health and social services to the North East, through Baptist mission activity commencing in the 19th century, had generated economic aspirations among younger educated members of resident communities, the means for realising these aspirations were severely limited by the lack of modernisation in the

regional economy. Starting from the 1940s, social and political unrest began to be felt in many parts of the North East as India gained independence, and regional populations sought to voice their unrealised own aspirations. After a long chain of agitations, movements and insurgencies, this culminated in the gradual dismantling of the old region of Assam into its modern constituents.

Table 3.1: Main Workers, Marginal Workers and Work Participation Rates in North East States in 2011

	Total Workers			Main Workers			Marginal Workers		
State	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**
Sikkim	3,08,138	1,94,358	1,13,780	2,30,397	1,60,513	69,884	77,741	33,845	43,896
Assam	1,19,69,690	85,41,560	34,28,130	86,87,123	70,34,642	16,52,481	32,82,567	15,06,918	17,75,649
Meghalaya	11,85,619	7,03,709	4,81,910	9,21,575	5,85,520	3,36,055	2,64,044	1,18,189	1,45,855
Arunachal	5,87,657	3,50,273	2,37,384	4,78,721	3,01,109	1,77,612	1,08,936	49,164	59,772
Nagaland	9,74,122	5,47,357	4,26,765	7,41,179	4,42,204	2,98,975	2,32,943	1,05,153	1,27,790
Manipur	11,59,053	6,65,463	4,93,590	8,55,012	5,54,518	3,00,494	3,04,041	1,10,945	1,93,096
Mizoram	4,86,705	2,90,740	1,95,965	4,15,030	2,63,305	1,51,725	71,675	27,435	44,240
Tripura	14,69,521	10,45,326	4,24,195	10,77,019	8,87,881	1,89,138	3,92,502	1,57,445	2,35,057
Total NER	**1,81,40,505**	**1,23,38,786**	**58,01,719**	**1,34,06,056**	**1,02,29,692**	**31,76,364**	**47,34,449**	**21,09,094**	**26,25,355**
Total INDIA	**40,22,32,724**	**27,50,14,476**	**12,72,20,248**	**31,30,04,983**	**24,01,47,813**	**7,28,57,170**	**8,92,29,741**	**3,48,66,663**	**5,43,63,078**

	WPRs		*% Main Workers*			*% Marginal Workers*			
State	***Persons***	***Males***	***Females***	***Persons***	***Males***	***Females***	***Persons***	***Males***	***Females***
Sikkim	*50.5*	*60.2*	*39.6*	*74.8*	*82.6*	*61.4*	*25.2*	*17.4*	*38.6*
Assam	*38.4*	*53.6*	*22.5*	*72.6*	*82.4*	*48.2*	*27.4*	*17.6*	*51.8*
Meghalaya	*40.0*	*47.2*	*32.7*	*77.7*	*83.2*	*69.7*	*22.3*	*16.8*	*30.3*
Arunachal	*42.5*	*49.1*	*35.4*	*81.5*	*86.0*	*74.8*	*18.5*	*14.0*	*25.2*
Nagaland	*49.2*	*53.4*	*44.7*	*76.1*	*80.8*	*70.1*	*23.9*	*19.2*	*29.9*
Manipur	*45.1*	*51.6*	*38.6*	*73.8*	*83.3*	*60.9*	*26.2*	*16.7*	*39.1*
Mizoram	*44.4*	*52.4*	*36.2*	*85.3*	*90.6*	*77.4*	*14.7*	*9.4*	*22.6*
Tripura	*40.0*	*55.8*	*23.6*	*73.3*	*84.9*	*44.6*	*26.7*	*15.1*	*55.4*
Total NER	***39.9***	***53.2***	***26.0***	***73.9***	***82.9***	***54.7***	***26.1***	***17.1***	***45.3***
Total INDIA	***33.2***	***44.1***	***21.7***	***77.8***	***87.3***	***57.3***	***22.2***	***12.7***	***42.7***

Source: Computed from Census 2011 data in Basic Statistics of Northeastern Region 2015

In 2011, the eight states of North East India had an aggregate working population of 18.14 million workers, amounting to approximately 4.5 percent of the total Indian workforce. Among the North East workers, 13.41 million worked around the year as part of the main workforce, while 4.73 million worked part-time as marginal workers. Work participation rates (WPRs) in the combined North East region were almost the same as WPRs in India, considerable intra-regional differences existed between neighbours. For instance, with under a third of the aggregate area in the North East region, the large state of Assam accounted 11.97 million workers amounting to two-thirds of the entire North East workforce. On the other hand, the border state of Arunachal which is larger than Assam in terms of area held just 3.2% of the regional workforce. While the smallest state Sikkim also had the smallest workforce of 0.31 million workers, densely-populated Tripura, the second smallest state, held 1.47 million (8.1%) of the North East workforce.

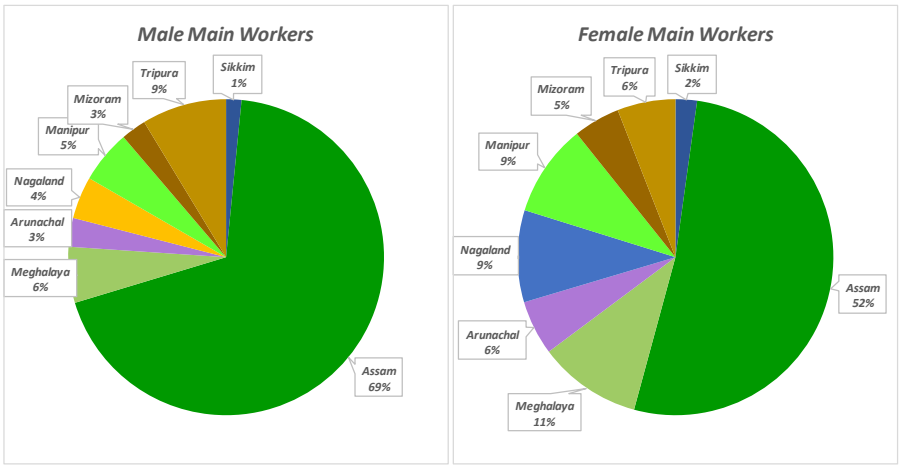
Manipur (22,429 sq.km) and Meghalaya (22,429 sq.km), both very similar in terms of area and overall proportions of workers, showed significant differences in the workforce character, with Manipur having a larger marginal workforce than either Nagaland or Meghalaya.

3.1 Main and Marginal Workforce

With gender WPRs of 53.2% and 26.0% for males and females respectively, the regional workforce was composed of 12.34 million male workers and 5.80 million female workers in the aggregate. Yet with smaller populations, the hill states of the North East have a much larger presence of women in their working populations as can be seen in the accompanying charts. Thus, while the highly populated states of Assam and Tripura have the lowest female WPRs of well below 24%, the female WPRs for the six hill states are very close to or even considerably exceed 50%. In contrast to the plains, close to half of women work in these states.

Not all workers get identical amounts of work around the year. While main workers, by Census definition work, for most of the year, marginal workers work part time for less than 6 months in a year. Men and women in India as a whole had work participation of 44.1% and 21.7% respectively in 2011. The North East region had a higher proportion of male workers and a lower proportion of female workers engaged in main work, compared to India as a whole. As many women workers participated in marginal work, the female workforce in all North East states was composed of 3.18 million main workers and 2.63 million marginal workers.

Chart 3.1: Male and Female Workers in the Main Workforce in North East States in 2011

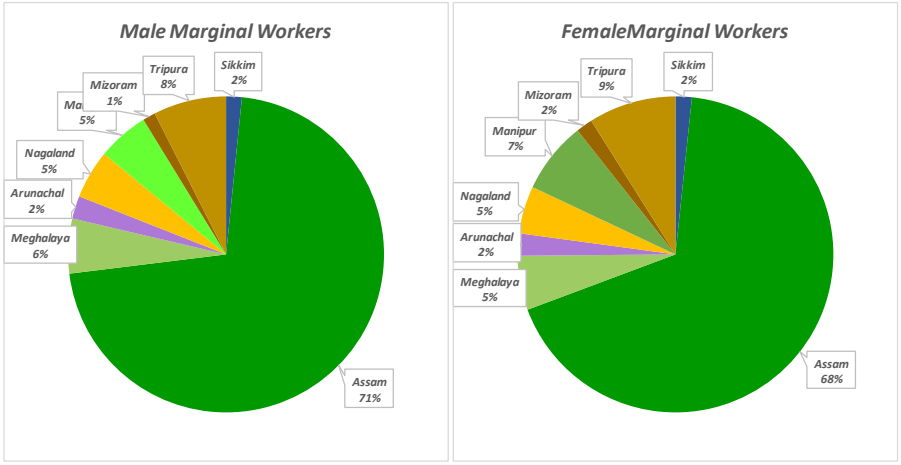


Once again, substantial intra-regional differences existed between the North East states in the deployment of the male and female workforce in main and marginal work. Speaking broadly. Whereas Assam accounted for the bulk of the male workforce, the hill states accounted for

the bulk of the women in work. The hill states of Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya, where women are actively involved in a wide range of home-based economic activities, besides engaging in agriculture, thus accounted collectively for over a third of the female main workers in the North East region.

Comparing the proportionate dispositions of the male and female workforce between main and marginal work, the scope for women workers to be absorbed into main work was therefore higher in the hill states of the North East region. With the exclusion of Assam and Tripura as outlier states, the proportion of women main workers in the female workforce was invariably over 60% in the other hill states, while the proportion of women marginal workers was lower than 40% in all these states. In contrast, in the densely-populated states Assam and Tripura, which have absorbed a lot of outside migration over the last seventy decades, more than half of the female workforce was engaged in marginal work.

Chart 3.2: Male and Female Workers in the Marginal Workforce in North East States in 2011



3.3 Worker Occupations in North East States

On the whole therefore, it might be said that shielding of the North East hill states from migration influx by the colonial policies of exclusion and partial exclusion, and the modern Constitutional safeguards of the Sixth Schedule, has worked well for the women. In low populations, the cooperative social roles of women and men in the local economy have been preserved, giving women an active place in the work economy. This is not so visible in the North East states like Assam and Tripura, where population and population pressures have undergone a transformation after the wave of post-Partition migration overwhelmed their indigenous people and social systems.

Excluding Assam and Tripura, the six hill states in the North East states had an aggregate workforce of 4.70 million workers, comprising 2.75 million male workers and 1.95 million

female workers. Meghalaya had 1.19 million (7%) workers of the aggregate North East workforce, while Manipur held 1.19 million (6%) workers. Interestingly, with less than a quarter of the male workforce in the North East region, the six hill states accounted for a third of the regional female workforce.

Using Census classifications, worker occupations in the North East states can also be disaggregated sectorally into work done on the farm and work done off the farm. In view of the wide intra-regional differences in work profiles earlier remarked on, this is a useful analysis to make. Grouping the regional workforce into farm and off-farm workers, over half the aggregate workforce in the North East states was engaged in the farm sector, with 6.50 million cultivators and 3.68 million agricultural labourers. Within the off-farm sector, while 0.69 million workers were engaged in home-based productive work such as artisanship, 8.28 million workers were engaged in miscellaneous other work and in the services. Excluding the smallest state Sikkim and the densely-populated state of Assam and Tripura as obvious outliers, the other hill states of the North East each had an on-farm workforce of just under 5 lakh workers on the average. Meghalaya, with an aggregate on-farm workforce of nearly 7 lakh workers was the most intensely cultivated of the hill states. Manipur had under 5.7 lakh farm workers.

Table 3.2: Workers in Farm Activities in North East States in 2011

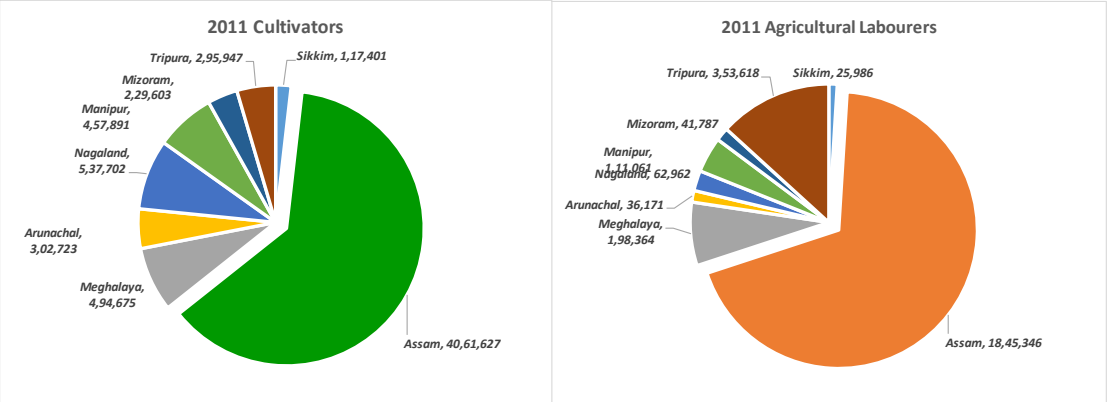
	Total Workers			Cultivators			Agri Labour		
State	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**	**Persons**	**Males**	**Females**
Sikkim	3,08,138	1,94,358	1,13,780	1,17,401	63,327	54,074	25,986	12,883	13,103
Assam	1,19,69,690	85,41,560	34,28,130	40,61,627	30,99,763	9,61,864	18,45,346	11,29,210	7,16,136
Meghalaya	11,85,619	7,03,709	4,81,910	4,94,675	2,77,330	2,17,345	1,98,364	1,06,342	92,022
Arunachal	5,87,657	3,50,273	2,37,384	3,02,723	1,52,863	1,49,860	36,171	18,377	17,794
Nagaland	9,74,122	5,47,357	4,26,765	5,37,702	2,59,454	2,78,248	62,962	31,857	31,105
Manipur	11,59,053	6,65,463	4,93,590	4,57,891	2,70,899	1,86,992	1,11,061	44,046	67,015
Mizoram	4,86,705	2,90,740	1,95,965	2,29,603	1,29,482	1,00,121	41,787	22,488	19,299
Tripura	14,69,521	10,45,326	4,24,195	2,95,947	2,28,868	67,079	3,53,618	2,14,106	1,39,512
Total NER	**1,81,40,505**	**1,23,38,786**	**58,01,719**	**64,97,569**	**44,81,986**	**20,15,583**	**26,75,295**	**15,79,309**	**10,95,986**
	% Total Workers			***% Cultivators***			***% Agri Labour***		
State	***Persons***	***Males***	***Females***	***Persons***	***Males***	***Females***	***Persons***	***Males***	***Females***
Sikkim	*1.7*	*1.6*	*2.0*	*1.8*	*1.4*	*2.7*	*1.0*	*0.8*	*1.2*
Assam	*66.0*	*69.2*	*59.1*	*62.5*	*69.2*	*47.7*	*69.0*	*71.5*	*65.3*
Meghalaya	*6.5*	*5.7*	*8.3*	*7.6*	*6.2*	*10.8*	*7.4*	*6.7*	*8.4*
Arunachal	*3.2*	*2.8*	*4.1*	*4.7*	*3.4*	*7.4*	*1.4*	*1.2*	*1.6*
Nagaland	*5.4*	*4.4*	*7.4*	*8.3*	*5.8*	*13.8*	*2.4*	*2.0*	*2.8*
Manipur	*6.4*	*5.4*	*8.5*	*7.0*	*6.0*	*9.3*	*4.2*	*2.8*	*6.1*
Mizoram	*2.7*	*2.4*	*3.4*	*3.5*	*2.9*	*5.0*	*1.6*	*1.4*	*1.8*
Tripura	*8.1*	*8.5*	*7.3*	*4.6*	*5.1*	*3.3*	*13.2*	*13.6*	*12.7*
Total NER	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***

Source: Computed from Census 2011 data in Basic Statistics of Northeastern Region 2015

3.3.1 On-Farm Work

Although the aggregate number of cultivators in the North East states was more than twice as large as the number of agricultural labourers, the proportionate state-wise shares varied widely. Both Tripura and Assam had a substantial presence of agricultural labourers, while their presence in the hill states was generally low, except for Meghalaya. The obvious reason for this would be the nature of cultivation in the North East hill states, where cultivable lands are restricted by the large area that still remains under unclassed forests. In Nagaland and the Manipur hills, particularly, the practice of non-sedentarised *jhum* cultivation still goes on unhindered. While this practice of *extensive* agriculture is in keeping with the very high land-man ratios that prevail in the hill region, cultivation by the communities living in the hills is carried out for subsistence, rather than for market sale. The practice of *intensive* agriculture, requires the private ownership of land and the establishment of settled village communities. So far, in the North East hills, where the progress of agricultural intensification has been slow, the old practices of community agriculture still continue, giving identity to the tribal populations that survive there.

Chart 3.3: Distribution of On-Farm Workforce in the North East Region in 2011



As the charts above indicate quite clearly, the intensively farmed states of Assam and Tripura account for the bulk of the regional on-farm workforce. Agricultural lands in the Assam valley are fertile and extensive, with a landscape and conducive water endowment that allows them to be farmed all year. Since the lowlands can also support a large population, a vast complement of cultivators and agricultural labourers participates in on-farm activity. In contrast, as a large proportion of farmers in the North East states have the status of cultivators, their need for agricultural labour is minimal. Moreover, topography and the lack of irrigation limit the number of crops that can be raised in a year. With less dependence on farm activities, the hill communities have to subsist to a greater extent on economic activity in the off-farm sector. Each hill community has further developed superior trade and craft skills that allow them to fit subsistence production to the market.

Table 3.3: Workers in Off-Farm Activities in North East States in 2011

State	Total Workers			HHI Workers			Other Workers		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Sikkim	3,08,138	1,94,358	1,13,780	5,143	2,947	2,196	1,59,608	1,15,201	44,407
Assam	1,19,69,690	85,41,560	34,28,130	4,91,321	2,05,744	2,85,577	55,71,396	41,06,843	14,64,553
Meghalaya	11,85,619	7,03,709	4,81,910	20,488	9,400	11,088	4,72,092	3,10,637	1,61,455
Arunachal	5,87,657	3,50,273	2,37,384	8,365	4,148	4,217	2,40,398	1,74,885	65,513
Nagaland	9,74,122	5,47,357	4,26,765	22,838	9,483	13,355	3,50,620	2,46,563	1,04,057
Manipur	11,59,053	6,65,463	4,93,590	89,495	19,975	69,520	5,00,606	3,30,543	1,70,063
Mizoram	4,86,705	2,90,740	1,95,965	7,852	3,894	3,958	2,07,463	1,34,876	72,587
Tripura	14,69,521	10,45,326	4,24,195	41,496	17,485	24,011	7,78,460	5,84,867	1,93,593
Total NER	**1,81,40,505**	**1,23,38,786**	**58,01,719**	**6,86,998**	**2,73,076**	**4,13,922**	**82,80,643**	**60,04,415**	**22,76,228**

State	*% Total Workers*			*% Cultivators*			*% Agri Labour*		
	Persons	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons*	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons*	*Males*	*Females*
Sikkim	*1.7*	*1.6*	*2.0*	*0.7*	*1.1*	*0.5*	*1.9*	*1.9*	*2.0*
Assam	*66.0*	*69.2*	*59.1*	*71.5*	*75.3*	*69.0*	*67.3*	*68.4*	*64.3*
Meghalaya	*6.5*	*5.7*	*8.3*	*3.0*	*3.4*	*2.7*	*5.7*	*5.2*	*7.1*
Arunachal	*3.2*	*2.8*	*4.1*	*1.2*	*1.5*	*1.0*	*2.9*	*2.9*	*2.9*
Nagaland	*5.4*	*4.4*	*7.4*	*3.3*	*3.5*	*3.2*	*4.2*	*4.1*	*4.6*
Manipur	*6.4*	*5.4*	*8.5*	*13.0*	*7.3*	*16.8*	*6.0*	*5.5*	*7.5*
Mizoram	*2.7*	*2.4*	*3.4*	*1.1*	*1.4*	*1.0*	*2.5*	*2.2*	*3.2*
Tripura	*8.1*	*8.5*	*7.3*	*6.0*	*6.4*	*5.8*	*9.4*	*9.7*	*8.5*
Total NER	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***

Source: Computed from Census 2011 data in Basic Statistics of Northeastern Region 2015

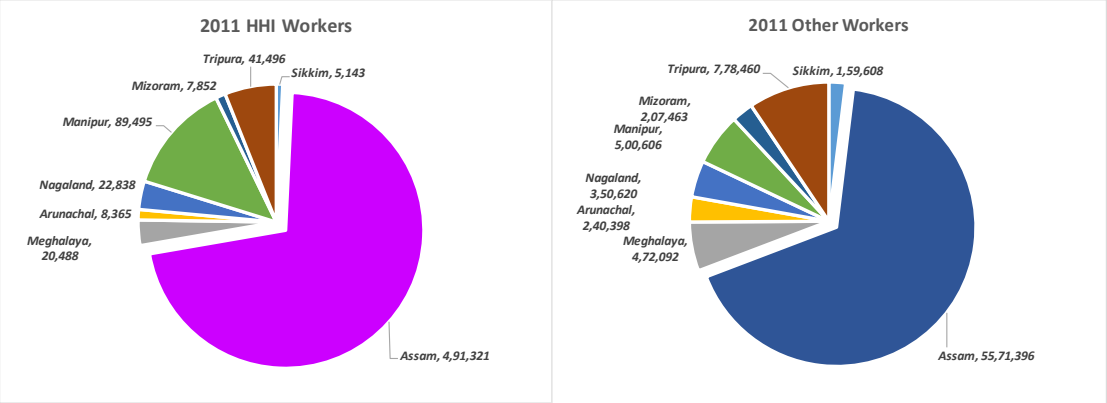
3.3.2 Off-Farm Work

The two census work-categories that would qualify as off-farm activities include artisanship in the production of household industrial (HHI) units, as well as other work in services and orthodox producing industries. Compared to the 9.17 million on-farm workers in the North East in 2011, the total workforce in non-farm employment amounted to 8.97 million workers. Approximately 8.28 million of the region's non-farm workers were engaged in manufacturing and service activities in the 'other work' category, making this the largest employment sector that engages nearly 47% of the aggregate workforce in the region. By way of comparison, the number of workers engaged in cultivation within the farm sector amounted to 6.50 million. One reason for such high employment of other workers in the North East is growing regional spread of tea plantations, plywood and other agro industries, especially in Assam. In contrast, the household artisanal industries which absorb only 0.69 million workers across the region are not a large employment sector, by any description.

The apparently small number of off-farm workers engaged in home-based work actually disguises the importance of the sector. It should be remembered that the sector produces all the textiles, garments and handicrafts, mostly with female participation. In particular North East states, the figures are impressive. For instance, in Assam with the largest number of 4.9 lakh workers in the home-based artisanal segment, the proportion of home-based workers amounted to 4.1% of the state workforce. In Manipur, with just under 90 thousand home-

based workers, their share in the state workforce rose further to 7.7%. As home-based production aptly suits the needs of women who have to work from their households, the share of women home-based workers in the total female workforce in Assam was as high as 8.33%. In Manipur most significantly, it rose steeply to a level of 14.1%. These patterns are closely reflected in associated charts below, which reveal statewise employment shares in non-farm activities in the North East. Once again, the significant presence of women in Assam and Manipur in home-based non-farm activities is revealed.

