

Status of Women in North East India: Comparing Gender-based Development Parameters

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Abstract

Development of a society needs development of men and women together. There is a perception that women's status in North East India is relatively better than that of other states of India. The fulfilment of "the Practical Gender Needs" (for example, prerequisite of employment, health care, education etc.) along with "the Strategic Gender Needs" (for example, equal wage, decision making, power and control over self finance, and protection from domestic violence etc.) are very important for appraisal of gender equality and over all women's status. Therefore, closer scrutiny of women's status in prevailing social, economic and cultural structure of North East India in present context is very important. The present study aims to examine women's status in North East India in comparison to other states of India in some selected gender-based development parameters. From the analysis it can be inferred that the status of women is better in the North East India than any other states of India regarding the gender-based development parameters like education, labour force participation, wages, participation in decision making, participation in management, physical, emotional, and sexual violence done by their husbands. However, women's status in the region is found below national average regarding health parameters, crime against women and participation in parliamentary process.

Key words: Status, Strategic gender needs, Practical gender needs, Equity, Parameters

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1. Introduction

Women represent about fifty per cent of society's population and therefore development of any society needs development of both men and women. However, women have been accorded a lower status than men in all over the world till now despite the progresses being made in recent years.

In the viewpoint of United Nations, "Gender equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities should not depend on whether they are as a born female or a male" (UNDP & BRIDGE, 2007). According to António Guterres, UN Secretary-General "Bridging the gender divide is not only a matter of justice for women and girls; it is a game changer for humanity. Societies with more equal representation are more stable and peaceful. They have better health systems and more vibrant economies" (European Investment Bank, 2022). The status of women in a society depicts the social, economic and mental condition of that society which is reflected ultimately in nation building of a country. Therefore, women's status is a topic of concern for many years and it is an important issue of the debate too.

In India, Government has taken several initiatives and implemented several programs and policies for improvement of women's health, education, and women empowerment. In India, women's labour force participation has increased and women are capable to acquire high positions in diverse fields of academics, administration, politics, entertainments etc. However, there is still a lot to be done to make assured full gender parity in the country as India's position in Global Gender Gap Index 2021 rankings, is 140 out of 156 countries, according to the Report of Gender Gap (World Economic Forum, 2021). "This gap is 4.2 percentage points wider than recorded in the previous edition, which explains why India has fallen 28 places in the ranking. Most of the decline has occurred on the Political Empowerment sub-index, where India has regressed 13.5 percentage points to reach a level of gap closed to date of just 27.6 per cent" (World Economic Forum, 2021). "Women are the worst sufferer in developing countries, coping with climate-related stresses, since they are often the ones in charge of providing food, energy and water" (WHO, 2011). There exists digital gender divide too (GSMA, 2022). According to the Report to estimate Mobile Gender Gap, women are having 18 per cent less smart phones than men (GSMA, 2022).

Whatever progress was made in education, health and labour force participation, the COVID-19 crisis has slowed down the progress. Women have suffered asymmetrical job losses and their work time for unpaid work has increased. According to International Labour Organisation, between 2019 and 2020, women's employment declined "by 4.2 per cent in 2020 compared to 3 per cent for men, and 90 per cent of women who lost their jobs in 2020 exited the labour force entirely" (ILO, 2021).

North Eastern Region (NER) comprises of seven sister states, namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Nagaland, and Sikkim. The NER comprises 3.78 percent of country's populace covering 7.9 per cent of India's total geographical area (Government of India, 2024). Despite relatively poor economic growth of the region, it is widely known as comparatively a progressive region regarding status of women. There exists an opinion that women's status is comparatively better in NER when it is compared with other states of India (Das, 2013; Bordoloi & Bedmata, 2022). The entire NER of India is dowry free. The North East India is having both matrilineal and patriarchal societies. The Khasis & Garos of Meghalaya of NER are following a matrilineal system. The girls marry the grooms who after marriage have to shift to the bride's houses and the girls enjoy ancestral properties rights. In matrilineal society, women get the opportunity to voice themselves in public and women are a part of local governments and decision-making. "Although workforce participation is regarded as one of the main parameters to empower the women in the society, high female employment rate may satisfy "Practical Gender Needs"(e.g. provision of employment, healthcare, education etc.) along with the "Strategic Gender Needs" (e.g. equal wage, decision making, power and control over self finance, and protection from domestic violence etc)" (Das, 2013). "The decision on what to cook, about their own healthcare, and staying with their parents/siblings, the extent of mobility and women's ability to make these choices to go to the market or visit friends/relatives without seeking permission are also important for gender equality" (Das, 2013). Therefore, closer scrutiny of women's status in prevailing social, cultural and economic structure of NER in present context is very important. Generally, biased inheritance rights, prevalence of crimes conducted for women, and increasing violence related case for women, all challenges women's status. Whether present status of women in NER is at par with the all India average or not, the

present study tries to explore this. Whether the NER states are doing well in terms of standard women/ gender-specific development parameters, it is an issue of grave concern.

A few gender gap studies have been found in the context of the North East India (Mahanta & Nayak, 2013; Das, 2013; Borah, 2019; Choudhuri & Kumar, 2021; Bordoloi & Bedmata, 2022, etc.). However, the analysis of women's status in North Eastern Region of India for gender-based development parameters in the recently published "Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23" data and "National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2019-21", "Women and Men in India Report 2020", is a less touched topic among the researchers so far. The present study expects to fill up this research gap.

The objective of the gender based development parameters is to create a definite set of facts that can be beneficially used to identify and intervene to improve status of women. Therefore, this study aims to examine women's status in the states of NER and to make comparison with other states of India in some selected gender-based development parameters.