Chart 3.4: Distribution of Off-Farm Workforce in the North East Region in 2011



3.4 District Workforce in Manipur

Having brought out several distinctive features that set Manipur apart from the rest of the states North East region, it is now time to consider the intrastate variations in workforce and work participation at the district-level, bringing particular focus to variations between the Manipur Hill region and the Manipur Valley. Manipur had an aggregate workforce of 1.71 million workers in 2011, 1.41 million (82.2%) of whom were in the main workforce. As only 3.04 lakh (17.8%) were marginal worker, an impression gained from the earlier discussion was borne out. Although the concentrated settlement in the Valley accounted for close to two-thirds of Manipur's total population, the Valley had a total of 1.04 million workers, against 0.67 million workers scattered through five districts in the Manipur Hills. Despite the concentrated settlement in the Valley, 5.21 lakh workers had found main work against 3.34 lakh workers in the Manipur Hills. Against work participation rates of 66.5% for Manipur as a whole, very close to the WPR in the Valley, the Hill districts had a higher WPR of 67.4%.

The principal reason for concentrated settlement in the Valley, it would appear, is the attraction of urbanisation and irrigated agriculture. In the Manipur Hills, with community land ownership by tribal communities in the Manipur Hills, as extensification of agriculture has taken place through the practice of *jhum*, and many hill farmers have acquired the status of cultivators,

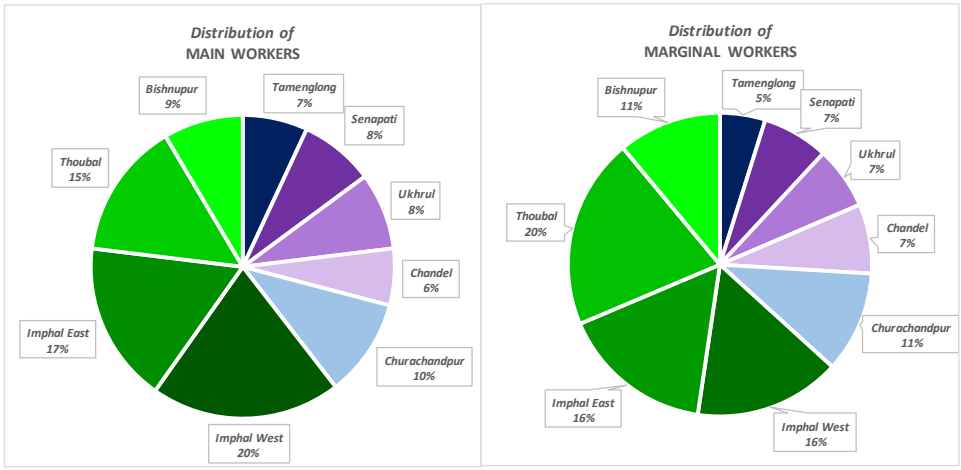
Agricultural labour prevails in larger numbers in the Valley as a joint product of old Manipuri land tenancy institutions and the easy availability of irrigation in the Valley for progressive rice cultivation.

Table 3.4: Main and Marginal Workforce & Its Sectoral Distribution in Manipur in 2011

State/DT	Total Population	Total Workers	Main Workers	Marginal Workers	Total Cultivators	Total Agri Labour	Total HHI Workers	Total Other Workers
Tamenglong	1,40,651	1,11,958	97,262	14,696	48,849	1,924	1,710	18,192
Senapati	1,93,744	1,33,148	1,11,657	21,491	58,987	7,353	3,117	18,608
Ukhrul	1,83,998	1,35,448	1,15,243	20,205	56,815	3,852	2,233	25,029
Chandel	1,44,182	1,07,506	85,021	22,485	43,255	8,315	3,040	21,628
Churachandpur	2,74,143	1,79,558	1,46,682	32,876	64,834	8,282	5,067	44,472
Imphal West	5,17,992	3,32,018	2,84,640	47,378	37,107	12,870	19,918	1,43,492
Imphal East	4,56,113	2,90,686	2,41,181	49,505	36,355	20,250	21,826	1,16,417
Thoubal	4,22,168	2,66,856	2,04,965	61,891	77,331	33,106	21,017	63,865
Bishnupur	2,37,399	1,52,846	1,19,332	33,514	34,358	15,109	11,567	48,903
MANIPUR	***25,70,390***	***17,10,024***	***14,05,983***	***3,04,041***	***4,57,891***	***1,11,061***	***89,495***	***5,00,606***
MANIPUR HILLS	***9,90,119***	***6,67,618***	***5,55,865***	***1,11,753***	***2,72,740***	***29,726***	***15,167***	***1,27,929***
MANIPUR VALLEY	***15,80,271***	***10,42,406***	***8,50,118***	***1,92,288***	***1,85,151***	***81,335***	***74,328***	***3,72,677***

Source: Computed from Census 2011 data in Basic Statistics of Northeastern Region 2015

Chart 3.5: Workers in Main and Marginal Work in the Manipur Districts in 2011



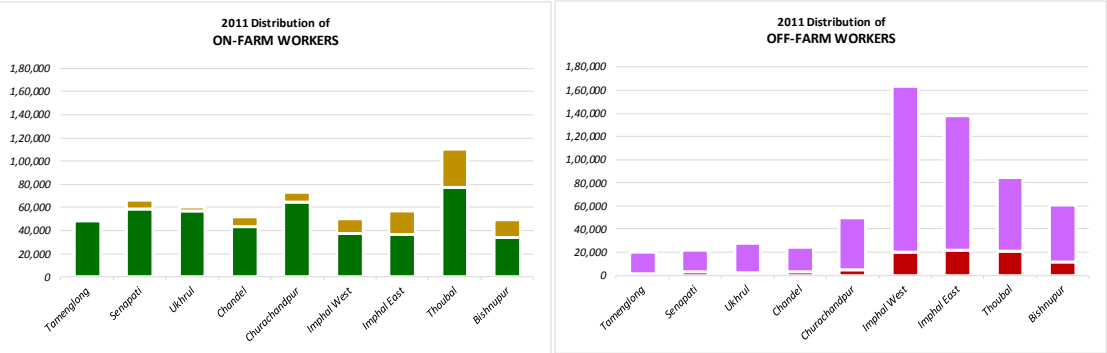
As depicted graphically by the charts above, the four central districts of the Manipur Valley account for three-fifths of the main workers in Manipur, and nearly two-thirds of its marginal workers. While Imphal West & East districts have dominant shares in the main workforce, the contribution of Thoubal and Bishnupur to the main workforce is much lower. However, the contribution of Thoubal and Bishnupur districts to the marginal workforce increases appreciably, while the share of marginal workers in the two Imphal districts shrinks. Taken together, the five Hill districts contribute around two-fifths of the main workforce, and make a smaller contribution to the marginal workforce. Churachandpur and Chandel are the only hill districts where marginal workers have a significant presence, with their presence in the other hill districts being much lower.

3.5 Workers in Farm and Off-Farm Activities

The distribution of on-farm and off-farm workers across the Manipur districts in 2011 has been presented in the form of the two associated column charts below, which graphically represent the on-farm distributions of cultivators and agricultural labourers, and the off-farm distribution of home-based workers and other workers across the districts of Manipur in aggregate terms. As the chart to the left depicts, the on-farm employment sector in Manipur is mostly dominated by cultivators, depicted in green, with agricultural labourers forming a thin stacked layer depicted in light brown at the top.

Thoubal has the largest number of on-farm workers, followed by Churachandpur and Senapati districts in that order. As can be seen very clearly, the presence of agricultural labourers is extremely limited in the Hills of Manipur, where the bulk of on-farm workers have ample lands to cultivate. However, given the community character of tribal landholding, the agricultural land is mostly owned in entirety by the tribe, and given to its members in small parcels to cultivate. The farmer cultivator on tribal land does not generally have a property claim on the land he or she cultivates, and the land cannot be freely traded. The negative downside is that the hill farmer remains a farmer, and does not acquire farmland as a personal asset that can be traded and sold. Legal recognition and protection to this form of tribal agrarian relations is preserved in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution which is applicable in the North East states.

Chart 3.6: Workers in Farm and Off-Farm Activities in the Manipur Districts in 2011



The chart presented to the right graphically represents the district-wise distribution of the off-farm workforce across the nine Manipur districts, again revealing prominent differences between the Manipur Hills and Valley regions. As depicted clearly in deep red, the home-based workers in Manipur are present significantly in the four Manipur Valley districts and have a more limited presence in Churachandpur, while being hardly present in the other Hill districts.

The marked presence of home-based workers in Imphal East & West, and Thoubal coincides with the main centres for the production of the miscellaneous weaves and crafts that Manipur is well-known. The fourth Valley district, Bishnupur, also has a significant presence of home-based workers in the district workforce, even though a large part of its area is inundated by Loktak Lake.

Again, most notably, the densely-populated Valley districts very strikingly have a large section of their off-farm workforce engaged in the 'other work' category, depicted in the chart in light purple. The huge concentration of other workers in Imphal East & West districts is explained to a large extent by the urbanisation process, through which the urban workers in the Valley have entered urban commercial activities, the tertiary services and the professions. However, the large presence of other workers in Thoubal, Bishnupur and Churachandpur, which adjoin Imphal points attention to the existence of significant economic and commercial interlinkage between Imphal City and the other districts of the Valley. With a significant complement of home-based workers producing artisanal products in the Valley, it is only logical that the products enter the urban market at Imphal. This line of thought will be inquired into further during analysis of the women vendor survey at Imphal.

3.6 Gender Distribution of the Workforce

In view of the Imphal women vendors survey that will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters, it would be useful also to obtain a broad idea of the work roles that Manipuri women play in the Manipur Hills and Valley, and in the different Manipur districts. The appended district table briefly outlines the gender characteristics of the farm and off-farm workforce in Manipur as revealed in the 2011 Census.

The total workforce of the 1.71 million workers in Manipur in 2011, was distributed almost equally between farm occupations (5.69 lakh workers; 33.3%) and off-farm occupations (5.90 lakh workers; 34.5%). While the five districts in the Manipur Hills accounted for close to half of the farm-based workforce mostly comprising cultivators, the Valley districts contributed just over a quarter of the farm workforce with a large sprinkling of agricultural labour. The position of the Manipur Hills versus the Valley was significantly different, in respect of the off-farm workforce. Here, the four Valley districts contributed close to two-thirds of the off-farm workforce including 3.73 lakh other workers, while the Hill districts together collectively accounted for under one fourth. In relative terms, over a fifth of the total male workers were engaged in cultivation in the Hill districts, against 12% in the Valley, and more women worked in cultivation in the Hills, rather than in the Valley. Compared to the Manipur

Hills, the Valley districts contributed more agricultural labour to the aggregate workforce, the bulk among them being women.

Table 3.5: Gender Workforce in Farm and Off-Farm Occupations in Manipur in 2011

State/DT	Total Workers	Cultivators			Agri Labour		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Tamenglong	1,11,958	48,849	24,218	24,631	1,924	827	1,097
Senapati	1,33,148	58,987	33,584	25,403	7,353	2,708	4,645
Ukhrul	1,35,448	56,815	27,688	30,605	3,852	2,119	3,820
Chandel	1,07,506	43,255	22,934	20,016	8,315	2,368	2,724
Churachandpur	1,79,558	64,834	35,729	23,907	8,282	4,432	7,279
Imphal West	3,32,018	37,107	26,410	12,151	12,870	6,390	9,506
Imphal East	2,90,686	36,355	26,472	9,239	20,250	7,916	11,846
Thoubal	2,66,856	77,331	47,566	29,765	33,106	12,647	20,459
Bishnupur	1,52,846	34,358	26,298	11,275	15,109	4,639	5,639
MANIPUR	**17,10,024**	**4,57,891**	**2,70,899**	**1,86,992**	**1,11,061**	**44,046**	**67,015**
MANIPUR HILLS	***6,67,618***	***2,72,740***	***1,42,838***	***1,07,445***	***29,726***	***15,271***	***25,712***
MANIPUR VALLEY	***10,42,406***	***1,85,151***	***1,28,061***	***79,547***	***81,335***	***28,775***	***41,303***

State/DT	Total Workers	HHI Workers			Other Workers		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Tamenglong	1,11,958	1,710	647	1,063	18,192	11,545	6,647
Senapati	1,33,148	3,117	1,087	2,030	18,608	12,819	5,789
Ukhrul	1,35,448	2,233	1,007	2,828	25,029	19,558	12,975
Chandel	1,07,506	3,040	791	1,393	21,628	16,966	6,766
Churachandpur	1,79,558	5,067	2,342	8,548	44,472	33,155	21,765
Imphal West	3,32,018	19,918	4,689	16,668	1,43,492	90,499	49,201
Imphal East	2,90,686	21,826	3,489	14,426	1,16,417	71,786	33,683
Thoubal	2,66,856	21,017	4,105	16,912	63,865	45,059	18,806
Bishnupur	1,52,846	11,567	1,818	5,652	48,903	29,156	14,431
MANIPUR	**17,10,024**	**89,495**	**19,975**	**69,520**	**5,00,606**	**3,30,543**	**1,70,063**
MANIPUR HILLS	***6,67,618***	***15,167***	***6,140***	***18,361***	***1,27,929***	***99,202***	***52,601***
MANIPUR VALLEY	***10,42,406***	***74,328***	***13,835***	***51,159***	***3,72,677***	***2,31,341***	***1,17,462***

Source: Computed from Census 2011 data in Basic Statistics of Northeastern Region 2015

Women off-farm workers featured very significantly among other workers in the Manipur Valley. Here, they composed approximately a quarter of total 'other workers' in Manipur as a whole, and nearly 70% of the women workers engaged in the 'other' non-farm category. Home-based women workers from the Valley did feature significantly in the off-farm workforce, accounting for over 57% of the 89,495 workers in the HHI workforce in Manipur. In comparison, although women in the hill tribes are also engaged in home-based activities of several kinds, the relative presence of women HHI workers in the Manipur Hills was much smaller. The significant economic positioning of women in the Imphal region in HHI production activities and in other non-farm work, requires closer examination. This is accomplished via the primary vendor survey of women in economic activity in Imphal's Ima Keithel women's market.

Chapter 4

MANIPUR AND ITS ECONOMIC HISTORY

4.1 Physical Landscape and Communications

The central valley of Imphal slopes slightly from the north to the south with a length of 58 km, and average elevation of 792 masl (Ansari 1973). The average east-west breadth of the valley is 32 km. Spreading across 92 percent of the state area, the Manipur Hills have an elevation range between 762-3048 masl, starting just southwest from their highest point in southern Nagaland. The central Valley is flanked by the western hill ranges leading from Mt. Japfu (3019 masl) near Kohima to the Chin Hills in the southwest. To the east of the Valley, the hill ranges trend from Mt. Saramati (3826 masl) towards Yomadung near the Myanmar border. The Manipur-Myanmar boundary runs for 352 km along mountains at the eastern edge of Ukhrul and Chandel districts.

To both sides of this water-divide, Manipur spans two principal river catchments that are part of the Ganga-Brahmaputra and Chindwin-Irrawaddy fluvial systems. West of the Japfu-Barail range, Jiribam is part of the Barak Catchment. The Iril, Imphal, Nambol and Thoubal rivers drain the Central Valley and eventually discharge into the Chindwin-Irrawaddy basin. Because of very heavy annual rainfall exceeding 4000 mm in Tamenglong and Senapati districts, the western ranges present highly dissected relief. Elsewhere, the annual rainfall is just under 2000 mm per year. Easy topography and abundance of land resources needed for agriculture has historically encouraged human settlement in the Valley.

The few bridle paths developed with conscripted labour under the kings mainly served as passage for draft animals, ponies and elephants. Within the Valley, waterways provided the primary means of communication. Wheeled carriage only entered Manipur in the late 19th century, primarily as wooden carts. The internal river system within the Valley served as a waterway for dug-out canoes that regularly ferried loads of upto 250 kg, and could carry upto 600-800 kg when water levels were high after the rains (Brown 1874). Two historical routes linked Manipur to India from the west. The first led from Sylhet in Bengal through Cachar into the Imphal Valley, crossing several intermediate mountain ranges and fording several rivers on the way. The trickle of trade that existed between Manipur and Bengal passed along this traditional route. The route leading to the Assam Valley across the Naga Hills was longer, and was also difficult to traverse when it passed territories held by unpacified hill tribes. After appointment of the first British Political Agent in Manipur, the Imphal-Cachar road that had been built initially between 1837-44 was upgraded to accommodate increased trade flow.

Manipur's hill territories were linked to the Valley by the Imphal-Mao road built in 1881. In 1893, this route was upgraded into a cart road extending via Kohima to the planned railhead at Dimapur. The Dimapur-Maram section is known today as NH 129, and the Maram-Imphal section as NH 2, which then extends onward into Mizoram.

A third road-route, running southeast from Imphal to the Burmese border at Tamu in the Chindwin Valley, was developed soon after the British annexation of Burma., This was upgraded into a strategic metalled road for military communications during World War II. Today, the border checkpost at Moreh serves as the point of commercial entry into Tamu.

4.2 Evolution of Land Tenure

Dynastic rule in Manipur was established around 33CE by the legendary king Pakhangba, when the Ningthouja clan rose to ascendancy over the other Meitei clans in the Kangla fort region of the central Valley. Ningthouja kings ruled uninterrupted from Imphal till British Paramountcy was established over Manipur in 1891. A new social order introduced by the reformer king Liyamba in the 11th century, divided the Valley into six circles, each in the charge of the remaining Meitei clans. On the principles of division of labour, each clan was assigned a set occupation, in order to regulated different trades and crafts. The Meiteis were Hinduised when Vaishnava Hinduism was bought to Manipur by Brahmins in the 15th century.

The groupings of Meitei society were based around the seven clan identities of Ningthouja, Sarang Leisangthem, Khaba Ngaba, Luwang, Khumel, Angom, Moirang, and their lineages (Kamei 2015). Each clan had its own territory. Hill society was clustered around Naga tribal groupings like the Kabui, Maram. Tangkhul, Anal, Maring, etc., each with its own specific homeland and transplanted Kuki-Chin groups like the Chothe, Gangte, Paite, Simte, Thadou, etc., The Kukis were mainly resettled in Manipur from Burma by Col. William McCulloch in later times, to provide a line of defence to the exposed border road to Cachar (Johnstone 1896). Political life in the Valley was hegemonised by the ruling Ningthouja clan, with limited autonomy given to the other Meitei clans. Meitei power in the Valley was based on a well-organised military, combining cavalry, archers and infantry, and quick capability to mobilise a mounted army armed with swords, spears and shields almost instantly through *Lallup* levy. Social groupings were based on kinship and place of residence. Marriage within the groups could be contracted by love or by elopement, but wide practice of polygamy by royalty and the nobles had undermined the social position of wives. The arts of spinning, weaving, dyeing and sericulture were well known to Meitei women since ancient times.

However, massive depopulation is believed to have occurred in Manipur during the Burmese occupation. In 1859, the population of Manipur was estimated roughly at 50,000, and had risen to 70,000 in 1869 (Brown 1874). The first Census conducted in Manipur in 1881 estimated the population at 221,070 persons overall. The Valley population was broadly composed of the 7 original Meitei *salai* (clans), the Pangals or Meitei-speaking Muslims who are reputedly descendants of war-captives taken from Khagemba's 16th century encounters with the Bengal sultans, and the low-status Loi artisanal castes who practice various crafts like silk weaving, metalcraft and fishing in the Valley. As a non-Hinduised community, the artisanal castes lived in segregated Loi villages scattered across the Valley. The Manipur Hill areas are the homeland of over 27 Hao tribes, composed principally of 11 Naga groups, 11 Kuki groups, another 5 marginal groups including the Hmar, the Mizos and the Zou. Another important constituent in the Valley population are Meitei Brahmins who entered Manipur from western India in the 15th century, when king Pamheiba adopted Vaishnavism as the state religion. While all Hinduised Meitei claimed the ritual status of Kshatriyas, the powerful Brahma Samaj or Council of Brahmins was convened to advise the king on all ritual matters.

At the zenith of Meitei power, king Pamheiba aka Gharib Nawaz (1709-1748) had mounted an attack on Kabaw Valley in the Shan states of Burma (Myanmar). The territory was lost following Burmese raids, triggering a sharp decline in the power of the Manipur kings. Between 1755-1826, when Burma raided and occupied Manipur, the land was devastated. During the Anglo-Burmese conflict, Gambhir Singh (1826-34) expelled the Burmese after inviting British intercession. Although an end to the Anglo-Burmese war (1819-26) was brought about by the Treaty of Yandabo, Manipur became a British protectorate with a Political Agent being appointed to the court from 1851 to advise the king. British paramountcy over Manipur was established in 1891 by P. A. Grimwood, when Churachand Singh became the first British-appointed king.

Land in the Manipur hills was traditionally held under communal ownership by the tribe that had collectively cleared the land of forest. In the Manipur Valley, all land was vested with the king. From this, families were given tax-free cultivable land as a royal grant to the nobility, to the Brahmins, to the soldiery, or as a reward for faithful service, or for outstanding bravery. A certain amount of heritable land meant for the upkeep of temples was also set aside in the name of various gods and goddesses. In most cases, these tax-free grants were not made in perpetuity. For instance, out of the 1 *pari* (approx. 1 ha) of land granted to each Brahmin after the thread ceremony, half was heritable after his decease by his dependents, while the rest reverted to the king. As soldiers in the king's army were not paid regular wages in cash, land was allotted to them according to rank, without any right of transfer or sale. On the death of

the assignee, half would pass on to the dependents, while the rest reverted to the king. No rights of transfer or sale subsisted either, in the case of land grants given as a reward for meritorious service. On the decease of the original assignee, the land could be retained by his family on payment of the land-tax. However, land given in reward for outstanding bravery in battle was heritable by the assignee family.

Land taxes were realisable by the king in the form of harvested paddy from the land grants that had been given in lieu of regular cash payment to civilians serving the administration. Such individuals were allowed to rent out their land on private lease arrangements. So long as the land tax on them was deposited, erstwhile wastelands that had been personally brought into new cultivation by farm-families, or purchased from cultivators who had originally cleared such land, could be held permanently. Such lands could not be taken over without compensation. All land beyond these tenurial categories belonged to the state.

All agricultural land estates could be cultivated by their owners, or by other peasants on rental-payment, or by bonded labour working for the estate owners. Lands brought into new cultivation and the king's own estates were cultivated by *Lallup* labour. Under the *Lallup* system, all adult males from cultivator families in the Valley were liable to compulsorily render 10 days of free service to the king in each 40-day cycle, in lieu of the lands that had been granted to them for taxation-free cultivation. Originally used for mustering the soldiery during conflicts, *lallup* (literally a 'military-levy') was also used for public works and also to farm the large private estates held by the king and nobility. While land rents for rented lands were fixed by mutual arrangement, the peasants had to bear the costs of cultivation on their own.

Under the system of debt-bondage that existed at the time in the Valley, land could also be farmed by bonded labour in parcels of 1.5 *paris* (3.8 ha) per family, with the landowner supplying the inputs and plough-cattle. After the rice-harvest, each cultivator family was required to pay a rental in kind of 30 baskets (200 kg) of rice for the land so assigned. An unmarried worker was liable to pay half this amount.

Of the 26,000 *paris* of tenured land in the Valley mentioned in British statistical records from 1891, approximately 63 percent was held in various forms of tax-free tenure (Ali 1988). Thus land taxes were only being realised from 37 percent of the king's land, making the public revenues of the state highly insecure. However, as most agricultural land was not heritable under the old system, and was temporarily settled with the cultivators, the problem of fragmentation of holdings with expansion of the family was allayed.

After 1891, this form of temporary tenure was abolished by the British, along with the practice of *Lallup*, which had perpetuated landlordism by the nobility. Instead, the British introduced a tax that was payable per homestead.

While the *Lallup* system had historically assisted the nobility to cultivate large land estates with low cultivation costs, through regular extraction of unpaid *corvee* labour service from their temporarily settled tenants, the traditional landholding system yielded little revenues for the state. Accordingly, shortly after the British assumed paramountcy over Manipur, the British Political Agent Major Maxwell abolished *Lallup* in 1892, introducing permanent settlement of land with cultivators in lieu of payment of land and homestead taxes. A new class of fixed rent tenants emerged, paying grain-rents to the *pattadars* (land lessees).

After they achieving paramountcy, the British encouraged the extension of cultivation as a means of augmenting land revenue in 1891. This entailed the introduction of land taxes and permanent settlement, as well as the abolition of the *Lallup* system in order to free up corvee labour for alternative employment. Other important consequences followed. Opening of the Manipur-Kohima Cart Road in 1895 gradually encouraged trade and the importation of manufactured goods from outside Manipur. Introduction of land taxes payable in cash encouraged the marketing of surplus agricultural production. Meanwhile, the very low prevailing prices of rice in the Valley encouraged rice exports and further extension of paddy cultivation.

Although the Assam Land and Revenue Regulations governing land settlement throughout old Assam had already been enacted in 1886, their application was only extended to Manipur in 1947. In 1960, these regulations were replaced by the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960, especially enacted for the Valley.

4.3 Evolution of the Manipur Economy

Although several theories have been proposed for the point of origin of the Meitei people, ascribing this variously to an ancient wave of migration from Yunnan in South China, or from the Shan states of the Chindwin-Irrawaddy Valley in Burma, or even to descent from the Naga Hills into the Manipur Valley, no universal explanation exists. However, it can be said with certainty that the settlement of Meitei people in the central Imphal Valley from earliest times was driven by the abundance of water resources, and a highly evolved system of subsistence. The evolution of the Manipur economy since the time of settlement can be

explored in the terms the evolution of the subsistence economy and of the economy of trade and commerce.

4.3.1 The Subsistence Economy

The Imphal Valley has several marshlands or *pats*, including Pumlen Pat, Kharung Pat, Khoidrum Pat, Lousi Pat, etc., making the Valley region ideal for rice cultivation. The best agricultural land is concentrated in the fertile alluvial soils of Valley, and paddy accounts for four-fifths of the area sown. The Loktak Hydro Electric Project (HEP) promises to extend the irrigated area. In tribal areas of the Manipur hills, traditional farming is practised through *jhum* (slash and burn) and terraced cultivation. As draft animal power cannot be employed while cultivating hill slopes, hill farming is done manually using hoes. Chemical fertilisers are not used, therefore manuring is done using cowdung, compost and green manure.

Land statistics are not available for the Manipur Hills, as no cadastral survey have been conducted there. In the Valley, out of a reporting area of 1.91 lakh hectares, the total land available for cultivation is 1.70 lakh ha. A total of 1.51 lakh holdings operated on this land in 2010-11 (Manipur Economic Survey 2017). Of these, more than half were in the marginal category and 33 percent in the small category, with average sizes of 0.52 ha and 1.28 ha respectively. Thus while more than four-fifths of the operating holdings were in the small and marginal category, they occupied under three-fifths of the arable land. Obviously, land pressure in Manipur continues to be acute.

Agriculture is nevertheless the mainstay for the rural population of Manipur, employing a fifth of all workers and contributing a major share of the state domestic product (Manipur Economic Survey 2017). Less than a tenth of the land in Manipur is cultivated land, of which half is located in the Valley where two-thirds of the Manipur population reside. Land pressure in the Valley is therefore intense.

Long known for paddy production, the Valley districts of Manipur still grow 44 local rice varieties and 17 new HYV varieties under intensive irrigation. Three principal practices are adopted for the cultivation of Valley rice. On sloping soils, where ground moisture lingers between May-June, dry *in situ* cultivation is followed. Damp wetland cultivation commences in June-July after the rains begin. Transplanted cultivation is adopted for inundated lands, and has the highest productivity. The Manipur hills grow an astounding 256 varieties of indigenous upland rice in smaller quantities, with Churachandpur alone accounting for 74 of these (Medhabati *et al* 2009)). Among them are early and late sowing varieties, early and late maturing varieties, as long growing-cycle and short growing-cycle varieties, which are sown

as prevailing climatic conditions indicate. Much of the hill rice is grown directly *in situ* without transplantation. Manipur also has six known aromatic rice cultivars. The antiquity of rice-growing in the Valley can be adduced from the fact that two wild varieties of rice can still be found there.

With two agricultural seasons, rice cultivation therefore dominates over other major agricultural crops like pulses and vegetables. In 2011-12, total area under foodgrains in the Valley amounted to 2.79 lakh ha, of which various cereal crops amounted to 2.51 lakh ha, and rice alone accounted for 2.24 lakh ha. With a high average yield of 2642 kg/ha compared to 1,816 kg/ha for the North East region as a whole, total rice production in the Valley was 5.91 lakh MT (Basic Statistics of the NER 2015), In ratio terms, therefore, Manipur accounted for 6.3 percent of the area under rice in the North East, but contributed 8.7 percent of the aggregate rice production. While the demand for agricultural products has risen commensurately with the growing population, production has not been increasing. Except in case of paddy, adoption of modern growing techniques using high-yielding varieties (HYV) seeds has been slow, especially in the Manipur hills. Next in order of importance are oilseeds crops with an area of 0.36 lakh ha and an output of 0.28 lakh MT, pulses with area of 0.29 lakh ha and output of 0.27 lakh MT, and maize with 0.25 lakh ha and 0.46 lakh MT, which is mostly grown in the Manipur Hills

Among the traditional crops grown commercially in Manipur are cotton, mulberry, oilseeds and sugarcane. The vegetable crops grown during the *kharif* season include string beans, various gourds, tomatoes, aubergines, okra, colocacia and alocacia (taro) yams. During *rabi,* the vegetables grown include potatoes, cabbage and cauliflower, peas, broad beans, broccoli, capsicum and root vegetables like radishes and carrots. Onions, garlic, chillies and ginger, turmeric, and *hatkora* citrus are also commonly grown as spice crops. Because of the varied agroclimatic situations found in Manipur, the state has the economic potential to produce fruit crops like bananas, litchis, oranges and lemons, pineapples, peaches, plums and pears, as well as cashew and walnuts on a commercial scale.

The livestock animals reared in Manipur include bovines like cattle and buffalo, as well as goats and sheep, pigs and poultry, etc. Bovines are reared primarily to provide animal power for wet-rice cultivation, while the rearing of other animals supplements village incomes. A sizeable gap nevertheless exists in Manipur between the supply and demand of livestock products.

The Remote Sensing Applications Centre (RSAC) for Manipur has mapped 17 lakes and 2 river oxbows in the Valley. The largest number of waterbodies are located in Imphal district, followed by Thoubal and Bishnupur. Because of the combined system of lakes, river oxbows, inundated wetlands and swamps, fisheries are inevitably a very important economic sector in the Manipur Valley. A wide variety of edible fish are sourced from the wetland system, including the glass perch and climbing perch, the common barb or *puti* and flying barb or *borali*, the Meitei snakehead, Loktak loach, botia loach, and eel loach, and also the pangas and breme carp. Because of the abundance of fish in the Valley, fish are a principal item on the Meitei diet, and total fish demand has to be met from outside imports.

Some of the endemic fish varieties are now threatened by rising water levels following construction of the Ithai Barrage of Loktak HEP project. As shown in the recent film *Loktak Lairembee* (Lady of the Lake), made in 2016 by Haobam Paban Kumar, floating *phumdis* form an exclusive feature of Loktak Lake (area 266 sq.km). *Phumdis* are large masses of matted aquatic weeds, organic matter and decaying vegetation that float and sink with the rise and fall in water levels, and draw nutrients from the lakebed below. While the largest single floating mass covering 40 sq.km in the southern Lake, is conserved as a habitat for the endangered *sangai* deer as Keibul Lamjao National Park, the *phumdis* floating in the northern portion of the lake are used for fishing by fisherfolk who build *khangpok* (temporary huts) on them. Circular manmade grass-islands or *athapums* anchored along the northern Lake form living enclosures for aquaculture.

4.3.2 The Commercial Economy

Several tradecrafts were practised as village industries in Manipur. These included skilled carpentry, like the making of intricately carved furniture and wooden canoes by Meitei and Pangal artisans. In view of the natural endowment of dense forests and timber resources, wood was a prized building material for the Valley nobility. With cane and bamboo also being widely available, basketry and cane-work was a secondary activity for agricultural families, with Meitei men acquiring great skill and dexterity in basket-weaving. For measuring out grain, *sangbai* baskets in standard sizes were commonly used. Decorated mats and ornamented cane containers were also woven for storing valuables were also woven, and a number of fishing and agricultural implements were crafted from bamboo.

While the utensils used by well-to-do urban families were made by bell-metalworkers, earthenware pots were made for ordinary families by artisanal potters at specific locations in the Valley. Although Manipuri dwellings were made typically from bamboo and thatch, a small quantity of clay bricks and tiles were also produced by Valley potters for use in temples

and royal houses. The iron needs for weaponry and common implements in Manipur were met by limited working of the Valley deposits. These were also produced by tribal artisans in the Manipur hills. Brassware, bell-metal and gold and silver ornaments were made in artistic designs by highly skilled metalworkers.

In the past, salt was not imported into Manipur from outside, but was manufactured locally by Lois and hill tribes from saline water extracted from brine wells in in Ukhrul and Thoubal, which were owned by the king. The molasses required for making caramelised rice and sweetened *hookah* tobacco was also made from local sugarcane using traditional methods. The
widespread introduction of bicycles, machinery and motorised vehicles in Manipur after the 1930s also led to the need for urban service and repair facilities.

Traditional skills were passed down as the young were trained by successive generations of experienced artisans. However, since these skills were limited to small specialised artisanal communities such as the Loi, the number of artisans working at any one time was always small. As most items of manufacture were made principally for home consumption, only the small surplus was marketed. This had enabled traditional crafts skills to survive continuously. British administrators did try to improve production by importing modern techniques and sending selected workers for training outside Manipur from time to time. These efforts were mostly unsuccessful. Importation of manufactured goods and mill-made cloth from outside Manipur in modern times have caused some local cottage crafts to decay, although for traditional textile garments and crafts, local artisanship is still culturally preferred. Artisans displaced from other crafts have largely sought absorption in primary agriculture.

As trade activity in Manipur was largely confined to internal or local exchange, it allowed the participation of women traders in large numbers, providing them adequate earnings to meet daily needs. An outside commercial class was largely absent in Manipur. The coming of the British created a professional class of local persons as well as outsiders. Although this class became educated, it did not develop a capitalist identity. However, strong social organisations called Mahasabhas began to emerge during the 1930s, demanding social, political and economic reforms under British rule.

4.4 Evolution of Women's Economic Roles

Having lasted for five centuries after its initial institution by Khoiremba, the *lallup* levy system has left an indelible impact on the organisation of labour in Meitei society. Because of the compulsory calling up of males from each family for 10 days of free service at the king's

command in each 40-day cycle, Meitei women had to fill in for their economic absence. The men called up for war-duties in times of conflict would be compensated with tax-free grants of cultivable land for use by the family. Since the land rights to these grants were usually not heritable, they did not acquire property value as they could not be freely bought and sold. Earning was low as *lallup* labour was rendered without wage-payments. Every subsistence cultivator subsisted on his own production, leaving very little surplus to be bought and sold from which wealth might accumulate. Ordinary peasants lived in bamboo & thatch village homes, ate simple meals of rice, locally-caught fish and vegetables, and wore cotton clothes handwoven by the women.

As the only urbanised area, Imphal did attract some investment, trade and workers, but the rest of the Valley had an agricultural character, with subsistence cultivation as the main occupation. *Lallup* service only secured the temporary grant of tax-free cultivable land. On the death of holder, his right to till the land reverted to the king. While the debt-bondage system allowed unforeseen economic needs to be met by voluntary commitment of future unpaid labour, it did not bring in earnings. Without accumulation, Manipur therefore did not develop a middle class. What developed instead were the voluntary institutions associated with community capital. Among the farmers, *singlups* served as voluntary village organisations that rendered mutual assistance.

As reported by early observers (*cf.* Dun 1886), women from all communities in Manipur played a highly visible role in the social, political and economic life of the people. As most of the work in the subsistence sector was done by women, they served as the mainstay of Meitei families, contributing to all except the heaviest work of tilling the land. From ancient times, the arts of spinning and weaving were an essential component in the education of Manipuri women. Instead of sitting idle, Manipuri women practised weaving and other crafts after their domestic chores were over. This enabled them to move frequently into larger economic roles during the periodic absences of their menfolk.

A peculiarity of commercial activity in Manipur has been the phenomenon of women being in sole control of the internal and external trade in handloom goods, rice, betel-nuts and other agricultural products of the State. Throughout Manipur, the market scene is an all-women affair, with women as both buyers and traders (Chaki-Sircar 1984). In the ancient past, it is believed that Meitei women occupied an even freer station within their family. Hinduisation, Brahminisation and colonisation had the effect of restricting the social and political lives of Meitei women. However, the Brahminical institution of male dominance was not transplanted in its entirety into Meitei society. Instead, by destroying the economic base of traditional

Meitei society, the economic impact of colonialism made Valley society a part of the vast colonial market. From the colonial era, the social participation of Manipuri women underwent a decline.

Because of the respectful station occupied by Manipuri women, son-preference and discrimination against girl-children is not a feature found within Manipuri society, and dowry marriages are extremely rare. What is seen instead is the system of *awunpot* by which a bride is sent to her marital home accompanied by gifts she may use in her new household. Through demonstration effects, the quantums of *awunpot* have increased somewhat in recent times.

The solidarities created between economically empowered women in the Valley also gave them the agency for strong unified action, which they demonstrated amply in 1862 in resisting the introduction of copper coinage to replace the bell-metal coinage in use in the Valley since the time of Khagemba (Ali 1988). In 1904, the women unitedly resisted the British attempt to revive *Lallup* by sending a new labour levy of men from Manipur to fetch timber from the Kabaw Valley in Burma to rebuild two British bungalows that had been burnt by rebels. A second *Nupi Lan* ('Women's War) was mounted in 1939, to resist the export of rice out of Manipur by Marwari merchants, which was creating scarcity and famine-like conditions in the Valley. This evolved into a movement seeking constitutional and administrative reform in Manipur. To this day, the two *Nupi Lans* led by women in Manipur continue to be the stuff of legends.

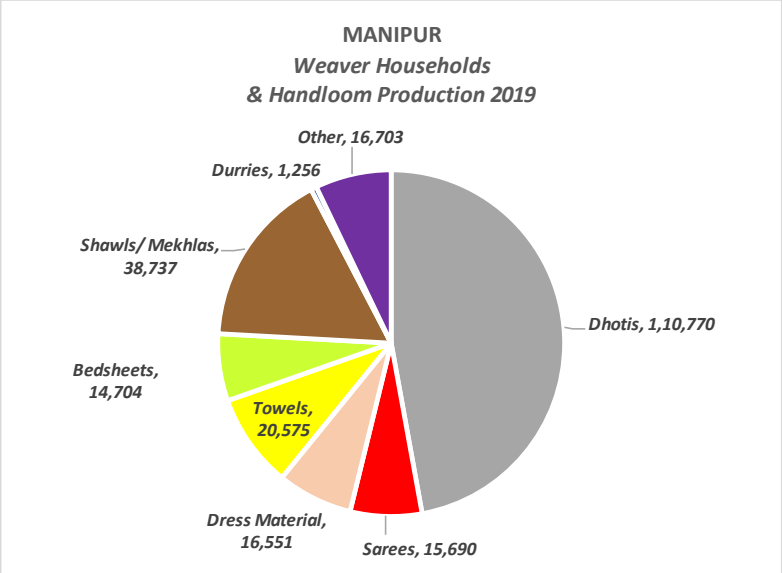
A modern association of Manipuri women known as *Meira Paibi* (literally, 'women with the flaming torch') emerged in 1977 in the Kakching area of Thoubal district. These Meira Paibi groups, composed overwhelmingly of elderly women, seek to bring about change in prevailing social and civil norms through direct action. Besides mounting movements against the social problems created by alcoholism and substance abuse, Meira Paibis have intervened on the woman's side in cases of domestic violence. Direct women's action through Meira Paibis has also been mounted in Manipur against false arrest, atrocities, abduction and physical abuse by members of the Indian armed forces carried out under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958, which governs the security of many strife-torn North East areas (Thangjom 2013). The dramatic Meira Paibi protest by twelve *Imas* (mothers) outside Kangla Fort in 2004 against the rape-murder of Thangjam Manorama by personnel of the Assam Rifles, and their arrest and 3-month for this daring act is often spoken of throughout Manipur as the third *Nupi Lan*.

Women of Manipur were specially known for their skills in the art of weaving, on which very high value was placed by their marital homes. Handloom weaving in every home was done exclusively by women using traditional back-strap loin looms and throw-shuttle looms. The products ranged from cotton handloom textiles meant for everyday use to luxury silks, with colours and designs more suited to the status and tastes of the nobility. The most prized designs were the silk dhotis and silken skirts worn by Manipuri royalty. Cotton yarn was produced largely in the Kuki areas of Manipur while raw mulberry silk was produced by the Loi communities. With all cloth being woven by women in Manipur, no importation was needed from outside.

For producing the bright coloured yarn used in traditional handloom cloth, the women also dyed it in bright colours using natural dyestuffs like burnt *uti* straw-ash as a mordanting agent, wild *indigo tinctoria* for the colour black, *khujum* or *achyranthes aspera* for purple; *heibung* or yellow mangosteen for bright yellow, plantain-ash for dull yellow, safflower for the colour saffron, and insect lac for bright red (Ali 1988). Combined with knowledge of dyeing chemistry, the artistic weaving skills of women weavers were highly valued in their family households.

Weaving activities still account for dominant economic position of women in Manipur. In the 4th National Handloom Census conducted in 2019 (GoI 2019), the state reported 2.22 lakh handloom weavers, from whom 2.05 lakh were women and 1.92 lakh lived in rural areas. Weavers are well distributed among the ST, OBC and general Hindu communities. The wide variety of piece goods women handloom weavers produce include *dhoti*s, sarongs, and saris in several qualities, long cloth and dress material, towels, napkins and *gamochhas*, bedsheets and blanket-wraps, traditional shawls, *mekhla chadors* and scarves in cotton, wool and silk, as well as mats and rugs. With rural weavers reporting production levels of upto 5.92 metres of textiles per day, Manipur accounted for 28.7% of the national consumption of *muga* silk, 10.4% of the national consumption of *eri* silk, 11.6% of the national consumption of wool, 14.9% of the national consumption of polyester blends for weaving purposes, while topping the country by consuming 54.3% of the acrylic wool used in weaving.

Chart 4.1: Handloom Products produced in Manipur



Women in Manipur have been economically active and independent from the earliest times. Women engaged in production activity within village households also attend to all domestic chores when their work is done (Kipgen 2010). Their participation in outside economic activity increases when they reach middle age, and when there is some other woman to engage with the household as a daughter or daughter-in-law. With agriculture as the principal rural occupation in Manipur, women farm vegetable plots of their own, while assisting in the cultivation of family land. Besides such work, women also participate in hired labour activities. Having acquired weaving skills from their elders at an early age, each woman is expected to weave for the household. After producing for the home production, women begin to trade their surpluses in the market, in solidarity with other women producers and traders. This trading activity eventually becomes an important source of supplementary income for the women of Manipur.

In the Valley, the principal point of sale for many women is in the Khwairamband Women's Market, which has existed in Imphal since the days of *Lallup*. The results of a survey of women trading in Khwairamband Market is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

PARTICIPATION OF MANIPURI WOMEN IN VENDING TRADE – *FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY*

5.1 The Imphal *Ima Keithel* Market

The vast *Ima Keithel* women's market is located in the Khwairamband area in Imphal, along Bir Tikendrajit Road, just outside the western gates of ancient Kangla Fort. Spreading out in large interrelated market segments on the principles of a modern departmental store, it is divided into several non-competing sections. In the oldest market segment *Purana Bazar*, 1691 women vendors in 28 vending sheds held vending licences reserved for items of traditional clothing, particularly traditional *phanek* body-wrappers and *innaphee* shawls. Commencing from 2003, the Imphal Municipal Corporation (IMC) began redeveloping the older *Ima Keithel* vending shed structures with the help of the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) and the Manipur Public Works Department (PWD). The intention of modernising the market was to replace the older unreinforced masonry and tin-roofed sheds supported on steel or bamboo pillars by modern reinforced concrete (RCC) buildings (Rai *et al* 2017). The vendor sheds in the clothing market have been redeveloped into a two-storeyed RCC building at Purana Bazar by IMC, with women vendors occupying its lower floor. The adjacent *Phouoibee Bazar* segment sold household necessities like food, utensils and craft items, with 1196 licensed women vendors operating from 18 vending sheds. The sheds were subsequently redeveloped by IMC into the adjacent 2-storeyed *New Market* building, where these women vendors now occupy the lower floor. To the south of the main *Ima Keithel* cluster, across the main road, 14 specialised vending sheds operated from *Laxmi Bazar*, where 734 licensed women vendors principally sold various bedding materials, along with homecrafts. These *Ima Keithel* sheds were subsequently redeveloped by IMC into the third 2-storeyed building, where these women vendors now occupy the lower floor.

Table 5.1: Vendor Respondent Selection at *Ima Keithel* Vending Sites

Vendor Market-site	Vending Sheds	Vendors Operating	Vendor Respondent Selections
Purana Bazar	28	1691	30
Laxmi Bazar	14	734	30
Phouoibee Bazar	18	1196	30
Temporary Market	22	1408	30
Street Vendors		3000	30
Total	**82**	**8029**	**150**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

The remaining vendor market sheds which are yet to be relocated and redeveloped by IMC are designated as the *Temporary Market*. From the 14 vendor sheds here, 1408 licensed women vendors sell daily essentials, necessities and craft items. Although most of these sheds have roofs of tin or asbestos, supported on steel truss pillars, women vendors in an extended section operate under polythene roofs stretched over bamboo poles. Another group of unlicensed women vendors selling mostly perishable and preserved vegetable, fish and dairy products, operate from the mat-market section of *Ima Keithel*, where they roll out plastic sheeting to lay out their daily wares along the streets between different segments of the bazars. This is the *Street Vendor* market, so-called because there are no designated vendor sheds here. Because the women vendors here are unlicensed, no exact figure is available from IMC for the number of women street vendors who operate here. It has been estimated however that in excess of 3000 women vendors from operate here on any given day.

Because of their highly differentiated nature, these five specialised bazar sections were selected for the vendor survey, in order to capture the wide spectrum of women's vending activities in Imphal City. The selected bazar segments have been indicated in the map, and are then described separately below.

Map 5.1: Women's Vendor Markets in *Ima Keithel*

5.2 Women's Vendor Market Segments

In keeping with the long tradition of women's economic activities in the Imphal Valley, the women vendors who participate in enterprise activities in Khwairamband are deeply religious, reposing their trust on the Sanamahi deities of Loktak, the god and goddess Lairemba and Lairembi. Women engaged in vending activities believe firmly that, with the blessings of Lairembi, their earnings will be good that day. Hence, before commencing their vending every morning, they worship Lairemba and Lairembi at the Ima Keithel market shrine with a candle and a handful of flowers. Without seeking the blessing of these deities, they believe their earnings would suffer. Thus, Manipuri women vendors are empowered by their belief in the goddess as they enter the market each day. They are also sure she stands with them in their daily economic struggle to survive.

PURANA BAZAR

Located in the oldest section of the Khwairamband Ima Keithel, Purana Bazar is the traditional outlet for the handloom textiles and handcrafted items that are produced that are produced in large volumes in Manipur. Commercially, the most popular among these is the traditional *phanek* or handloom body-wraps traditionally worn by all women in Manipur. Depending on their intended form of use, *phanek* wrappers are available here in several different qualities, ranging from simple wrappers for everyday use to the elaborate and expensive wrappers that are preferred during social ceremonies and special occasions. Besides traditional *phanek* wrappers, the premium silk and *Muga* silk shawls available in Purana Bazar are distinctive and carry their own unique identity. The silk shawls of the highest quality are thin and also very expensive. The weavers producing such textile items are also women from different surrounding regions who are well known for their weaving skills. Handloom textile items generally come in mostly from villages and census towns in Imphal East and Bishnupur districts, like Kongba, Wangkhei, Khongman, Bamon Kampu and Utlou, while traditional tribal shawls are brought down from tribal districts in the surrounding hills. The bamboocraft traded in the Purana Bazar is sourced principally from Kongba, while traditional metalwork and ironwork items are brought mainly from the villages of Wangkhei and Thangjam Leikai, all in Imphal East district (IMC records). Purana Bazar is also principal market outlet for all the ritual goods used in Vaishnava Hinduism and traditional Manipuri Sanamahi ceremonies. Among the handwoven textile items sold there are the *leirum* ceremonial cloth and the *likli mayekphee* bedcovers that are gifted as presents during wedding ceremoniess, as well as the simple *khudei* cloth worn by Meitei people in their everyday life, The market is also the source for handloom cloth used in traditional Manipuri dance costumes, as well as the handloom *phaneks* and miscellaneous weaves produced by the Kabui and Tangkhul women.

LAXMI BAZAR

Located across the highway from Purana Bazar, Laxmi Bazar is a women's market that specialises principally in the vending of bedding items and mosquito nets. The bedding items include mattresses, pillows and pillow covers, bedsheets and bedcovers. These are available in many different qualities ranging from the ordinary to expensive premium materials that can be given as wedding gifts, etc. Besides bedding sets, vendors in Laxmi Bazar also sell handloom clothing, metal utensils and handloom ritual cloths for various ritual ceremonies that commemorate weddings, births & deaths, and so on. Khadi imported as cloth and garments from outside Manipur is also traded in large volumes at Laxmi Bazar because this is a less expensive option compared to indigenous Manipuri handloom craft.

PHOUOIBEE BAZAR

Phouoibee is a mixed market for household items and edibles, where women vendors sell a large variety of preserved and perishable food items, along with other household utility goods. The food items sold here by women vendors include fermented bamboo shoots, and spices like dried chillies, fiery Naga chillies, etc. Laxmi Bazar is also an important fruit market. The fruit traded here is either fresh picked from local gardens, or else imported, e.g. apples, mangoes, pomegranates, etc., which are not grown locally in Manipur. Since fish are a very important item in the Manipuri diet because of the proximity of large waterbodies in the Imphal Valley, fish is eaten every day. Hence, the most important section within the Phouibee bazar is its fish market which trades in local freshwater fish brought in large volumes from Loktak, Nambol and Moirang in Bishnupur district, and also freshwater fish that is imported from outside states like Assam, Bihar, etc. Since smoked fish and fermented fish are the principal methods of preserving fish in Manipur, these are also widely traded at Phouoibee as a delicacy food item. Besides fresh foods and other preserved foods, women vendors at Phouoibee also trade in locally manufactured snack items like salted puffed rice and caramelized rice, as well as cosmetics and household pottery.

Women vendors in Purana Bazar, Laxmi Bazar and Phouoibee are required to follow pre-set rules laid by the Imphal Municipal Corporation (IMC). Under these rules, only specific commodities can be traded in each these specialised market sections. Besides giving these markets a specialised and orderly character, this restricts market-entry and reduces the extent of oligopolistic competition that might have to be faced by the women vendors. Despite such market restrictions however, since many of the vending items traded in Phouoibee are seasonal, women who vend highly specialised items in-season are allowed to sell mixed

commodities during the off season. This limits the fall in their income that would occur between seasons.

TEMPORARY VENDOR MARKET

Occupying a large section of Ima Keithel and housed under covered sheds, the temporary market is another mixed market, where vending activities are conducted on a small scale by 1408 registered women vendors. Although women vendors trading in the temporary market must possess a valid permit-card for which they also pay municipal taxes at a lower rate, there are no other IMC item restrictions on trade in this market. Hence women vendors trading in the temporary market can sell whichever commodities they may wish. Most women vendors who occupy this market segment however choose to trade mostly in perishable goods, especially local vegetables which are brought in from outlying villages. A small number of women vendors also trade in fruit, rice and fine local black rice, dried fish, and also cheap jewellery. However, because of the lower dues realised from this market, fewer responsibilities are exercised by IMC. The women vendors here are not allotted specific vending spaces, and there is little municipal overhead expenditure on construction, maintenance and drainage. This creates major obstacles for women vendors in the temporary market especially over the rainy season because the roofs of the market sheds are old and do not have ceilings. As most women vendors trading in the temporary markets come from economically poorer families, their limited vending income merely supports their precarious hand to mouth existence, with little scope for capital accumulation.

STREET VENDOR MARKET

Without being allotted a specified market space in any particular section of Ima Keithel, the Street Vendor market spreads out on plastic place-mats along the lanes and bylanes between the built-up market sections of Purana Bazar and the Temporary Market in the northern segment of Khwairamband. The Street Vendor market opens earlier than the other Khwairamband market segments. One set of women vendors come in very early and leave by late afternoon. The space is reoccupied by another set of women street vendors who carry out their vending activity in the night. The women vendors who sit in this Ima Keithel segment are *stationary* vendors in the sense they can carry out vending activity on a regular basis each day from their own specific part of the Ima Keithel women's market, without being assigned individual vendor spaces. However, as they are not certified card-holders, they do not pay vending fees to the IMC. The Street Vendor market is important in the support it provides to enterprise-based activities that can be undertaken by less educated and less privileged women with little input of capital. Besides contributing to the economic livelihoods of several poorer

self-employed women from in and around Imphal, the Street Vendor market also supplies various low-cost necessities to urban customers from other parts of the city. The items traded by the street vendors are typically cheaper and are also relatively easy to access since the vending takes place at street-level. This allows the city customers to shop here regularly without having to find separate parking for their vehicles. Nevertheless, the critical vending challenges that are faced each day by women street vendors arise mainly because they do not occupy fixed individual market-spaces and thus have to compete each day to find a spot from which they can carry out their vending trade, often arriving at the street vendor's market as early as 3:00 am in darkness just in order to secure a good vending spot. Since the competition for street vending space is unregulated, quarrels between vendors tend to break out. Because they lack storage space, many women street vendors have to carry in their vending stock of commodities to the market each morning on autorickshaws and leave with their unsold stock in the early evening. Because of the recurring cost, other women street vendors have managed to work out a private arrangement with a neighbour in the adjacent Temporary Market who allows them to store their vending stock in a shared storage space.

Ima Keithel is now regulated by the Imphal Municipal Council (IMC), under whose control women traders enjoy secure legal status. Regulation of trade and licensing services, shop rental value, civic conservancy charges including sweeping & cleaning, sweeping and wastewater disposal services are all provided against the vendor taxes realised by the Municipal authority. Women traders pay a monthly fee of Rs.95 as vending tax, while another Rs.15 is realised by IMC for disposal of solid waste. These conservancy services have largely been privatised. Several civil-society organisations and NGOs now assist the Imphal Municipal Council in managing urban solid wastes produced by different IMC Wards. These include the Centre for Research on Environmental Development [CRED], the Khaba Waste Management System [KWAMS], the Seven Security Force [SSF], the Social Upliftment and Welfare Organization [SUWO], the Thangmeiband Assembly Constituency Development Forum [TACDEF], and the Workers' Union Manipur [WUM]. CRED and TACDEF among these are easily recognised organisations that are also popular with the women traders, because they take full additional responsibility for maintaining the market and managing storage facilities at the women's market, against a daily levy of Rs.10 rupees per vendor.

The rules of generational inheritance by which Ima Keithel vendorships were handed down within the same vendor families dated from the distant past, when the different trading sheds in the women's market were organised in order of their Meitei *shageis* or clan-lineages. Under the traditional system, the vending sheds selling *hawai kangtak* or lentil dal were controlled by the Angom clan, the sheds selling *kabok* or puffed rice were controlled by the

Lairikyengbam and Kshetrimayum clans, the sheds selling various iron implements were under the control of the Thangjam clan, while jewellery sales were controlled by the Tourangbam, Kangabam and Keisham clans. In contrast, the vending shops that mostly sold embroidered cloth at Phiribi Potfam were open to all clans.

While such clan restrictions are no longer practised, and have thus largely disappeared from the Khwairamband Ima Keithel, their influence remains. Thus, the women trading in a specific commodity from a specific section of the bazar are usually from the same place. The licensed women vendors trading from Purana Bazar, Laxmi Bazar and Phouoibee in the Khwairamband Market all hold regular membership cards that declare them to be permanent vendors. Permanent vendors have to obey the IMC vending rules and regulations, unlike licensed and unlicensed women vendors who trade in mixed commodities from the Temporary and Street Vendor market.

5.3 General Profile of Women Vendors

Among the 150 women vendors surveyed in five bazar segments in the Imphal's Ima Keithel, the majority were overwhelmingly native Manipuri or Meitei, with another prominent section also comprising Meiteilon-speaking Manipuri Brahmins. On the other hand, the number of Pangals (Meiteilon-speaking Muslims) who came in mostly from Thoubal district to participate in the vending trade was much fewer, along with a mere sprinkling of tribal women vendors coming in from the Manipur hills. Women vendors in the more established bazars held vending licences and membership cards, which entitled them to a fixed bazar location upon the payment of regular bazar fees. On the other hand, the women street vendors were squatters without a fixed claim to their bazar site. This made their day-to-day presence in the street market more much more competitive. The principal reason for the concentration of all women's vending business in the Ima Keithel is the central location of all these Khwairamband bazars within central Imphal City.

5.3.1 Ethnic Participation

The central Imphal Valley region of Manipur has a predominantly Meitei Hindu population. As the Meitei Hindu and Meitei Bamon (Brahmin) groups in the Imphal Valley have become highly urbanised, many women from these urban households have sought economic participation, and have chosen the vending trade as a means for their economic and social empowerment. Many of the Purana Bazar, Laxmi Bazar and Phuoibee women vendors have either inherited their vending enterprise from their relatives belonging to previous generations, or have acquired their vending business through later purchases of vending licences from the long established women vendors who had preceded them. Because the

strictly genderised character of the Ima Keithel women's market blocks the incursion of male competition, the three principal vendor markets have traditionally been the preserve of Meitei women entrepreneurs who have accumulated sufficient capital over several generations.

Meitei women have been empowered in this respect by the social capital created by the strong *Marup* organisations commonly found among Meitei women, which provide them gender solidarity and economic support. Because they lack this social capital and are generally based outside the City, Muslim Pangals and tribal women lack access to this form of support even if they need it. Hence, the rural non-Meitei women vendors chose to participate vending activities on the Ima Keithel streets and in the shops located in the shelter for Temporary Vendors, where capital requirements and entry barriers were much lower.

Table 5.2: Ethnic Distribution of *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors

Vendor Site	VENDOR ETHNICITIES						
	Meitei	Brahmin	Pangal	Kuki	Kabui	Maring	Naga
Purana Bazar	23	6	1	-	-	-	-
Laxmi Bazar	20	10	-	-	-	-	-
Phouoibee Bazar	24	5	1	-	-	-	-
Temporary Bazar	19	5	2	2	1	1	-
Street Vendors	13	-	11	1	1	1	3
ALL VENDORS	**99**	**26**	**15**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**3**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Because of lower capitalisation requirements, entry of new women vendors into the Temporary Bazar and Street Vendor bazar segments is less restricted and relatively easier. Except for the minor presence of Pangal and tribal women vendors among them, Meitei women still dominate the Temporary Vendor bazar. The Temporary Bazar has a mixed commodity character, where a wide spectrum of commodities is traded at lower capital cost. Stock values are still high. Many more vendors from the tribal Naga, Kuki, Kabui, Maring and Pangal communities are found among street vendors in Ima Keithel. who generally deal with consumable commodities like food and vegetables, which they can bring to their Imphal street stalls from outlying rural settlements. Many women street vendors are actually rural residents who have begun to take advantage of the commercial opportunities offered by Imphal City

Table 5.3: Language Proficiencies of *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors

Vendor Site	MOTHER TONGUES					2nd/3rd LANGUAGES	
	Meiteilon	Kuki	Kabui	Maring	Naga	Hindi	English
Purana Bazar	30	-	-	-	-	15	9
Laxmi Bazar	30	-	-	-	-	7	2
Phouoibee	30	-	-	-	-	10	3
Temporary Vendors	26	2	1	-	-	4	3
Street Vendors	24	1	1	1	3	2	1
ALL VENDORS	**140**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**38**	**18**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

5.3.2 Language Proficiency

Language proficiencies among women vendors in different *Ima Keithel* market segments also reflect these ethnicities. Meiteilon is the language most prominently spoken, both as a mother tongue among Meiteis, Meitei Brahmins and Pangals, and as a communication language by women vendors from the tribal communities. Since major segments of the Ima Keithel markets like Purana Bazar and Phouoibee also serve non-Manipuri customers, around a quarter of the women vendors also speak Hindi as a second language for business purposes. Language proficiency in English had been acquired by some vendors through education, since this language is hardly used for business purposes in the vending trade.

5.3.3 Age and Education

The age and educational profile of the women vendors are depicted below, along with ± figures that show the range of deviation from means, i.e., the range of dispersion between vendors in each market location. On the average, most women vendors in the Ima Keithel vendor markets are currently in the middle age-group of 50-57 years, with average vending experience ranging from 9-15 years. Most women had become vendors after completing the age of 40 years. Since the marriage age for women commonly averages around 21-25 years for women vendors and also for women in Manipur, women generally enter the vending trade after completing 20-24 years of marriage, by which time their household duties have somewhat lessened because their children are now grown. By the age of 40, most women vendors have grown daughter and daughters- in-law, to whom their responsibilities for household chores and other care activities can now devolve. Many urban women reaching these ages do not want to sit around at home doing nothing. Their entry into vending at this stage provides them an avenue for becoming economically active.

While literacy achievements in Manipur had previously been low, literacy rates modern-day Manipur are now appreciably high at 86% for males and 72% for females (Census 2011). Urban literacy for males had reached even higher at 92% and had reached a level of 79% for urban females. Women vendor respondents averaging the age of 50+ years represent an older generation when literacy achievements were poorer. The women vendors who established themselves in Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar have received more years of education, reaching the average Class 10 level in Purana Bazar with low dispersion, the Phouoibee women vendors have generally received education till the middle school level. Education among the street vendors, who generally belong to poorer rural families are just under

primary level, with uniformly low dispersion. This indicates that education or the lack of it can act as a major driver for the entry of women into vending.

Table 5.4: Age and Educational Profile of *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors

Vendor Market Sites	Average Vendor Age	Years of Education Received	Age at Marriage	Age-Range at Entry	Post-Marriage Entry-Age	Current Age-Range	Vending Experience in Years
Purana Bazar	57	10.5 ± 3.6	24.8	43.0 ± 11	19.9 ± 14	57.2 ± 9.8	14.3 ± 9
Laxmi Bazar	55	9.1 ± 4.4	23.1	39.5 ± 11	16.8 ± 10	54.7 ± 8.7	15.1 ± 10
Phouoibee	57	7.9 ± 4.3	21.7	42.7 ± 14	21.2 ± 15	57.1 ± 9.9	12.2 ± 10
Temporary Vendors	54	7.5 ± 4.7	21.6	44.2 ± 7	22.5 ± 8	54.1 ± 10.2	10.0 ± 8
Street Vendors	50	4.3 ± 3.2	22.2	46.5 ± 12	24.3 ± 15	49.7 ± 12.7	9.4 ± 6
ALL VENDORS	**55**	**7.9 ± 4.5**	**22.6**	**43.3 ± 12**	**23.2 ± 13**	**54.6 ± 10.6**	**12.5 ± 9**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

5.3.4 Vendor Family Characteristics

While most women vendors had unitary families with joint earning contributions from other family members, a fair number of women vendors were sole earners, especially in Phouoibee, and the Temporary and Street Vendor markets. Striking contrasts were also seen between vendor household-sizes in the five market segments. Generally, the households of women vendors operating in the Temporary and Street Vendor bazars were bigger, requiring more earnings per family. Earning pressures on these women vendors, many of whom come from joint-family households in rural areas, were thus much higher. So, both Temporary and Street Vendors household family size are bigger as compared to others Vendors. However, the average vendor household had more female than male members. Also, the dependency ratios or ratio of dependents to family earners was fairly high for vendors in all bazar sections except the Temporary Market.

Table 5.5: Family Status and Dependency among *Ima Keithel* Vendor Households

	Vendor Family-Type		Earning Status		Total Household	Total	Total	Dependents			*Dependency*
	Unitary	Joint	Sole	Joint	Size	Minors	Earners	Total	Minor	Elderly	*Ratio*
Purana Bazar	24	6	9	21	5.9	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.2	0.3	*0.9*
Laxmi Bazar	17	13	14	16	5.8	2.4	3.0	2.4	1.5	0.9	*0.8*
Phouoibee	15	16	16	14	7.4	2.6	3.3	2.4	1.5	0.9	*0.7*
Temporary Vendors	21	9	14	16	7.8	2.6	3.8	2.1	1.4	0.7	*0.5*
Street Vendors	18	12	13	17	8.2	2.8	3.5	2.4	1.5	0.9	*0.7*
ALL VENDORS	**95**	**56**	**66**	**84**	**7.2**	**2.7**	**3.2**	**2.5**	**1.6**	**0.8**	***0.8***

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

The composition of male and female earners was quite similar in all markets. As the well-established women vendors in Purana Bazar, Laxmi Bazar and Phouoibee have higher earnings because of nature of their vending trade, the higher profits of sole-earning vendors in these markets allowed many of them to manage a large part of their household expenditure by themselves and still invest in their vending business. This was not the case among women

vendors operating in the Temporary and Street Vendor markets, where profits and capital accumulation was not enough to allow them in higher-valued commodities.

5.3.5 Living Conditions and Household Amenities

The living conditions of women vendors operating in different segments of the Ima Keithel bazars were ascertained broadly from their descriptions of household assets and house construction quality. More women vendors in Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar lived in well-constructed *pucca* houses and many more in semi-*pucca* structures, indicating their economic conditions were better. For vendors in Phouoibee, house-quality was dispersed more widely. Housing quality was much lower among women vendors operating from the Temporary and Street Vendor bazar segments. A great many lived in makeshift *kuchha* houses or older wooden structures in the case of tribal women vendors descending from the hills. Clearly, this indicated that the economic conditions of women vendors operating in this market segment were still poor.

Table 5.6: Living Conditions of *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors – *HOUSING QUALITY*

Vendor Site	CONSTRUCTION-TYPE			
	Pucca	Semi-*Pucca*	*Kuchha*	Wooden
Purana Bazar	13	8	4	5
Laxmi Bazar	12	10	7	1
Phouoibee	8	8	6	8
Temporary Vendors	3	5	18	4
Street Vendors		7	17	8
ALL VENDORS	**36**	**38**	**52**	**24**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Similar economic conclusions can be drawn from the average vendor-family holdings of household assets. While more women vendors who operated from Purana Bazar, Laxmi Bazar and Phouoibee had better access to modern home amenities through their family holdings of household whitegoods, including greater access to private means for transport and communication, the others sections of women vendors were asset-poor. Even fewer street vendor families had access to entertainment amenities like radio and TV.

Table 5.6: Living Conditions of *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors - *HOUSEHOLD AMENITIES*

Vendor Site	HOUSEHOLD WHITEGOODS							
	Refrigerator	Washing Machine	Cooking Oven	Radio	TV	Video Player	2-Wheelers	4-Wheelers
Purana Bazar	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.9	0.8	0.1	1.0	0.3
Laxmi Bazar	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.8	0.9	0.4	1.2	0.4
Phouoibee	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.6	0.2	0.9	0.2
Temporary Vendors	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.9	0.1
Street Vendors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
ALL VENDORS	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.9	0.3

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

5.4 Work Profile of Women Vendors

In Manipuri vendor households, as in households elsewhere, women have to carry a major load of housework for their families. This is why the women tend to enter vending activity after reaching the age of 40 years, by which time their children have grown, and there is another female member in the family who is old enough to lend a hand. This obviously one reason why the Khwairamband women's bazars are called the 'mothers market' or the Ima Keithel. Nevertheless, despite their vending duties, women vendors are not entirely free of housework, as shown in the table.

5.4.1 Workhour Allocations by Women Vendors

The workhours and active hours of women vendors are seen to be broadly similar for all bazar segments, indicating that women's workloads do not vary with economic status. With average activity hours of around 11-12 hours per day, the women vendors spend between 7-10 active hours every day at shop work, combining their vending duties with 3-4 hours spent every day at household chores and just under another hour in shopping for their households. This leaves them around 3 hours for personal leisure in a working day that has averaged around 15 hours. While women vendors in Purana Bazar are able less hours to vending work, they spend the workhour time saved at housework, rather than increasing their personal leisure. The findings for other bazar segments are also nearly similar, except for women street vendors who have to spend nearly 2 extra hours at vending work because of the additional need to transport their stocks to and from Khwairamband. This is compensated by reducing their personal leisure, which marks the time they have for gardening, stitching, watching television and playing with their grandchildren.

Table 5.8: Allocation of Daily Workday Hours by *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors

Vendor Site	Workday Hours	Total Active Hours	Vending Work Hours	Household Chores Hours	Household Purchases Hours	Personal Leisure Hours	*Work: Leisure Ratio*
Purana Bazar	15.2	11.8	7.1	4.8	0.8	3.3	*3.6*
Laxmi Bazar	15.4	11.6	8.1	3.6	0.6	3.8	*3.1*
Phouoibee	14.9	11.7	8.6	3.1	0.6	3.2	*3.6*
Temporary Vendors	15.7	12.7	9.0	3.6	0.5	3.0	*4.2*
Street Vendors	15.4	12.6	10.0	2.6	0.6	2.8	*4.5*
ALL VENDORS	**15.1**	**11.8**	**8.4**	**3.4**	**0.6**	**3.3**	***3.6***

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

The work-to-leisure ratio in the table provides a broad summary of workday differences between women vendors in the different bazar segments. Thus while women in the more established Purana Bazar, Laxmi Bazar and Phouoibee segments need, in ratio-terms, to spend less hours at work for every hour of leisure, the opposite is true for less-privileged women vendors in the Temporary and Street Vendor segments.

Most women vendors in the Temporary and Street Vendor bazar segments travel in to the city from outlying rural areas, in order to carry out vending work in 3 relay-shifts every day at the women's bazar. Women in the first vending shift come in between 3-4 am and complete their daily sales by 10a m, then travel homeward. The second shift of women vendors arrive at the Temporary and Street Vendor markets between 10-11am and sell their vending materials at the bazar uptil 4-5 pm, when they leave. Women vendors come in for the third vending shift between 3-4 pm and sell their wares at the bazar uptil 8-9 pm. With is no overlap in these times, the vending areas are cleared by the departing shift before the next shift arrives.

Depending on their respective bazar timings, women vendors in the three vending shifts have to finish their household chores before or after they leave, However, since many of the rural women belong to larger-sized or joint households, they have more help in completing household chores and can an extra hour or two every day at travel and vending work.

5.4.2 Vendor Capital Access and Capitalisation Needs

As discussed in the section on the Manipur economy, women in Manipur are strongly organised around women's *Marup* groups. The relatively better access of Meitei women to social capital in the form of these traditional women's organisations has also been an important supporting factor for women entering enterprise activities in Manipur. Women's Marups in Manipur emerged as organised women's groups that institutionalised cooperative behaviour among their members. In course of time, women's Marups increasingly began to adopt economic functions.

Since traditional Marups had the social purpose in organising solidarity among Meitei women, they acted as an important institution in mobilising and channelling social capital for women's enterprise. Behaving as rotating supply and credit associations (ROSCAs), Marup credit groups emerged with women traders as their members. The Marup credit groups acted by mobilising and rotating their daily savings within nuclear vendor groups. Thus, women vendors in Ima Keithel became eligible for credit advances from the Marups of which they are members. Most women's vendors in Ima Keithel are members of one or more Marup groups, with varying membership. The Marup group pools the membership collections from its members into a revolving capital fund, from each Marup member is periodically entitled to receive capital support for her vending venture when her turn arises.

Most established women vendors in Purana Bazar, Laxmi Bazar and Phouoibee have one or two memberships in Marup credit groups that collect a good amount of money from them

every month. They can thus periodically ask for large working loans from the group. Credit access is much more limited for the women street vendors, who belong to smaller Marups that also make lower money collections per month. Accordingly, the periodic loans available to their group members are much smaller. Because of their higher stock investments, women vendors in Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar had taken more Marup group-memberships and were making higher monthly contributions than the rest. Vendors in Phouoibee, the Temporary market and the Street Vendor markets made lower Marup contributions since they had fewer memberships. The Marup contributions by women in each market bore a fairly close relation to the amount of Marup credit availed. Therefore, the women vendors at Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar carried larger Marup Loans.

Table 5.9: Credit Access and Credit Availed by *Ima Keithel* Women Borrowers

Vendor Site	MARUP Credit Memberships	Money Lender Credits	Borrowers from Other Sources: Relatives	Moneylenders	Banks
Purana Bazar	1.17	1.08	16	14	-
Laxmi Bazar	1.13	1.04	16	13	1
Phouoibee	1.11	1.02	22	6	2
Temporary Vendors	1.09	1.01	16	13	1
Street Vendors	1.10	1.01	16	13	1
ALL VENDORS	**1.03**	**1.00**	**86**	**59**	**5**

Vendor Site	MARUP Credit Memberships	Monthly MARUP Collection	MARUP Credit Availed	Loans from Other Sources: Relatives	Moneylenders	Banks	Loans from All Sources
Purana Bazar	1.17	6,833	1,22,778	12,267	21,429	-	1,56,473
Laxmi Bazar	1.13	5,127	1,20,003	12,438	21,923	10,000	1,64,364
Phouoibee	1.11	4,771	1,19,916	8,205	9,167	5,000	1,42,287
Temporary Vendors	1.09	4,259	1,10,128	11,706	21,923	10,000	1,53,757
Street Vendors	1.1	4,322	1,11,735	12,438	21,923	10,000	1,56,096
ALL VENDORS	**1.03**	**3,686**	**1,00,802**	**11,312**	**20,508**	**8,000**	**1,40,622**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Marup credit alone would however be insufficient to meet vending needs. Personal credit is available to women vendors from three other sources, namely interest-free loans from relatives, moneylender credit and bank loans. More than half of the 150 women vendors had taken small loans from relatives. However, the ability to raise such loans also depended on the state of solvency of the relatives and their capacity to lend out spare funds. Almost the same number of women vendors had taken moneylender loans. Moneylender loans were usually sourced without collateral from moneylenders registered with Government as under as unincorporated bodies (UIBs) who extend business credit on a daily rotating basis at high interest of upto 3 percent per month. Such loans were availed for short periods by women vendors at high daily interest for meeting urgent investment needs.

However, moneylender credit acts very differently from Marup credit. Since the availability of moneylender loans does not depend on the rotation of pooled daily collections by a group of women vendors, the loan amounts availed are small, but have to be paid back with interest in daily instalments. In such conditions, moneylender credit was mainly availed by women vendors during personal emergencies and rarely used for strictly business purposes. Such loans were non-collateralised, although high interest still had to be paid. The moneylenders were more tended wary about lending to women street vendors, whose status and their presence in the market is not permanent.

Surprisingly, given their dependence on credit, few women had availed or heard of bank credit. Some stated that they lacked the time to go to bank branches to process loans, because of their vending engagements. Instead, the moneylender loans dispensed by UIB lenders were accessible on site. Other difficulties they had experienced when seeking bank loans was the need for collateral, and the lumpiness of the repayment schedule for paying back bank loans. Women vendors found it more convenient to pay back their loans on a daily basis from their daily earnings, and sourced their borrowings from moneylenders instead.

Table 5.9: Credit Access and Credit Availed by *Ima Keithel* Women Borrowers

Vendor Site	MARUP Credit Memberships	Money Lender Credits		*Borrowers from Other Sources*		
				Relatives	Moneylenders	Banks
Purana Bazar	1.17	1.08		16	14	-
Laxmi Bazar	1.13	1.04		16	13	1
Phouoibee	1.11	1.02		22	6	2
Temporary Vendors	1.09	1.01		16	13	1
Street Vendors	1.10	1.01		16	13	1
ALL VENDORS	**1.03**	**1.00**		**86**	**59**	**5**

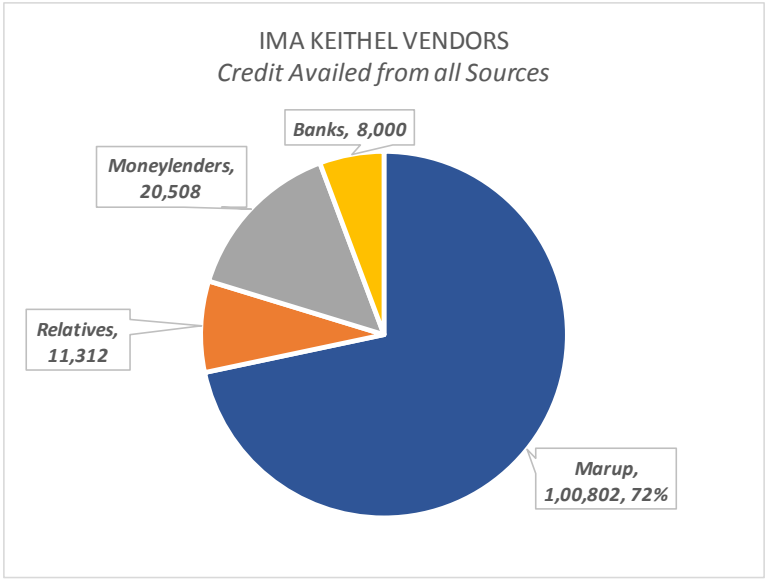
Vendor Site	MARUP Credit Memberships	Monthly MARUP Collection	MARUP Credit Availed	*Loans from Other Sources*			Loans from All Sources
				Relatives	Moneylenders	Banks	
Purana Bazar	1.17	6,833	1,22,778	12,267	21,429	-	1,56,473
Laxmi Bazar	1.13	5,127	1,20,003	12,438	21,923	10,000	1,64,364
Phouoibee	1.11	4,771	1,19,916	8,205	9,167	5,000	1,42,287
Temporary Vendors	1.09	4,259	1,10,128	11,706	21,923	10,000	1,53,757
Street Vendors	1.1	4,322	1,11,735	12,438	21,923	10,000	1,56,096
ALL VENDORS	**1.03**	**3,686**	**1,00,802**	**11,312**	**20,508**	**8,000**	**1,40,622**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

As seen in the table, the principal source of credit for women vendors was their Marup, which served as the fount of their business. Even the poorest women borrowers were carrying an average Marup loan of more than Rs. 1 lakh. Next in order of importance were loans from relatives, although the loan amounts in this case were small. For larger loan amounts, the women preferred to deal with moneylenders, out of convenience. Only in Phouoibee, were the average borrowings from these two sources relatively smaller. With 86 women vendors

borrowing from outside their Marup, the total loans they were carrying were relatively high at well over Rs. 1.4 lakh. The relative credit amounts and the sources from which they were taken are shown in the chart.

Chart 5.2: Vendor Credit Sources for Ima Keithel Women Vendors



Because of the ability of UIB moneylenders to enforce loan repayment, loan capital is also made available on a daily basis to poor vendors for purchasing the stock required for the coming day on daily collection basis. Daily repayment of the principal amount with interest is made to the collection agents from the vending sales of the day, with exceptions to the strict repayment schedule only being made during bandhs and strikes, and when vendors have not got customers over the day. As Daily Collection loans are often the only means by which poor unlicensed vendors can raise enough stock capital to operate, they are repaid at astronomical interest rates that can reportedly go up to 8 percent per day (240% per month). With no time to calculate the burden of interest, and not recourse open to other softer loans, many poor and illiterate vendors often end up handing the bulk of their vending income over to the UIB moneylending agency.

5.4.3 Vendor Capitalisation at Entry

Most women vendors who operate currently in Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar had acquired their vending licences either through inheritance, or purchase from other woman vendors. A few woman vendors in Laxmi Bazar had also acquired their vendorships through fixed-period lease deposits they made on the vending licences held by other women. In lower-ranked Phouoibee, fewer women vendors had inherited vending rights and even fewer had purchased their vending licences outright from other vendors. Thus a fairly large proportion of women

carried out vending operations in Phouoibee on the basis of lease-deposits they made to secure temporary vending rights from other licensed women vendors for fixed durations.

Table 5.10: Vendor Capitalisation and Mode of Vendor Entry of *Ima Keithel* Vendors

	VENDOR CAPITALISATION		***VENDORSHIP ACQUISITION MODE***		
Vendor Site	**Startup Capital**	**Stock Capital/pm**	**By Inheritance**	**By Purchase**	**By Deposit**
Purana Bazar	24,655	1,65,517	15	14	1
Laxmi Bazar	11,680	92,907	13	11	6
Phouoibee	9,573	79,608	12	8	10
Temporary Vendors	8,852	77,591	17	16	20
Street Vendors	7,954	78,165	-	-	-
ALL VENDORS	**6,589**	**73,975**	**57**	**49**	**37**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Before the *Ima Keithel* women vendors had entered vending activity, they had usually been engaged in agricultural and traditional weaving activities, besides petty vending at their home locations. Although many among them were nominally illiterate at the time of startup, all women who enter vending enterprise generally possess an intrinsic sense of saving and expense accounting. However, regardless of whether they made large or small startup investments, it was not equally easy for all women aspirants to enter vending business in any preferred market segment of Ima Keithel. Because of high stock costs ranging from nearly Rs.1 lakh-Rs.1.7 lakh for vending higher-valued items like traditional handloom clothing and bedding, the initial startup capital commitments by women vendors trading in the specialised Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar market segments also had to be quite large, ranging between Rs. 11,000 to Rs.25,000. In Phouoibee, the Temporary market and the Street Vendor market, on the other hand, initial investment needs were not quite so high. Startup capital in these market segments ranged between Rs.8,000-9,500, with almost similar stock capital values that were just under Rs. 80 thousand.

Any new women vendor could enter the Ima Keithel vending trade by competing daily for vending space in the Street Vendor market. Although competition for space was stiff and not always satisfactory, this mode of vendor entry suited rural women with little capital to invest, who could arrive at the market early. Alternatively, three modes of licensed entry were open to women vendors who entered higher-valued vending segments like Purana Bazar or Laxmi Bazar. They could thus become licensed woman vendors at Ima Keithel by

(a) *inheriting* a vendor license from an older woman relative

(b) *purchasing* a vendor license from a retiring woman vendor

(c) *depositing* a contracted amount of cash with existing vendors, to lease their vendor licences for fixed periods.

With the history of Ima Keithel stretching back nearly two centuries, the inheritable vendorships became the means for keeping high-valued vending enterprise within the family. However, since growing capital accumulation allowed some successful women vendors or their families to branch into formal business opportunities elsewhere, their vending licenses were also available on sale. These vendor licences could then be purchased by other women vendors seeking permanent vending licenses, who were related or unrelated to the original licence-holders. In the long term, the purchase arrangement allowed successful woman vendors from the less-valued Temporary or Street Vendor segment to use their accumulated holdings of capital as a means for upward mobility into the higher-valued vending segments. In another contractual arrangement, a new woman entrant could deposit an agreed amount of money with an existing woman vendor-licensee for a fixed period, which would allow her to sit at the vendor market in place of the original licensee. The deposit accepted by the original licensee would then be repaid in monthly instalments every month over an extended period, after which the licence would revert to the original licence-holder. This deposit system allowed a licensed woman vendor to capitalise the lease value of her existing vendor licence when she needed to raise fixed amounts of capital to meet other business needs. A woman vendor who accepted the lease deposit could thus avoid having to seek other forms of market credit.

In the Temporary sheds, the vending spaces assigned to licensed women vendor are much smaller in size. Most women vendors at this location had augmented their small vending space they inherited through outright purchases or through fixed duration lease-deposits on adjacent vending spaces. Nearly half of the women vendors in the Temporary market were new entrants. However, since a great many vendorships in Phouoibee and the Temporary market were inherited, entry of outside women into existing vendor groups was difficult if they lacked links to existing vendors. Most new women entrants into vending activities consequently commenced vending in the unlicensed Street Vendor segment, where vending rights were undefined and vending spaces depended daily on which women were able to occupy the street first.

Table 5.11: Vendor Capitalisation and Seasonal Trading Volumes among *Ima Keithel* Vendors

Vendor Site	Total Capitalisation in Rs.	Monthly On-Season Sales (Rs)	Monthly Off-Season Sales (Rs)	Monthly On-Season Profits (Rs)	Monthly Off-Season Profits (Rs)
Purana Bazar	1,90,172	6,39,667	17,500	34,550	4,867
Laxmi Bazar	1,04,587	6,43,667	34,500	45,650	9,033
Phouoibee	89,181	4,57,167	20,667	31,183	4,533
Temporary Vendors	86,444	3,15,500	20,500	20,617	4,917
Street Vendors	86,119	70,333	18,333	17,550	4,150
ALL VENDORS	**80,564**	**4,25,267**	**22,300**	**29,910**	**5,500**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Because of internal segregation of different Ima Keithel market segments by the specific type of commodities that can be traded there, ruinous competition between different market segments has been largely avoided. However, since vendors within the same shed sell the similar product-types and virtually identical commodities, competition between the individual women vendors has been quite fierce. While vendor entry into Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar has been rendered quite difficult by the high investment requirements for startup and stock capital in these market segments, women vendors entering the Phouoibee, Temporary and Street Vendor market faced other startup constraints. All three of these bazars cater to the highly competitive food and general household provisions segment of vending business. Although the initial investments made by women vendors in these markets were manageable and quite low, the vending commodities traded here are meant for daily use, without seasonalities in their turnover. Therefore, the women vendors trading in these three market segments were compelled to maintain constant stock levels throughout the year, without getting seasonal investment relief during the off-season.

In relative terms, average capitalisation required by women vendors at Purana Bazar was more than double compared to the vendor capital required for entering the Street Vendor segment. While vendor capitalisation levels at Laxmi Bazar lingered slightly behind, the capitalisation needs of women vendors in the Phouoibee, Temporary and Street Vendor market converged quite closely. However, the on-season sales turnovers of different Ima Keithel segments diverged quite sharply. In Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar which deal in higher-valued vending merchandise, on-season sales turnover averaged well over Rs. 6 lakhs per month, yielding profits averaging Rs. 35-45 thousand per month. In Phouoibee and the Temporary market which operate at different scales within similar goods segments, average on-season turnovers were between Rs.3-4.5 lakh per month, yielding profits at between Rs.20-30 thousand per month. However, since stock values were relatively high in all four market segments, the rates of profit realised lingered at between 5-7% in season. However, although sales turnovers decline substantially during the off-season, the vendor prices remain quite steady. Thus, off-season profits in all four licensed vendor segments rise inversely to between 21-27%, ensuring that the fall-off in vendor incomes during the off-season is less drastic.

During the off-season, sales turnovers in the four vendor market segments fell drastically, especially in Purana Bazar where high-valued handloom textiles dominate sales during the festive season. No seasonality was evident in the Street Vendor market, where rural women vendors sell perishable and preserved food merchandise required around the year. For these

unprocessed commodities brought in from outlying rural areas, the profits realised from urban sales are relatively high. At the Ima Keithel Street Vendor markets, the profits of women street vendors averaged a steady 22-25% around the year.

Chapter 6

WOMEN'S VENDING TRADE ANALYSIS – *FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY*

6.1 Vendor Market Specialisations

The women's vendor market at Ima Keithel in Imphal originally covered 82 vending sheds (IMC records), where over five thousand licensed women vendors traded in around 21 different vending commodities. Another three thousand unlicensed rural women vendors came to the Ima Keithel market to trade in 21 vending commodities, including vegetables and groceries.

Table 6.1: Typical Commodity Trade Patterns of *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors

Vending Locations	Vendor Sample	Trade Goods Sample	*Typical Vending Items*
PURANA BAZAR	30	**5**	*Clothing, footwear, household tools, fresh fish, processed rice*
LAXMI BAZAR	30	**2**	*Clothing, bedding*
PHOUOIBEE BAZAR	30	**13**	*Clothing, bedding, cosmetics, ritual goods, bamboocraft, household utensils, household tools, household fuels, fresh fish, fresh fruit, processed rice, preserved spices, pickles, perishable vegetables*
TEMPORARY VENDORS	30	**14**	*Clothing, garments, footwear, cosmetics, ritual goods, bamboocraft, household groceries, household fuels, edible snacks, fresh fruit, processed milk, preserved spices, pickles, perishable vegetables*
STREET VENDORS	30	**11**	*Garments, household groceries, household utensils, flower orchids, dried fish, fresh fish, fresh fruit, processed milk, preserved spices, pickles, perishable vegetables*
ALL VENDORS	150	**22**	

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

The vendor market at Purana Bazar was reserved principally for trading in clothing materials. Most women vendors who had operated from 28 vending sheds here were engaged in trade in traditional woven handloom textiles like *phanek* wrappers, *innaphee* shawls, and the ritual *leirum* cloth used in Manipuri ritual ceremonies. Purana Bazar women vendors also retailed footwear of different designs and qualities ages, as well as various household ironware items like knives, hammers, and spades, etc. On the other hand, the women vendors at Laxmi Bazar mainly specialised in selling bedding items like mattresses, bedsheets, bedcovers, pillows and pillowcovers, and mosquito nets of different types, at prices that varied apace with quality. Phouoibee Bazar, on the other hand, was a mixed market where women vendors principally retailed food and daily necessities, household utensils, tools and utility items, as well as various bamboocrafts like basketry and winnowers, fruit and vegetables, and processed rice products like puffed rice, etc.

Women vendors at 22 unreconstructed sheds in the Temporary market also sold a mixed bag of vending merchandise including garments, footwear and cheap cosmetics, alongside fresh

food, preserved and fermented foods and vegetables, and household groceries. The unlicensed women vendors in the Street Vendor section sold mixed vegetables and preserves, low-cost garments, groceries and spices as well as fresh and dried fish. In all, 22 major consumer commodities were traded at Ima Keithel.

The degree of market diversification in each vendor bazar is explored in the table below. It becomes clear that while Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar serve as specialised vendor markets, Phouoibee Bazar, the Temporary market and the Street Vendor market trade in a varied range of vending commodities. Among the high-end vending markets, trade diversification was lowest among the bedding vendors of Laxmi Bazar. Purana Bazar followed with a narrowly diversified range of high-end trade goods. Trade diversification was highest in the Temporary market, followed closely by Phouoibee, in both of which licensed women vendors operated. Unlicensed women vendors in the Street Vendor market also sold a wide range of trade goods, with vegetables, fresh fish and fresh fruit being dominant among them.

Table 6.2: Trade Good Distribution across *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors

	Purana Bazar	Laxmi Bazar	Phouoibee Bazar	Temporary Vendors	Street Vendors	All Vendors
Sampled Vendors	30	30	30	30	30	150
Sampled Trade Goods	5	2	13	14	11	21
Clothing	*y*	*y*	*y*	*y*	-	*y*
Bedding	-	*y*	*y*	-	-	*y*
Garments	-	-	-	*y*	*y*	*y*
Footwear	*y*	-	-	*y*	-	*y*
Cosmetics	-	-	*y*	*y*	-	*y*
Ritual Goods	-	-	*y*	*y*	-	*y*
Bamboocraft	-	-	*y*	*y*	-	*y*
HH Groceries	-	-		*y*	*y*	*y*
HH Utensils	-	-	*y*	-	*y*	*y*
HH Tools	*y*	-	*y*	-	-	*y*
HH Fuels	-	-	*y*	*y*	-	*y*
Flower Orchids	-	-	-	-	*y*	*y*
Edible Snacks	-	-	-	*y*	-	*y*
Dried Fish	-	-	-	-	*y*	*y*
Fresh Fish	-	-	*y*	-	*y*	*y*
Fresh Fruit	-	-	*y*	*y*	*y*	*y*
Processed Rice	-	-	*y*	-	-	*y*
Processed Milk	-	-	-	*y*	*y*	*y*
Preserved Spices	-	-	*y*	*y*	*y*	*y*
Pickles	-	-	-	*y*	*y*	*y*
Perishable Vegetables	-	-	*y*	*y*	*y*	*y*

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

6.2 Vendor Communities and Vending Specialisation

Four broad community groups of women vendors traded at the five vendor market segments of Ima Keithel. Overwhelmingly, the large majority comprised Meitei women vendors who traded in a broad spectrum of trade goods in every market segment. Besides selling handloom textile clothing and bedding in Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar, they traded in miscellaneous trade goods like garments and cosmetics, pickles, and preserved spices in Phouoibee and the

Temporary market, and fresh fruit and vegetables in the Street Vendor market segment. Meitei Brahmin women carried out their vending trade mostly in high-end in Laxmi Bazar, and to a lower extent in Purana Bazar, Phouoibee and the Temporary vendor market. However, they were noticeably absent among the rural women vendors who came in every day to trade the Street Vendor market.

Table 6.3: Ethnic Specialisation in the Vending Trade in *Ima Keithel* Women's Market

Vending Communities	Vendors	Trade Specialisations
MEITEI WOMEN VENDORS	**99**	*Clothing, Bedding, Footwear, Garments, Bamboocraft, Ritual Goods, HH Groceries, HH Tools, Cosmetics, Fresh Vegetables, Fresh Fruit, Fresh Fish, Processed Milk, Processed Rice, Preserved Spices, Edible Snacks, Pickles*
BRAHMIN WOMEN VENDORS	**26**	*Clothing, Bedding, Bamboocraft, HH Utensils, HH Tools, Cosmetics, Processed Rice,* *Processed Milk, Preserved Spices*
PANGAL WOMEN VENDORS	**15**	*Garments, Footwear, Flower Orchids, Fresh Vegetables, Fresh Fruit, Fresh Fish, Dried Fish, Processed Rice, Pickles*
NAGA, KUKI, KABUI, MARING, etc. WOMEN VENDORS	**10**	*Garments, HH Fuel, Fresh Vegetables, Fresh Fruit, Preserved Spices*

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Pangal Muslim women were mostly present in the Street Vendor segment where they traded mostly in vegetables and fresh fish. They had close to negligible presence in the other market segments which were dominated by urban women. The Naga, Kuki and other tribal women vendors descending from the hills were only present in very small numbers in the Temporary and Street Vendor market, where they traded mostly in fresh vegetables, fresh fruit and fresh and dried fish.

Table 6.4: Ethnic Concentration of Women Vendors in *Ima Keithel* Markets

Vendor Site	Meitei Women Vendors	Brahmin Women Vendors	Pangal Women Vendors	Naga, Kuki, & Other Women Vendors
Purana Bazar	23	6	1	-
Laxmi Bazar	20	10	-	-
Phouoibee	24	5	1	-
Temporary Vendors	19	5	2	4
Street Vendors	13	-	11	6
ALL VENDORS	**99**	**26**	**15**	**10**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Table 6.5: Household Characteristics of *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors by Ethnicity

Vendor Site	Total Vendor Households	Joint Family Households	Unitary Family Households	Joint Earner Households	Sole Earner Households
Meitei	99	35	64	55	44
Brahmin	26	13	13	13	13
Pangal	15	1	10	9	6
Naga, Kuki, etc.	10	5	5	7	3
ALL VENDORS	150	54	92	84	66

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Unitary families were much more prevalent among Meitei and Pangal women vendors, than among the Meitei Brahmin and tribal women vendors. However, only the Meitei had significant numbers of women vendors who were sole earners. Among the women vendors in the other ethnic communities, joint-earner households were more widely present.

Because of economic differentiations in the specific trade segments that women vendors engaged in, broad differences also existed between ethnic communities in the nature of capitalisation and in seasonal profits and sales turnover for the vending activities they engaged in. Average stock capital values also diverged widely, because of wide differences in the types of merchandise trade the vendor communities engaged in. At over Rs. 64 thousand, startup capitalisation was highest among Meitei Brahmin women vendors, who had invested nearly six times more in starting up vending operations, compared to the Meitei and Pangal women vendors. who had invested almost equal amounts in their startups. However, because of the wider range of trade goods that Meitei women vendors traded in, stock capital among them was well over Rs. 1 lakh despite their much lower startup investment.

Table 6.6: Capitalisation and Sales Turnover among *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors by Ethnicity

Vendor Site	Startup Capital (Rs)	Monthly Stock Capital (Rs)	Monthly On-Season Sales (Rs)	Monthly Off-Season Sales (Rs)	Monthly On-Season Profits (Rs)	Monthly Off-Season Profits (Rs)
Meitei	13,520	1,11,847	4,78,636	22,929	30,535	5,606
Brahmin	64,192	63,667	5,59,423	24,423	37,712	5,981
Pangal	11,877	12,708	76,333	18,000	25,667	5,867
Naga, Kuki, etc.	3,400	19,150	71,500	17,000	9,800	2,650
ALL VENDORS	**12,789**	**97,091**	**4,25,267**	**22,300**	**29,910**	**5,500**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

While stock investment stood on par with startup investment in the case of Meitei Brahmin and Pangal women vendors, the vending scale of Meitei Brahmin vendors was nearly six times higher than the scale at which Pangal women operated. The position of Naga, Kuki and other tribal women was strikingly different. As they mostly came to trade in the Temporary and Street Vendors market segment, carrying in their trade goods from outlying rural areas, their stock capital was valued much higher than their modest starting investment.

Differences between on-season and off-season monthly sales turnover were also markedly high for both Meitei and Meitei Brahmin women vendors. The high on-season sales realised by Meitei women vendors were based however on high stock investment. Therefore, in business terms, the Meitei Brahmin women vendors were placed at a comparative advantage, achieving the highest on-season sales with much lower stock capital investment. However, because of the market segments they traded in and higher seasonal elasticity in supply and

demand, monthly sales turnover fell off drastically for both Meitei and Meitei Brahmin women vendors during the off-season. Seasonalities in sales turnovers were much less in the case of Pangal and tribal women vendors, who traded mainly in the Temporary and Street Vendor market segments at much lower operating volumes.

6.3 Commodity Trade Analysis

The relative differences in women's trading positions seen above in different Ima Keithel market segments and among women vendors of different ethnicities were defined intrinsically by the nature and capital value of vending commodities they typically traded in, and also the profit markups they managed to achieve. These patterns are analysed below.

Table 6.7: Required Capitalisation Needs for Trade Goods in *Ima Keithel* Vendor Markets

	Required Startup Capital *(Rs)*	*Stock Capital Required in Ratio to Startup Capital*
Clothing	17,659	*7.00*
Bedding	21,529	*5.05*
Garments	1,917	*14.61*
Footwear	25,000	*8.00*
Cosmetics	9,889	*9.21*
Ritual Goods	16,667	*5.00*
Bamboocraft	9,375	*7.20*
HH Groceries	3,500	*11.29*
HH Utensils	12,750	*4.06*
HH Tools	25,000	*6.00*
HH Fuels	5,000	*6.00*
Flower Orchids	2,000	*2.00*
Edible Snacks	7,000	*7.14*
Dried Fish	1,000	*3.00*
Fresh Fish	12,750	*4.81*
Fresh Fruit	5,444	*8.73*
Processed Rice	13,600	*6.69*
Processed Milk	10,000	*8.28*
Preserved Spices	6,500	*35.26*
Pickles	5,167	*13.19*
Veg Perishables	4,344	*7.91*
All Trade Goods	**12,789**	**7.59**

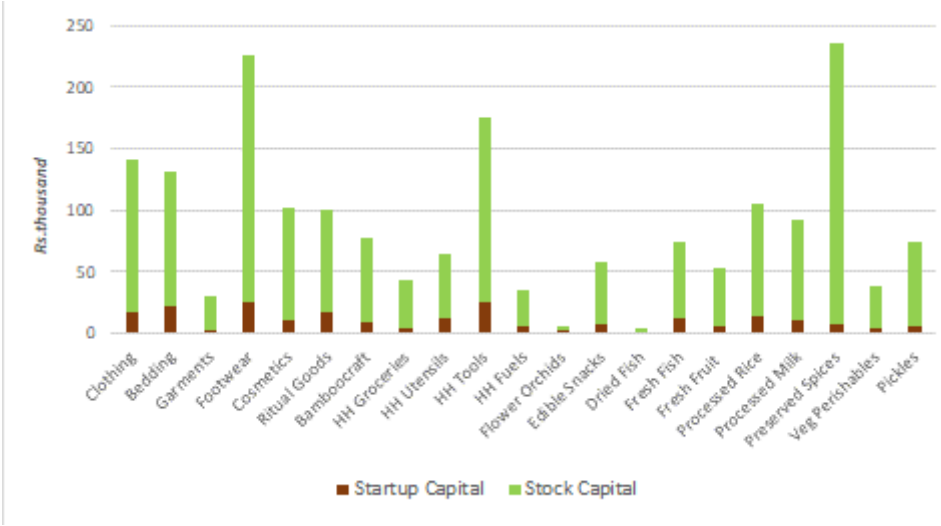
Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

6.3.1 Commodity-based Capitalisation

Women vendors needed higher startup capitalisation to enter vending segments in commodities like footwear, household tools, bedding, ritual goods and processed rice. However, the stock capitalisation requirement did not necessarily follow the same order. Depending on the items traded, unit values of stock differed widely. The case of footwear could be cited as an example. With footwear prices in the range of Rs.250-300 for a pair of slippers, it became very difficult in financial terms for footwear vendors to stock and display additional commodities. This lowered their sales turnover since footwear shops attracted fewer buyers compared to other vendor shops that sold a wider range of goods.

Similar difficulties arose for vendors dealing in bedding and clothing, as clothing varieties like *muga* and silk are very expensive and bedding materials are available in a wide range of qualities, styles and price levels. Vendors in these items therefore need to invest huge amounts of capital in maintaining their stocks at a level that would attract enough buyers. As the above commodities were all subject to seasonal demand, with demands peaking during weddings and festivals, the range and value of commodity stocks varied by season. Therefore, the size of inventories and vendor stock-capital capital also varied according to season.

Chart 6.1: Startup & Stock Capitalisation of *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors



6.3.2 Commodity-rankings and Capitalisation

The commodity capitalisation patterns in the previous table have been reordered and ranked by their relative startup capital requirement in the table below. For any new woman vendor wishing to enter trade at Ima Keithel, the different commodity segments represent the portfolio of available trading choices, ranging from segments with high startup costs and high profits, to those with lower profits and low startup costs. A woman vendor's choice of the commodity to trade in at the point of market-entry is determined by her ability to gain entry into the market, her capacity to mobilise the capital required for fixed establishment and stock in the chosen commodity-segment, and the ebbs and flows of seasonal supply and demand, seasonal turnover variations, and her ability to reinvest vendor-profits into the expansion of vending trade, by investing in more profitable commodity-segments if needed.

However, as seen in the associated figure, the requirements of stock capital for each commodity segment do not strictly follow the same relation as startup capital requirements. For instance, the clothing and processed rice segments require higher ratios of stock investment relative to startup investment compared to other household items like bedding and

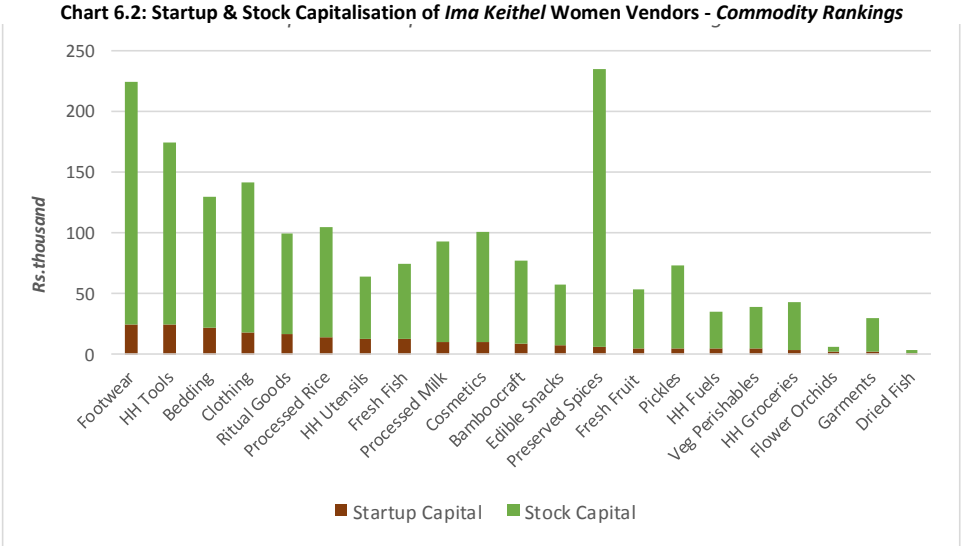
utensils. Similarly, preserved spices, processed milk, cosmetics, bamboocraft and pickles also require higher ratios of stock investment relative to startup investment than food and edibles. In principle, in market segments where the commodity demands are high, the required stock investment is also high. However, the exact relation of stock capital levels and profits is also determined partly, on the other hand, by unit costs and the length of shelf life, as well as by the unit prices realised in different commodity segments.

Table 6.8: Ranked Capitalisation of Trade Goods in *Ima Keithel* Vendor Markets

Trade Goods	Average Startup Capital *(Rs)*	Average Stock Capital *(Rs)*	*Trade Goods*
Footwear	25,000	2,29,222	*Preserved Spices*
Household Tools	25,000	2,00,000	*Footwear*
Bedding	21,529	1,50,000	*Household Tools*
Clothing	17,659	1,23,636	*Clothing*
Ritual Goods	16,667	1,08,824	*Bedding*
Processed Rice	13,600	91,111	*Cosmetics*
Household Utensils	12,750	91,000	*Processed Rice*
Fresh Fish	12,750	83,333	*Ritual Goods*
Processed Milk	10,000	82,750	*Processed Milk*
Cosmetics	9,889	68,167	*Pickles*
Bamboocraft	9,375	67,500	*Bamboocraft*
Edible Snacks	7,000	61,333	*Fresh Fish*
Preserved Spices	6,500	51,750	*Household Utensils*
Fresh Fruit	5,444	50,000	*Perishable Vegetables*
Pickles	5,167	47,556	*Fresh Fruit*
Household Fuels	5,000	39,500	*Household Groceries*
Perishable Vegetables	4,344	34,344	*Perishable Vegetables*
Household Groceries	3,500	30,000	*Household Fuels*
Flower Orchids	2,000	28,000	*Garments*
Garments	1,917	4,000	*Flower Orchids*
Dried Fish	1,000	3,000	*Dried Fish*
All Trade Goods	**12,789**	**97,091**	**All Trade Goods**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Chart 6.2: Startup & Stock Capitalisation of *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors - *Commodity Rankings*



Seasonality of commodity demands also plays a part. In commodities which have year-round sales such as household utensils, cosmetics, edible snacks, preserved spices and fish, startup investment requirements tend to be much lower than stock capital investment. In other trade goods where commodity sales see significant seasonal fluctuation, commodity stocks are maintained at more moderate levels, thus lowering stock investments to medium levels in relative terms. Finally, for perishable commodities with very short shelf life, stock investment has to be kept very low, with frequent stock renewal.

The entry of new women vendors into any commodity segment would ordinarily be determined by her ability to mobilise the desired amount of startup capital and to renew stock investment periodically. Women with greater access to high investment in startup capital do not need to renew their stock investments so frequently. In contrast, women like street vendors who cannot mobilise large enough amounts of startup capital to directly enter the licensed vendor segments, resort instead to keeping their startup investment low and renewing their stock investments daily.

Table 6.9: Distribution of Women Vendors by Trading Activity in *Ima Keithel* Vendor Markets

Trade Goods	Purana Bazar	Laxmi Bazar	Phouoibee Bazar	Temporary Vendors	Street Vendors	All Women Vendors
Clothing	*24*	*16*	*4*	*1*	*-*	*45*
Bedding	*-*	*14*	*3*	*-*	*-*	*17*
Garments	*-*	*-*	*-*	*1*	*5*	*6*
Footwear	*1*	*-*	*-*	*1*	*-*	*2*
Cosmetics	*-*	*-*	*5*	*4*	*-*	*9*
Ritual Goods	*-*	*-*	*1*	*1*	*-*	*2*
Bamboocraft	*-*	*-*	*3*	*1*	*-*	*4*
HH Groceries	*-*	*-*	*-*	*1*	*1*	*2*
HH Utensils	*-*	*-*	*1*	*-*	*1*	*2*
HH Tools	*5*	*-*	*1*	*-*	*-*	*4*
HH Fuels	*-*	*-*	*1*	*1*	*-*	*2*
Flower Orchids	*-*	*-*	*-*	*-*	*1*	*1*
Edible Snacks	*-*	*-*	*-*	*1*	*-*	*1*
Dried Fish	*-*	*-*	*-*	*-*	*1*	*1*
Fresh Fish	*-*	*-*	*3*	*-*	*2*	*6*
Fresh Fruit	*-*	*-*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*9*
Processed Rice	*-*	*-*	*4*	*-*	*-*	*5*
Processed Milk	*-*	*-*	*-*	*3*	*1*	*4*
Preserved Spices	*-*	*-*	*1*	*5*	*3*	*9*
Pickles	*-*	*-*	*-*	*2*	*1*	*3*
Perishable Vegetables	*-*	*-*	*1*	*5*	*10*	*16*
Total Women Vendors	**30**	**30**	**30**	**30**	**30**	**150**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

6.4 Seasonal Turnover and Profit Analysis

The different Ima Keithel segments differ widely in terms of the nature of commodities they deal with. These trade differentiations survive from the time when the responsibility for supplying the needs for different commodities in the Imphal market were assigned to women from different Meitei clans. While Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar appear broadly similar in dealing primarily with high-value non-perishable tradegoods, as can be seen below, Laxmi

Bazar is less differentiated and sells only clothing and bedding material. Purana Bazar is specialised toward clothing, but retains a few stalls selling household goods and edibles. Phouoibee instead is a diversified market for licensed women vendors who sell a much wider range of commodities, including several items from the edibles segment. However, the capitalisation levels, unit prices and value of sales are much lower here when compared to Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar. Because of the larger commodity range it offers, Phouoibee is visited by a large number of buyers each day, but is a less preferred market venue for the licensed women vendors who can make larger investments in order to trade in higher values. Against this argument, while the buyer need to purchase clothing and bedding items is occasional, the need to purchase the kind of commodities sole at Phouoibee is much more regular. Therefore, a need exists to compare the seasonalities and turnover patterns between these three bazars.

The women vendors in the Temporary market also sell a highly diversified product range spread over all commodity categories, including many more in the edibles segment. Hence, the daily buyer footfall in the Temporary market is also high. Pending reconstruction of the building by the IMC, the number of licensed vendors accommodated here has risen because of the addition of polythene-covered vendor sheds. Nevertheless, the Temporary market suffers the disadvantages of being extremely congested and being housed in open-wall sheds that are exposed to the weather. Because the temporary vendors pay lower licensing dues, the size of the display-space allotted to each vendor is much smaller. Many vendors have to rent two or three adjacent mat-spaces to spread their wares. Sales are variable and buyer entry is low when it rains. In the higher-end garments, clothing and crafts-goods commodity segments, the Temporary market competes with Phouoibee, which offers a better marketing solution in terms of amenities. In the edibles and vegetables segment, the Temporary market competes with the Street Vendor market that lines the lanes outside. Practically the same household items and edibles are also sold on the street by unlicensed women vendors who arrive from the villages in alternate shifts, hoping to dispose of their entire stock by the end of the day.

Thus the Temporary and Street Vendor markets actually represent two different scales of business. The street vendors work according to a different clock and calendar because they have to compete for vending spaces everyday. Because of lack of onsite storage space and associated carrying costs, their daily inventory of stock capital is necessarily low. This makes the Street Vendor market an entry-point for women seeking to enter vending enterprise. With luck, a woman street vendor can enter into an agreement with another woman in the Temporary market who agrees to share her storage space. With even more luck, she may even

be able eventually to buy a vendor licence from a retiring woman vendor, and sit in a different section of the Khwairamband Ima Keithel. However, it takes a very long time for such a thing to happen, because the margin of sales and profits for women street vendors are so low.

From the table below it also becomes clear that the nature of on-season and off-season turnovers in all women's markets depends on the commodity traded by the woman vendor. As earlier anticipated, seasonal turnover swings widely between the on-season and off-season for high-end commodities that are bought occasionally, like clothing, bedding, ready-made garments and cosmetics. Nevertheless, because of higher unit-prices, it is profitable to trade in this commodity segment in all seasons. Among the edibles with the highest turnover are fresh fish which as important Manipuri diet item, and processed milk and preserved spices which have a longer shelf-life. For other household goods and edibles, there is less seasonality in sales turnovers.

Table 6.10: Turnover & Profit Analysis of Women's Vending Activities in *Ima Keithel* Vendor Markets

Trade Goods	Total Women Vendors	Total On-Season Turnover *(Rs)*	Total Off-Season Turnover *(Rs)*	Total On-Season Profits *(Rs)*	Total Off-Season Profits *(Rs)*	*% Profit on On-Season Turnover*	*% Profit on Off-Season Turnover*
Clothing	45	6,46,222.22	19,555.56	38,822.22	6,477.78	*6.0*	*33.1*
Bedding	17	5,15,000.00	42,058.82	39,764.71	7,794.12	*7.7*	*18.5*
Garments	6	86,666.67	17,500.00	15,333.33	2,833.33	*17.7*	*16.2*
Footwear	2	1,00,000	20,000	18,500	3,000	*18.5*	*15.0*
Cosmetics	9	6,43,889	17,778	34,333	3,556	*5.3*	*20.0*
Ritual Goods	3	80,000	20,000	8,000	2,833	*10.0*	*14.2*
Bamboocraft	4	3,01,250	18,750	24,375	3,375	*8.1*	*18.0*
HH Groceries	2	75,000	15,000	9,000	2,750	*12.0*	*18.3*
HH Utensils	2	85,000	17,500	9,000	2,750	*10.6*	*15.7*
HH Tools	5	56,250	16,250	7,000	2,375	*12.4*	*14.6*
HH Fuels	1	80,000	15,000	9,000	3,000	*11.3*	*20.0*
Flower Orchids	1	70,000	20,000	8,000	2,500	*11.4*	*12.5*
Edible Snacks	1	75,000	20,000	8,000	2,500	*10.7*	*12.5*
Dried Fish	1	1,00,000	25,000	95,000	14,000	*95.0*	*56.0*
Fresh Fish	6	10,29,167	21,667	65,500	8,083	*6.4*	*37.3*
Fresh Fruit	9	94,444	20,556	11,667	3,278	*12.4*	*15.9*
Processed Rice	5	1,11,000	22,000	16,200	3,300	*14.6*	*15.0*
Processed Milk	4	7,81,250	20,000	51,250	8,375	*6.6*	*41.9*
Preserved Spices	9	5,70,000	29,167	27,500	10,583	*4.8*	*36.3*
Pickles	3	1,16,667	21,667	46,667	12,500	*40.0*	*57.7*
Perishable Vegetables	16	65,938	17,188	7,438	2,406	*11.3*	*14.0*
All Trade Goods	**150**	**4,25,266.67**	**22,300.00**	**29,910.00**	**5,500.00**	***7.0***	***24.7***

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Seasonalities in profits do not necessarily follow suit, the difference being made by relative-unit prices. For vendor commodities with highly seasonal turnovers like fish, price increase in time of scarcity partly makes up for loss of seasonal sales. As buyer demand remains sustained, the best seasonal profits are realised for complementary commodities like dried fish and fresh fish which are a dietary must. Similarly, profit-slackening between is less seasons for processed and preserved items like milk and pickles. Commodities that are sold as food

items have relatively inelastic sales and demands. For the other commodities, seasonal elasticity is high.

Chart 6.3: On-Season Trading Turnover and Profitability of Trade Activities by *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors

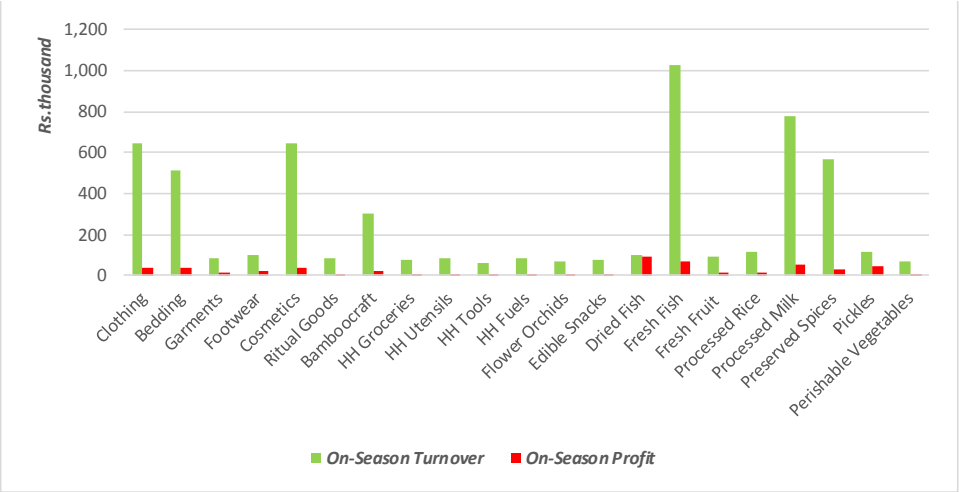
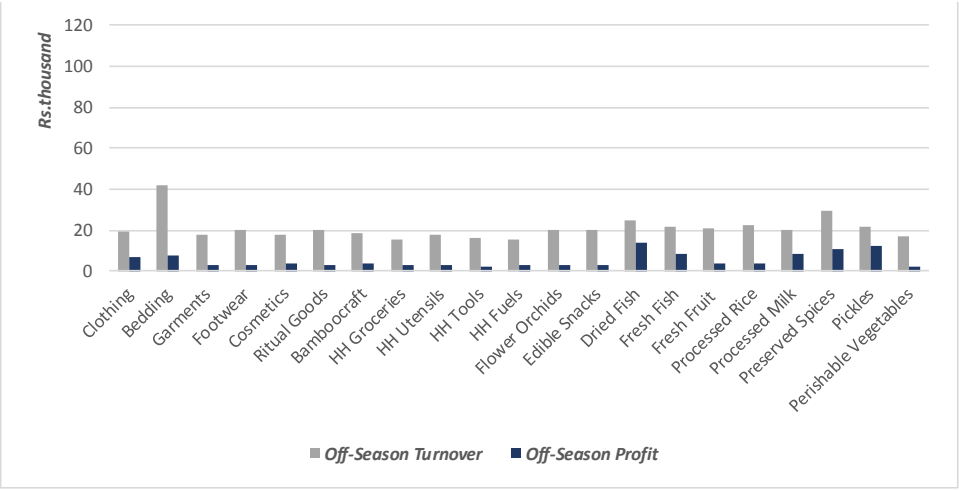


Chart 6.4: Off-Season Trading Turnover and Profitability of Trade Activities by *Ima Keithel* Women Vendors



The vending commodity-comparisons become clearer from the associated figures. The relative seasonal inelasticity of the fish segment is visible again, followed by processed, preserved and pickled edible items. A different turnover and profit relationship exists for commodity items of occasional sale. Other commodity segments like household goods and other edibles shoe little seasonal variation, hence experiencing relatively elastic vendor market conditions.

After appreciating how seasonality and turnover-profit relationships are affected by the nature of commodities traded, the concepts can be applied to different market segments in Ima Keithel, which can then be laterally compared in terms of the relative attraction they hold as vending venues for Ima Keithel women vendors. The turnover and profit figures presented

below are calculated averages for each vendor operating in the different Bazar segments. A detailed commodity-wise table for each bazar is presented at the end of the chapter.

Table 6.11: Turnover & Profit Analysis of Women's Vending Activities across Ima Keithel Vendor Markets

OVERVIEW

Trade Goods	Total Women Vendors	Total On-Season Turnover *(Rs)*	Total Off-Season Turnover *(Rs)*	Total On-Season Profits *(Rs)*	Total Off-Season Profits *(Rs)*	*% Profit on On-Season Turnover*	*% Profit on Off-Season Turnover*
PURANA BAZAR VENDORS							
All Trade Goods	30	6,39,667	17,500	34,550	4,867	5.4	27.8
LAXMI BAZAR VENDORS							
All Trade Goods	30	6,43,667	34,500	45,650	9,033	7.1	26.2
PHOUOIOBEE VENDORS							
All Trade Goods	30	4,57,167	20,667	31,183	4,533	6.8	21.9
TEMPORARY VENDORS							
All Trade Goods	30	3,15,500	20,500	20,617	4,917	6.5	24.0
STREET VENDORS							
All Trade Goods	30	70,333	18,333	17,550	4,150	25.0	22.6

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Because of bazar specialisation, vending in Purana Bazar is profitable for those women who can invest a lot of stock capital on expensive handloom textiles and high-valued items of indigenous clothing. Most women vendors operating in this Bazar are therefore from well-off families. The startup costs for entering business have been very high. Operating in a highly specialised market segment, women vendors here have to encounter and compete with numerous competitors, all selling similar commodities. Unit cost are high, and therefore unit sale-prices are also high. Buyers are drawn automatically to the market by its reputation for quality. Therefore, the women vendors in Purana Bazar compete on quality and colour selection, each trying to offer buyers exclusive value for money. Satisfied buyers, who mainly make purchases at the market for festivals and ceremonies, tend to visit the same vendor again and again, leading to establishment of longterm patron-client relationships that favour both. High on-season turnovers and profits at Purana Bazar reflect this exclusiveness. As the fall in turnover during the off-season is not matched by equivalent fall in profits, the ratio of profits to sales turnover rises during the off-season, because unit sale prices remain high.

Women vendors in Laxmi Bazar operate primarily in the clothing and bedding segment. The turnover on bedding material is seasonal, since a bride is frequently gifted luxury bedding materials along with her trousseau of bridal garments during the wedding ceremony. Laxmi Bazar is thus a one-stop market for buyers who wish to purchase and gift such items. Once again, the specialised character of the market makes competition very high and women vendors who choose to operate from here because of its product specialisation have to

compete on quality and value for money, encouraging the formation of longterm buyer-seller relationships. Off-season turnovers and profits here are in fact higher here than in Purana Bazar and the decline in off-season turnover is not matched by equivalent fall in profitability. Thus, Purana Bazar and Laxmi Bazar are both premium markets that can sustain higher inventory costs and high profits through high relative turnover. But by their nature, entry of new vendors into these market segments is difficult.

As a mixed market selling general goods, Phouoibee caters to everyday household needs for commodities that are required daily. Because of lower seasonality, the difference between on-season and off-season sales turnover in this Bazar is lower, with good profits accruing to vendors in both seasons. However, as entry-barriers are lower here, Phouoibee is more attractive for women vendors with lower financial capitalisation who wish to trade in general everyday commodities. The Temporary market accommodates women traders with modest personal means and lower capitalisation ability, who operated in the low-cost segment of the mixed market. Although the on-season turnover and profit here is lower than in Phouoibee, the off-season position for both markets is virtually similar because of the inelastic nature of food demand in both market segments. Taking the relative differences in rental values into view, as a result of which a woman vendor in the Temporary market operates with lower overheads than her counterpart in Phouoibee, the Temporary market is a better vending venue during the off-season. However, with low holding capacity, the vendor in the Temporary market selling edibles and perishables has to make many more trips to distant supply-points in order to restock. This gives the Phouoibee vendor the edge during the on-season, when sales and supply turnovers are both high.

The Street Vendor market accommodates the poorest section of women vendors, who are unlicensed and do not therefore sit at a stationary point of the Khwairamband markets. Rather, they compete for and occupy street space in the lanes between the Ima Keithel Temporary market sheds. Mostly selling perishables which they source from villages outside Imphal, the street vendors face different business risks and are unable to capitalise their vending business because of financial constraints. Accordingly, their on-season turnover is much lower compared to women vendors in other market segments, although the fall-off between on-season and off-season turnover is not so high essentially because they mostly sell edible commodities with inelastic seasonal demand. For this reason, they earn consistent rates of profit through both on and off seasons. The big constraints to women in street vending enterprise are posed by their lack of capital, their lack of a vendor license, and the constant insecurity they face from not having a fixed location to sit at in the Khwairamband Ima Keithel.

Table 6.11: Turnover & Profit Analysis of Women's Vending Activities across *Ima Keithel* Vendor Markets

DETAILED BREAKUP

Trade Goods	Total Women Vendors	Total On-Season Turnover *(Rs)*	Total Off-Season Turnover *(Rs)*	Total On-Season Profits *(Rs)*	Total Off-Season Profits *(Rs)*	*% Profit on On-Season Turnover*	*% Profit on Off-Season Turnover*
PURANA BAZAR VENDORS							
Clothing	*24*	*7,46,458*	*17,917*	*37,563*	*5,479*	*5.0*	*30.6*
Footwear	*1*	*50,000*	*15,000*	*7,000*	*2,000*	*14.0*	*13.3*
HH Tools	*5*	*58,333*	*16,667*	*7,000*	*2,333*	*12.0*	*14.0*
All Trade Goods	**30**	**6,39,667**	**17,500**	**34,550**	**4,867**	**5.4**	**27.8**
LAXMI BAZAR VENDORS							
Clothing	*16*	*6,79,688*	*23,438*	*46,969*	*9,219*	*6.9*	*39.3*
Bedding	*14*	*6,02,500*	*47,143*	*44,143*	*8,821*	*7.3*	*18.7*
All Trade Goods	**30**	**6,43,667**	**34,500**	**45,650**	**9,033**	**7.1**	**26.2**
PHOUOIOBEE VENDORS							
Clothing	*4*	*55,000*	*13,750*	*21,500*	*2,500*	*39.1*	*18.2*
Bedding	*3*	*1,06,667*	*18,333*	*19,333*	*3,000*	*18.1*	*16.4*
Cosmetics	*5*	*6,11,250*	*20,000*	*49,000*	*3,750*	*8.0*	*18.8*
Ritual Goods	*1*	*85,000*	*22,500*	*7,000*	*3,250*	*8.2*	*14.4*
Bamboocraft	*3*	*3,78,333*	*20,000*	*29,833*	*3,667*	*7.9*	*18.3*
HH Utensils	*1*	*15,00,000*	*45,000*	*1,00,000*	*10,000*	*6.7*	*22.2*
HH Tools	*1*	*50,000*	*15,000*	*7,000*	*2,500*	*14.0*	*16.7*
HH Fuels	*1*						
Fresh Fish	*3*	*16,66,667*	*23,333*	*63,333*	*9,333*	*3.8*	*40.0*
Fresh Fruit	*2*	*1,25,000*	*20,000*	*8,500*	*4,750*	*6.8*	*23.8*
Processed Rice	*4*	*1,26,250*	*23,750*	*18,500*	*3,500*	*14.7*	*14.7*
Preserved Spices	*1*	*20,00,000*	*25,000*	*90,000*	*15,000*	*4.5*	*60.0*
Perishable Vegetables	*1*	*50,000*	*15,000*	*6,000*	*3,000*	*12.0*	*20.0*
All Trade Goods	**30**	**4,57,167**	**20,667**	**31,183**	**4,533**	**6.8**	**21.9**
TEMPORARY VENDORS							
Clothing	*1*	*70,000*	*20,000*	*8,000*	*2,500*	*11.4*	*12.5*
Garments	*1*	*1,00,000*	*20,000*	*20,000*	*3,000*	*20.0*	*15.0*
Footwear	*1*	*1,50,000*	*25,000*	*30,000*	*4,000*	*20.0*	*16.0*
Cosmetics	*4*	*10,76,667*	*15,000*	*32,667*	*4,000*	*3.0*	*26.7*
Ritual Goods	*1*	*70,000*	*15,000*	*10,000*	*2,000*	*14.3*	*13.3*
Bamboocraft	*1*	*70,000*	*15,000*	*8,000*	*2,500*	*11.4*	*16.7*
HH Groceries	*1*	*80,000*	*15,000*	*10,000*	*3,000*	*12.5*	*20.0*
HH Fuel	*1*	*80,000*	*15,000*	*9,000*	*3,000*	*11.3*	*20.0*
Edible Snacks	*1*	*75,000*	*20,000*	*8,000*	*2,500*	*10.7*	*12.5*
Fresh Fruit	*3*	*1,16,667*	*21,667*	*19,000*	*3,333*	*16.3*	*15.4*
Processed Milk	*3*	*10,25,000*	*21,667*	*66,000*	*10,500*	*6.4*	*48.5*
Preserved Spices	*5*	*2,84,000*	*30,000*	*15,000*	*9,700*	*5.3*	*32.3*
Pickles	*2*	*1,25,000*	*25,000*	*20,000*	*3,750*	*16.0*	*15.0*
Perishable Vegetables	*5*	*79,000*	*16,000*	*8,100*	*2,600*	*10.3*	*16.3*
All Trade Goods	**30**	**3,15,500**	**20,500**	**20,617**	**4,917**	**6.5**	**24.0**
STREET VENDORS							
Garments	*5*	*84,000*	*17,000*	*14,400*	*2,800*	*17.1*	*16.5*
HH Groceries	*1*	*70,000*	*15,000*	*8,000*	*2,500*	*11.4*	*16.7*
HH Utensils	*1*	*70,000*	*20,000*	*8,000*	*2,500*	*11.4*	*12.5*
Flower Orchids	*1*	*70,000*	*20,000*	*8,000*	*2,500*	*11.4*	*12.5*
Dried Fish	*1*	*1,00,000*	*25,000*	*95,000*	*14,000*	*95.0*	*56.0*
Fresh Fish	*2*	*87,500*	*22,500*	*51,500*	*8,750*	*58.9*	*38.9*
Fresh Fruit	*4*	*62,500*	*20,000*	*7,750*	*2,500*	*12.4*	*12.5*
Processed Milk	*1*	*50,000*	*15,000*	*7,000*	*2,000*	*14.0*	*13.3*
Preserved Spices	*3*	*65,000*	*16,667*	*7,333*	*2,333*	*11.3*	*14.0*
Pickles	*1*	*1,00,000*	*15,000*	*1,00,000*	*30,000*	*100.0*	*200.0*
Perishable Vegetables	*10*	*61,000*	*18,000*	*7,250*	*2,250*	*11.9*	*12.5*
All Trade Goods	**30**	**70,333**	**18,333**	**17,550**	**4,150**	**25.0**	**22.6**

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019

Chapter 7

PROMOTING WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - THE SUMMARY FINDINGS

7.1 Summary of the Dissertation

Direct participation of women in the informal economy is seen across many countries in the world. However, a woman participating in the economy by entering trading activity on her own has to rely her own initiative and innate ability. This empowers women by bringing out latent entrepreneurial capabilities. Women who take part in vending activities also empower other women by demonstrating these capabilities.

Women' enterprise is not only about earning money. It reflects the ability of women to work autonomously, to be financially independent, and to arrive at their own decisions. Since this becomes a model example for other women, they feel encouraged to enter own-account enterprise (OAE) activities by themselves.

However, an important ingredient that contributes to their success is the opportunity to work in close proximity with other women. Women's agency is created within the group, who use it to channelise social awareness and the need for social change. Women's agency encourages women to be more productive, to be independent, to rely on their own abilities and to become equal participants in collective decision-making.

Collective agency also generates safety and security for women, and through joint action, enhances the social security of their families. It augments the power of women's voices, enabling them to become influential opinion-makers within society. Collective action by women transforms society in ways that amply demonstrate that what men do can also be done with equal efficiency by women.

Social norms play a critical role in the construction of society. However, norms differ widely across different social strata and regions. To remove prevailing disparities, more women need to enter the economy directly. Most educated women joining the formal economy can aspire to reach good positions at some point in life. Uneducated women have to enter the informal economy instead. Here, they can either follow the traditional norms of working from within the home, or can break out of existing social norms by working outside their domestic space.

Social and caste norms had played an instrumental role in reinforcing patriarchal attitudes in India, till growing poverty and proletarianisation forced women into work. Traditionally, most women in rural areas have worked alongside their families in agriculture. Women from landless and unprivileged social groups with few skill endowments generally enter the lower-paid segments of the labour market. Alternatively, however, some women turn towards self-employment instead, taking advantage of the economic opportunities that open around them.

Women across the North East region are generally in more empowered positions compared to women in other regions of India. The social norms prevailing in the region have been inherited from the tribal societies that were indigenous to the North East. They partly reflect situations prevailing within the tribal subsistence economy, where there is little personal accumulation because communal property rights prevail. Society in the region has therefore remained less patriarchal, with lower gender subordination, and greater equity between men and women.

Women are therefore more active in society and the economy in the North East. Private property institutions are weak. In matrilineal systems, such as those practised in Meghalaya, land becomes the property as well as the inheritance of women. Women in rural households in the North East work at domestic chores and in agriculture. Spinning, handloom weaving, and handicrafts are traditionally valued as highly skilled activities among women in the region.

When linked to the market through women's enterprise, these aptitudes and skills evolve into income-generating activities for women, reducing their dependency on men. As a result of relative improvements in women's status, less gender discrimination exists in the North East.

Most women in economic roles in urban areas in Manipur are engaged in the professions, or in urban commercial activities at the urban hub of Imphal City. Highly educated urban women enter government and non-government services or private teaching jobs at schools. Less educated women can be found working in hotel and restaurants, in personal services and urban production facilities. Self-employed women in urban areas are mostly engaged in trade and vending activity.

Rural women in Manipur are engaged in traditional farming and horticulture, contributing to growing of seasonal fruit, the collection of wild fruit, and the making of processed and pickled food. They also participate in the rearing of livestock, and in skilled activities that

produce a vast range of artisanal and processed products for use within the household and for the market sale.

By linking rural production systems to urban buyers, women vendors in Imphal have created critical economic bridges between rural women and urban women, shaping the strength of collective women's agency in Manipur. This reflects in the social respect earned by women's organisations and solidarity groups which have been in a key role in mediating the Manipur insurgency. As often said, men make war while women hold the peace.

Most women vendors enter market trade in their middle years, after raising their families. As there is little opportunity for accumulation, the vast majority of women vendors in Imphal lead a hand-to-mouth existence. Unlicensed women vendors who trade in perishable goods would sustain huge economic losses if their stocks remain unsold. Therefore, in order to keep their investment risk low, they operate at minimum scale. Licensed women vendors commonly sell non-perishable items, where unsold stocks can be stored. While the volume of stock investment and the value of stocks is much higher for them, markets risks can be lessened through storage.

Women vendors in Imphal work long hours. Their work is far from comfortable as the vending area is very small. In vending activities, women lay out their wares each day, and gather and pack them for storage every evening. This adds another hour to the length of their working day. Street vendors who commute to and from the market have to commit additional time for travel. Women vendors accept these hardships as being part of the job.

Most women vendors are unlettered and a few can only sign their names. However, they become functionally literate with vending experience, and are thus well aware of how to keep basic accounts while handling trade activity. Except for those women who obtain permanent vending licences directly through inheritance or outright purchase, most women seek the advice and mentorship of older and more experienced women vendors before starting business. Through the learning process, a solidarity network linking new vendors on the street with temporary and permanent licensed vendors.

However, most women who have had to fight their way out of rural poverty lack the financial resources to start up vending enterprise, Besides the little capital they can muster with help from relatives, most women lean back on credit support provided from group collections, by becoming members of credit Marups. For emergency purposes, they also resort to loans advanced at rigid interest by other women and agencies who have channelled their own funds

into moneylending. Because of their business commitments and the lack of outreach, most women vendors are unaware of financial support provided by banks and the Government.

A long tradition exists in Manipur, by which trading and vending activities are reserved exclusively for women. The Khwairamband *Ima Keithel* ('Mother's Market') is one such site. Among the many goods traded in its five sections, are the fine handwoven textiles and handicrafts that are traditionally produced in high volumes by women all over Manipur. Thus women weaving in the villages are linked to urban markets by other women.

Other goods traded by women vendors include garments, bedding materials, household goods and daily necessities, including perishable and preserved edible items brought in to Imphal from surrounding rural areas. Among the most important food items available in the women's market is fresh fish and smoke-dried fish brought in from Loktak, which forms an integral part of the Manipuri diet.

Vegetables are largely sold in the women's market by rural street vendors who carry in stocks from surrounding villages, without being allotted a fixed market space. Because of the competition for street space, the street vendor market opens earlier than other sections of Khwairamband market. While the stock each vendor brings in is small, the number of unlicensed women vendors trading here is very large.

The vegetable market is open in two trading sessions. The first shift of women vendors comes in very early and is done by late afternoon. The second shift then reoccupies the vacated space and carries out vending activities into the night.

The items traded in street markets are typically cheaper and also relatively easy to access, since all trading occurs at street-level. The women street vendors who sit here had so far successfully resisted the plans of the Imphal Municipal Corporation (IMC) to relocate them to a redeveloped section of the market.

Storage space is available at a premium for women street vendors who sell non-perishables, if they can work out private arrangements with the licensed women vendors who trade in neighbouring markets.

7.2 The Research Findings

Women become economically active in vending trade after their children have fully grown. Women engaged in economic activity still have to perform domestic chores, until another

woman enters the household and takes over charge. This happens when grown daughters and daughters-in-law begin to share in work within the household. Therefore, women only feel free to enter vending work after reaching the age where there is another woman to control the home.

Manipuri women do not face the same social restrictions and barriers f aced by women in other states. Because of historical participation of the menfolk in periodic unpaid levy-labour under the *Lallup* system, Manipuri women have been active and economically empowered by tradition. This has contributed, with efflux of time, to the economic empowerment of women, through direct participation in self-employment and informal work.

Women have also become active on social issues, forming associations and setting rules that increase the potential for women's development. As empowered women are self-dependent, they can take control of their lives.

Women with agency gain and maintain control over society. Financially independent women make their own decisions about what is good and bad, exercising control over resources, enhancing security and bringing down levels of domestic violence. Having attained financial stability, they also contribute significantly to the maintenance of the family.

Manipuri women are members of strongly-organised Marup associations. Credit Marups have recently become popular among women vendors in the Valley region. While improving group solidarity among members, women's credit Marups also recycle the funds generated from membership contributions by dispensing vendor loans cyclically on very easy terms to alternate members.

Women traders save their on-season profits to tide them over the off-season. What money they save is spent whenever needed on children's education, on building and repairing homes, and for medical purposes.

Many different women's Marups function within Meitei society. Luhongba Marups collectively look after wedding needs. Cheng Marups manage supplies of rice, Phi Marups manage clothing needs, and Ku Maups manage funerals and death rituals. Paisa Marups that manage liquid cash needs are recent additions which have grown to prominence. These Marup organisations play an important part in creating social bonding between Meitei women and encourage their participation in economic activities.

Women's groups have a proactive role in Manipur in pushing demands for reformation in society. Women vendors or 'Imas' are socially recognised as an influential section of opinion-makers who have given Manipuri women their own voice. The 'Ima' groups are consulted while taking social decisions, and their concurrence is needed when new policies affecting women are implemented. The social respect accorded to women's groups in Manipur has not undermined the political power of men. Instead, the economic participation of women in Manipur has instead generated women's agency. Women feel empowered to express opinions, to discuss them with other women, and to articulate them when joined by the group. In domestic spaces where women are alone, their labour can still be exploited and their inheritance and property rights denied by family males. However, in extreme cases like drug abuse, drunkenness or domestic violence, a woman can summon the collective agency of her group to intervene on her behalf.

7.3 Vendor Policy Recommendations

1. A requirement commonly voiced by vendors in every segment of the women's market is their need for improved and secure onsite storage facilities. Unlike upmarket shopping complexes in downtown Imphal which are housed in their own private premises, with lockable latches and shuttered doors, vendors in the women's market face storage insecurities. In the three redeveloped Khwairamband buildings, the items on sale at vendor stalls are laid out on slabs, with inbuilt spaces beneath for holding lockable storage in steel trunks. As this storage space is placed well below waist-height, it becomes constricting for a woman to stoop down to pull out and push in a heavy trunk each morning to unpack and display her trade items, and then to load her stock back into the trunk and lock it and push it in again at the evening. In the Temporary market, where low wooden platforms replace the slabs, storage conditions are even more stringent, as the women have to stoop down even lower to access their storage space. Unlicensed street vendors who have no storage pace whatsoever, have to ferry their goods back and forth from the street market at considerably added cost. All this exertion means extra work that contributes nothing to sales.

2. Market redevelopment of Ima Keithel by IMC has been done at great expense, without understanding vendor trade requirements. While a lot of this cost has been absorbed in architectural design by consultants and civil construction by NBCC, the structure defeats the requirement of having a covered market with individual lockable cubicles for sales and storage. As the basement in the reconstructed buildings that was intended for parking is still vacant, and the first floor gallery originally meant for

accommodating temporary vendors is lying unused, provision of stacks of steel racks and lockable *almirahs* laid out along this space would let the women vendors keep valuable items in safe storage.

3. As seen earlier, vending activity relies heavily on adequate stock investment. For this, borrowed capital can be sourced from interest-free personal sources, from loans taken at moderate interest from banks, and uncollateralised business loans obtained from traditional moneylenders and registered UIB microcredit companies. The latter can legally charge interest rates of upto 3 percent per month (36 percent per annum) to defray their costs of handling and recovering small loans. Paradoxically, this also means that capital borrowings become much more expensive for poor women vendors, while being available relatively cheaply for big hospitality establishments and shopping entrepreneurs. This is unjust in principle, since the daily recoveries of interest and of the loan principal are an added cost for the women vendors, who have to meet these from daily turnover instead of accumulated profits and savings. As capital formation in Manipur has historically been weak, women vendors who have been in trade for many years barely step out of borderline poverty, despite the intensity of their work.

4. Because of their insistence on collateral and procedural formalities, commercial bank networks have hardly any financial presence in women's markets. With shared economic difficulties, the amount of interest-free loans that a relative can give to a women vendor is also inevitably very low. Therefore, the mainstay for meeting the credit needs of women vendors is provided by their Marup. As organic women's institutions, Marups are not created by outside agencies, but by the collective agency of the women vendors themselves. At present, the amount of financial resources that Marups can advance on credit depends on the rotating fund created through collections from their members. If the credit Marups could be linked to scheduled commercial banks, on the line of the Bank-Self Help Group (SHG) linkage model promoted by NABARD in rural India, the financial commitments they could make toward loans to Marup members would expand significantly.

5. Relieved of the burden of meeting the extortionate interest rates at which women vendors presently hand over a considerable portion of their hard-won daily earnings to UIB collection agents, the Marup members would save and accumulate more, after receiving just reward for their effort. By overcoming the historical lack of

accumulation in the Manipuri social order, an avenue would be opened for many more women to enter the economy on their own.

6. Several Government schemes, including SGSY, provide seed-funding for miscellaneous rural development programs in Manipur, including NERCORMP (Community Resource Management), SILKS (Sericulture), Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) and the NABARD-SHG Schemes for Weavers. Along with these interventions meant to benefit women producers in the rural economy, State funding also needs to be pumped into schemes designed to foster urban women's enterprise and marketing activities.

7. Women vendors showed a complete lack of awareness about bank policies, while being well informed about UIB lending. The UIB collection agents who visit the women vendors daily also function as marketing agents for several attractively packaged UIB financial instruments like stop-payment lotteries, hire-purchase schemes, etc. The standard financial instruments offered by a bank cannot compete to attract women vendors, because they do not suit the pattern in which finance flows through vending enterprise, Therefore, in the interest of promoting financial inclusion with Government support, all banks operating in Manipur should design innovative financial packages that would make commercial sense to vendors. The Ima Keithel women vendors desperately need cheaper commercial credit, along with more flexible ways of accessing it.

8. Women traders in Manipur have survived in a subsistence economy for several hundred years. They provide vital urban marketing services to village production systems, while supplying trade-goods at rock-bottom prices to urban consumers. Even in this time and age, both these services continue to be indispensable. Hence, the existing character of Ima Keithel needs to be preserved for economic reasons, and not just for its heritage value. This can only happen if vending activity continues to make economic sense to women. The profitability of vending enterprise needs to match and counterbalance the financial lure from other professions.

9. Women's trading activity in Imphal developed in a bygone age, when property institutions were absent and capital formation was slow. The equality in gender relations seen today in Manipuri society was a product of that circumstance. Today, as the new generation of educated Manipuri women find their calling in the modern economy, the present generation of Imas in Ima Keithel may simply wither away. An

institution that has been the fount of Manipuri women's empowerment needs to be preserved for intrinsic reasons.

10. Through exercise of agency, women in Manipur have strongly resisted the incursions of outsider males into their trading sphere. Long after the *Lallup* labour levies ceased, Manipuri men have assiduously stayed out of the women's economic domain. However, since the rules of modern economics are based on inheritance and property rights, private property rights can establish and strengthen male dominance over women.

11. Higher vendor profitability would open the way for more Manipuri women to participate actively in the modern economy, by financialising their collective agency, Growth of economic power of women would also strengthen demands for welfare interventions in education and health that can benefit entire families.

12. It is sad that despite its centuries-old history, Manipur's unique Ima Keithel is still treated in Government promotions merely as a tourist attraction, when it is in fact an indigenous business model, much like the much-studied *'Dabbawalas'* of Mumbai who have been catapulted into worldwide attention. It is only very recently that women researchers in Manipur have begun to take a serious look at their own institutions. Because the Imas in the women's market are unlettered, genuine research on Ima Keithel can be done by committed women researchers who understand the language and ethos of their mothers. The present study is intended as a small contribution in that direction.

13. To bring more focus on Manipur's women traders, a formal mechanism should be instituted by Government, which gives special recognition and encouragement to women who have demonstrated the potential to be entrepreneurial leaders. Such women traders should be given the scope to travel to cities outside the state, in order to explain the Manipur experience to outside scholars, and to learn how market activities are being organised by women in larger cities.

14. The common fear that has united the Imas in their Nupi Lans is the fear of dispossession through loss of their economic space. They first fought back with their struggle against the introduction of foreign coinage, then with their fight against the colonial attempt to bring in outside traders who would export the rice needed for their own subsistence. They fought again during the redevelopment of their market, out of the fear that their individual vending spaces would be handed over to larger

commercial promoters. Today, an issue has emerged again that gives cause for renewed concern. An IMC proposal for reserving the unoccupied first-floor gallery for the apparel trade has been mooted, along with opening up the basement for use parking space. This brings the modern economy into conflict with the women vendors again. Because of the location of Khwairamband in prime urban space, vested entrepreneurial interests are obviously at play already.

15. More disturbingly, an emerging conflict between licensed and unlicensed women vendors is threatening to disturb the solidarities that kept women vendors united previously. This conflict commenced after the licensed vendors were asked to shift into their designated ground-floor space in the renovated buildings, while the first-floor was not opened to the unlicensed vendors who had been plying their trade at Khwairamband for many years at the old bazar. Unfortunately, since the licensed women vendors were Meitei, while most unlicensed vendors were Pangal Muslims or Christians from the hill tribes, the conflict developed an undesirable ethnic tinge. Following recent evictions of unlicensed vendors from the by-lanes where they did business, complaints were made that they were dirtying the street and blocking the entry of customers into the licensed bazar. A proposal has now been mooted to shift all unlicensed women vendors to a site at Lamphel, far away from Imphal's central business district, where no customers will go.

16. Since Imphal has been included for urban renewal in the second selection for the Government of India's Smart Cities Mission, city decongestion and major redevelopment of the Kangla Fort heritage area is already planned. In the new economy, with commercial development, will the centuries-old Ima Market survive?

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ANNEXURE - 1

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

SURVEY OF STREET VENDING IN THE IMPHAL MUNICIPAL CORPORATION AREA

Survey Site:……*Date:*……
Residence:……Ward No.:……..Urban Category: Colony / Slum

GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. Respondent's Name:……

2. Age: .....(in completed years)

3. Religion: Hindu / Buddhist / Christian / Other……

4 a. Ethnicity:…… 4 b. Sub-community……

5.a Mother Tongue:…… 5b..Other Languages Spoken……..

5c.Understood……

6a. Current Marital Status: Single/ Married / Widowed / Separated / Divorced
6b. Age at Marriage:…… (in completed years)

7a. Educational Level: Illiterate / Self-literate / Primary (upto Cls……) / Secondary (upto Cls)……

Above Secondary (upto Class……) Any Other *(Specify)*……

7b. Place of Education : ……

8a. Family Status: Unitary / Joint 8b. Earning Status of Respondent: Sole / Joint

9.

S. No.	Category	Male	Female	Total
9 a.	Household Size			
9 b.	Household Minors			
9 c.	Earning Members			
9 d.	Earning Minors			
9 e.	Dependent Minors			
9 f.	Dependent Elders			

ACTIVITY INFORMATION:

10 a. Primary Vending Activity……

10 b. Current Vending Location……

11 a. Total Vending Experience (years)……

11 b. Current Status: Principal Shop-Owner/Shop-assistant/Other (specify)……
……

12. Secondary Assistance:
12 a. Male helpers: Spouse/ Brother-in-law/Brother/Son/Other……
12 b. Female helpers: Daughter/Mother -in-law/Sister/Friend/Other……

13 a. Shop-hours of Principal Owner: Daily Hours:……..Timing……

13 b. Shop-hours of Shop-Assistant(s): Daily Hours:……Timing……

13 c. Non-Shop Business hours of Shopowner: Weekly Hours:……Day(s)……

14. Business Purposes of Owner's/Shop-Assistant's Non-Shop hours:

	Usual Person	*Weekly hrs*
14 a. Stock/Business Purchases	……	……
14 b. Business Account-keeping	……	……
14 c. Bank Transactions	……	……

15 Personal Purposes of Owner's/ Shop-Assistant's Non-Shop hours:

	Work-nature	*Weekly hrs*
15 a. Household Purchases	……	……
15 b. Family Chores	……	……
15 c. Personal Leisure	……	……

.16. Any other Major Weekly Time–commitments of Respondent

Work-nature	*Weekly hrs*
……	……

16a. Usual Weekly Closing Day of Shop: Day…….. Other Closing Hrs/day……..

	Most Active Months	*Slack Months*	*Non-Active Months*
16b. Seasonal Vending Activity	……	……	……

16c. Principal Clientele: *Main Active Months*: Local Regulars / Other Locals/ Seasoners

Less Active Months: Local Regulars / Other Locals/ Seasoners

17. Usual Income-sources for All Members of the Vendor's Direct Family:

S.no	**Income/ Sales Items**	**Monthly Receipt/Sale (Rs.)**	**Annual Receipt/Sale (Rs.)**
A	Purchased Manufactures		
B	Purchased Crafts/Local Products		
C	Fruit/Vegetables		
D	Milk/Eggs/Poultry		
E	Other Agricultural Produce		
F	Salaries Drawn		
G	House Rentals		
H	Shop Rentals		
I	Remittances from relatives		
J	Trading Profits		
K	Artisan Profits		
L	Remittances from relatives		
M	Other		
	Total		

18.Family Consumption (Monthly Home Budget on Non-Business Items)

S.no	**Items**	**Quantity**	**Units**	**Monthly Value (in Rs.)**
A	Cereals			
B	Dal			
C	Milk/Eggs			
D	Vegetables			
E	Meat/Fish			
F	Household Fuel			
G	General Expenses			
H	Educational Expenses			
I	Other Expenses			
	Total			

LIVING CONDITION:

19 a. Present Housing Type: Pucca / Semi Pucca / Wooden / Other……

19 b. Years of Occupancy: Exact Years……Duration……..……..

19 c. House Description:
(i) Rented / Self-owned
(ii) Approx. Living Space .....sq.ft
(iii) Living Rooms .....No.
(iv) Other Rooms ……No
(v) Storage-space ……sq. ft

19 d. Monthly Rental Value (Paid Rental) ……Rs.

(Imputed Rental) ……Rs.

19 e. Yearly Housing Maintenance Cost (Expenses Personally-borne) ……Rs.

20. Household White Goods:

a) Radio: Age in years.....Purchase Value……Rs.
d) TV set: Age in years.....Purchase Value……Rs.
c) Video-player: Age in years.....Purchase Value……Rs.
e) Motorised vehicle: Age in years..... Purchase Value……Rs.

f) Other Durables above Rs. 8,000/-Value *(List)*: ……..

……..

CAPTAL SOURCES & INDEBTEDNESS:

21. Capital Sources:

(a) **Business Loan Sources**	(b) **Amount (Rs.)**	(c) **Duration (months)**	(d) **Principal Loan Purposes**
Immediate Family			
OtherRelatives			
Personal Friends			
Trader Credit			
Moneylender			
Banks/Other Institutions			
Other…….……..			

22. Business Indebtedness *[last 5 years]*

	(a)**Loan Amount (Rs.)**	(b)**Loan Duration (years)**	(c)**Interest Rate/Amount**
Loans Outstanding			
Loans Repaid			

STREET- VENDING HISTORY

23 a. First-Entry into Street-Vending: *(Year)*……23 b. First Vending Items:……..

23 c. First Vending Location:……23 d. First Capitalisation: (Rs)……

24. Current Street-Vending Activity

(a) **Major Vending Items**	(b)**Nature of Sale**	(c) **Main Customers**	(d) **Main Sale Months**	(e) **Item/Unit/ Value (Rs)**	(f) **Daily In-season Turnover**	(g) **Daily Off-season Turnover**

Options: 24 b: Regular (R): Seasonal (S) ; 24 c: Regular Local (LR) / Irregular Local (IL) / Tourist (T)

25. Street-Vending Activity *(Ten Years Ago)*

(a) **Major Vending Items**	(b)**Nature of Sale**	(c) **Main Customers**	(d) **Main Sale Months**	(e) **Item/Unit/ Value (Rs)**	(f) **Daily In-season Turnover**	(g) **Daily Off-season Turnover**

Options: 24 b: Regular (R): Seasonal (S) ; 24 c: Regular Local (LR) / Irregular Local (IL) / Tourist (T)

26. Approx Monthly Contribution from Vending Profits to Household (Non-Business-related) Expenses:

(a) In-season Monthly Contribution:……*(Rs. & Months)*

(b) Off-season Monthly Contribution:……*(Rs. & Months)*

27. Approx Monthly Contribution of Other Family Members (other than Respondent) to Non-Business-related Household Expenses:

(a) Earning MemberDescriptions:……

……

(b) Aggregate Monthly Contribution from Wages ……(Rs.)

(c) Aggregate Monthly Contribution from Salaries ……(Rs.)

(d) Aggregate Monthly Contribution from Trade Profits ……(Rs.)

(e) Aggregate Monthly Contribution from Service Profits ……(Rs.)

(f) Aggregate Monthly Contribution from Artisan Profits ……(Rs.)

(g) Aggregate Monthly Contribution from Other Service Income ……(Rs.)

(h) Aggregate Monthly Contribution from Remittances within District ……(Rs.)

(i) Aggregate Monthly Contribution from Remittances within State ……(Rs.)

(j) Aggregate Monthly Contribution from Remittances from outside State ……(Rs.)

VENDING RECORD

28 & 29.	PRESENT ACTIVITY	(10 Years Previous) PAST ACTIVITY
28 a/29 a. Vending Location	……	……
28 b/29 b. Nature of Enterprise	Inherited from Family / Own Effort	Inherited from Family / Own Effort
28 c/29 c. Start-up Fixed Capital (Rs.)	……	……
28 d/29 d. Start-up Stock Capital (Rs.)	……	……
28 e/29 e. Start-up Trade Items	……	……
	……	……
	……	……
	……	……
28 f/29 f. Avg Daily/Weekly Turnover (Rs.)	……	……

29 a. Reasons for Shift from Previous Vending Location: *[Score 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 by order of Importance]*
Low Demand / Low Profit / Low Turnover / High Competition / Eviction Threat / Other

28 a. Reasons for Shift to Present Vending Location: *[Score 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 by order of Importance]*
High Demand / Higher Profit / Higher Turnover / Lower Competition / No Threat / Other

29 e. Reasons for Shift Out from Previous Trade Items: *[Score 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 by order of Importance]*
Low Supply / Lower Preference / Low Profit-margin / Slow Turnover / High Competition / Other

28 e. Reasons for Shift in to Present Trade Items: *[Score 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 by order of Importance]*
Smooth Supply / Greater Preference / Better Profit-margin / Higher Turnover / Low Competition / Other

VENDORS' OPERATIONS

30.Fixed Capital Itemisation
30 a. Start-up Fixed Capital Amount (Rs.)……..
30 b. Nature of Vending Structure: *Mobile / Stationary*
30 c. Structural Materials used……
30 d. Main Structure Cost (Rs.)……..
30 e. Roofing Materials used……
30 f. Roofing Cost (Rs.)……..

31 a. Approx Life of Vending Structure……years
31 b. Yearly Maintenance Cost (Rs.)……

32.*Working Capital Itemisation*
32 a. Monthly Stock Purchase-value (Rs.)……
32 b. Monthly Stock Transportation Expenses (Rs.)……..
32 c. Monthly Stock Handling /Loading Expenses (Rs.)……..

33. Monthly Cleaning of Shop Premises
33 a. Person(s) engaged……..
33 b. Paid cleaning help:……(Rs. per week)
33 c. Unpaid cleaning help:……(Cleaning-hours per week)

34. Monthly Cleaning of Shop-front
34 a. Person(s) engaged……..
34 b. Paid cleaning help:……(Rs. per week)
34 c. Unpaid cleaning help:……(Cleaning-hours per week)

35. Total Persons involved in Street-Vending OAE
35 a. Owner:…… 35 b: Other Females:…… 35 c. Family Males:……

36. Overhead Vending Costs:
36 a. Informal Space-hire……(Rs. per month)
36 b. Payable to Security personnel / Civic personnel / Trade Associations / Local protection / Other……..
36 c. Security Services-hire……(Rs. per month)
36 d. Payable to Security personnel / Civic personnel / Trade Associations / Local protection / Other……..

37. Competitive Pricing of Vending Items:

	Five Principal Vending Items	Itemisation Unit	Unit Street-price (Rs.)	Competing Unit-price (Rs.) at Establishment
37 a.	……..	……	……	……
37 b.	……..	……	……	……
37 c.	……..	……	……	……
37 d.	……..	……	……	……
37 e.	……..	……	……	……

VENDOR-MARKET AMENITIES

38.		PRESENT STATUS	(5 Years Previously) PAST STATUS
38 a & b.	Drinking water	At market / <0.5 km / 0.5-1 km / >1 km	At market / <0.5 km / 0.5-1 km / >1 km
38 c & d.	Washing facility	At market / <0.5 km / 0.5-1 km / >1 km	At market / <0.5 km / 0.5-1 km / >1 km
38 e & f.	Tiffin facility	At market / <0.5 km / 0.5-1 km / >1 km	At market / <0.5 km / 0.5-1 km / >1 km
38 g & h.	Meal facility	At market / <0.5 km / 0.5-1 km / >1 km	At market / <0.5 km / 0.5-1 km / >1 km
38 i & j.	Toilet	At market / <0.5 km / 0.5-1 km / >1 km	At market / <0.5 km / 0.5-1 km / >1 km

……

Signature of Investigator

ANNEXURE - 2

IMPHAL MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Woman Vendor Licence

Market Name .....

1. Licence No. .....
2. Name.....
3. Father's
   Husband's Name.....
4. Address.....
5. Trade.....
6. Seat No. .....
7. Shed No. .....

Photo

CONDITION

1. Seal is not transferable.
2. Licence fee is payable annually commencing from 1st April.
3. If the rent is not paid for three months from the date of due, the licence will be cancelled without notice.
4. Licence holder should follow the market Bye-Laws framed by the Imphal Municipal Corporation from time to time.
5. Value of a licence card is Rs. 500/-
6. No licensee should sell any other item of goods except referred to in the licence.
7. The amount of licence fee should be paid on or before the 10th April every year.

Verified by:

Licencing Officer
Imphal Municipal Corporation

Date of Payment	Validity	Signature of issuing Officer	Remarks

ANNEXURE – 3

RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE LICENSING OF VEGETABLE SELLERS IN IMPHAL

State: Manipur

Details of licensing are as follows
Vegetable sellers are regulated as per the directions of Manipur Municipalities Act 1976, Prevention of food Adulteration Act 1954 and the related byelaws framed under provisions of the Manipur Municipalities Act 1976. (Municipal license Byelaw named "The Municipalities/ Nagar Panchayats (Regulation of market) Model Bye-laws, 1998.)

Details are as follows:

In Imphal, "Vegetable seller" means a seller dealing with the edible vegetable and its products in Imphal, it includes fish sellers as well. A vendor license is required while to open a vegetable seller's market. There is no fixed number while to open a vegetable market. It depends upon big or small population of the existing market. As per the section 163 of the Manipur Municipalities Act 1976, No place shall be used for any of the purpose listed in the section in the limits fixed by the Municipal Board without a license. RTI reply of the municipal board says that vegetable sellers requires license.

Licensing Procedure:
The license can be obtained from the office of the Imphal Municipal Council on an application submitted for the same in the prescribed form along with the prescribed fees. The application need to be submitted to the executive officer. Manipur Municipalities Act says that the license shall not be withheld unless the board has the reason to believe that the business which is to be intended to establish would be offensive or dangerous or likely to create nuisance to the neighbours. The board based on the restrictions extends the provisions of the section to yards or depots for trade in coal, coke timber or wood.

Authority:
As per the RTI reply, In Imphal Municipal area office of the Imphal Municipal council is the supreme body regulating licenses and the executive officers of Imphal municipal council is the authority to issue the license.

Validity:
Regulations fix no time to issue licenses. The license issued will be valid for one year which is renewable annually.

Fees:
As per RTI reply, Rate of rents or fees which a council or panchayat may fix from time to time as it may deem fit within the range Rs.1.00 to 2 .00 per square metre per month**.**

License Renewal:
The license should be renewed every year. If delayed it is liable to be cancelled.

Penalty:
If any vendor is found doing a business without the license issued by the Imphal Municipal Council he/ she shall not be allowed to continue the business in the Municipal market**.**

ANNEXURE - 4






The above photographs above were all taken at different Ima Keithel markets while conducting the Vendor Survey. We can see that the market and street area is congested and very crowded mainly because of the street vendors. As Ima Keithel is controlled by Imphal Municipal Corporation (IMC), the task of sweeping and cleaning the markets area is assigned by IMC to seven NGOs and their Agents, namely TACDEF, CRED, KWAMS, SSF, SUWO, COCSUM and WUM. Among these, CRED and TACDEF are well-recognised and responsible organisation that are popular with the Imphal Municipal Corporation as well as with the women vendors. As part of their engagement with Ima Keithel, the NGO personnel take on many additional responsibilities besides cleaning the market. They also take full charge for the secure storage of vendor commodities for the sum of ten rupees for a day.

As Ima Keithel is governed by strict IMC licencing regulations, the women vendors have legal status. The Municipal authority ensures the maintenance of all licensing rules and regulations at the market, besides determining shop rental values, and other vendor dues, including civic charges for cleaning, sweeping, and waste-water disposal. These are included in the civic tax collection by the Municipal authority. Women vendors pay Rs.95 a month as vending licence charges, and Rs.15 additionally for collection and disposal of solid waste. The licensing charges are collected by the Imphal Municipal Corporation. The collection of charges for garbage disposal has been privatised.