This research paper has been organized in four sections including this introduction. The second section illustrates the sources of data and methodology used for the study. The third section depicts the result analysis and discussion while the final section draws the conclusion of the research paper.

2. Sources of Data and Methodology of the Study

Mainly secondary data were used in the present study which is collected from the latest published reports of PLFS (2022-23) and NFHS (2019-21), and "Women and Men in India (2020)".

Different organizations use different parameters to measure gender disparity or inequality to know women's status. "The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI) uses a broad range of dimensions and indicators like economic participation, economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment, health and wellbeing and others" (Lopez-Claros & Zahidi, 2005). According to FAO (2005), the parameters of gender equality are Women's rights component, Social component, Economic component and Political component. Some other parameters taken by others are life expectancy and

literacy, sex ratios and marriage and fertility (Chacko, 2003). According to the Report to estimate the Global Gap prepared by “World Economic Forum” (2017) & World Economic Forum (2021), “the indicators to measure the gender gaps are participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment”. “The gender-related indicators include data relating to economic and social equality and political equality, according to World Bank” (Eastin & Prakash, 2013).

The following gender based development parameters are selected from literature to examine the status of women of NER in comparison with that of the national average:

- (i) Female Literacy and Gender Gap (FLG),
- (ii) Female Labour Participation Rate (FLPR),
- (iii) Women Experienced Emotional, Physical and Sexual violence (WEPSV),
- (iv) Crimes Against Women (CAW),
- (v) Women Participation in Senior level and Middle level Management” (WPM),
- (vi) Women’s Participation in Parliament (WPP),
- (vii) Average Wage Earnings of Women (AWW),
- (viii) Control over cash earnings of Women and Men (CCE),
- (ix) Female’s Participation in decision making process (WDP), and
- (x) Health and Gender gap (GPH).

Here, FLG, FLPR, WPP, AWW, CCE, WDP and GPH are positive parameters and WEPSV and CAW are negative parameters of gender-based development. In case of the positive parameters, higher is the value, higher is the status of women while opposite is true for the negative gender-based development parameters i.e. higher is the percentage value lower is the status of women. Gender gaps are calculated using simple mathematical tools like subtracting values of females from that of males and performance rankings are determined from the values of positive and negative parameters.

3. Analysis and Discussion

3.1. Female Literacy and Gender Gap (FLG)

“Developing countries like India always have to face wide gender gap in literacy rates due to some disparities like gender imbalances, income imbalances, religious imbalances, caste imbalances and technological barriers prevailing in the society. Female illiteracy may stimulate population, employment, national income and overall the economic growths of the developing country like India” (Pal & Chattopadhyaya, 2018). Therefore, this study aims to examine the gender gap in literacy rates in NER by comparing that of other states of India.

Table 1: Comparison of literacy rates (in per cent) (7 & above age group) of persons of different age groups of NER with that of the rest of India, 2022-23

State	Rural					Urban				
	Female Literacy (Rural)	Rank in Female Literacy (Rural)	Male Literacy (Rural)	Gender Gap (Rural)	Rank in Gender Literacy Gap (Rural)	Female Literacy (Urban)	Rank in Female Literacy (Urban)	Male Literacy (Urban)	Gender Gap (urban)	Rank in Gender Literacy Gap (Urban)
States of NER										
Arunachal Pradesh	78.9	8	86.6	7.7	11	87.2	11	94.9	7.7	7
Assam	75.7	11	77.8	2.1	17	91.6	9	97.1	5.5	12
Manipur	85.7	8	93.3	7.6	12	90.9	9	96.2	5.3	13
Meghalaya	93.8	3	95.3	1.5	18	96.2	5	99.1	2.9	16
Mizoram	98.7	2	99.5	0.8	19	99.9	1	99.8	-0.1	20
Sikkim	80.7	10	89.1	8.4	12	93.6	7	97.3	3.7	14
Tripura	90.1	7	94.9	4.8	14	94.8	6	98.2	3.4	14
Rest of India										
Kerala	91.4	5	95.5	4.1	16	96.3	4	97.8	1.5	18
Lakshadweep	100	1	100	0	20	96.5	3	98.8	2.3	17
A & N Islands	88.6	8	93.7	5.1	16	93.2	8	96.3	3.1	16
Goa	91.1	6	97.6	6.5	13	92.1	8	98.9	6.8	10
Maharashtra	76.2	13	89.5	13.3	8	88.4	10	95.8	7.4	8
Uttarakhand	78.4	9	91.7	13.3	8	84.6	14	93	8.4	6
Gujarat	72.7	11	89.2	16.5	3	87.2	11	93.8	6.6	11
Odisha	71.7	12	83.7	12	9	85.1	13	92.4	7.3	9
Chhattisgarh	69	14	83	14	7	81.1	17	91.7	10.6	4
Madhya Pradesh	62.9	18	81.5	18.6	1	82.2	13	92.9	10.7	3
Andhra Pradesh	60.5	19	74.9	14.4	6	76.4	20	88	11.6	2
Uttar Pradesh	66.8	16	83.1	16.3	4	77.5	19	88.8	11.3	5
Jammu & Kashmir	68.8	15	85	16.2	5	88.4	10	89.5	1.1	19
Jharkhand	70.3	13	84.7	14.4	6	96.2	5	92.8	-3.4	21
Bihar	64.8	17	82	17.2	2	78.7	18	90.4	11.7	1
Tamil Nadu	78	10	87.5	9.5	10	86.7	12	94	7.3	9
All India	70.3	13	83.6	13.3	8	84.6	14	93	8.4	6

Source: Gender gaps are calculated and rankings are done on the basis of PLFS-2022-23 data

Table 1 illustrates the women literacy and the gender literacy gap in the states of NER in comparison with the other states of the country. It is apparent from the ranking of the states that literacy rates are higher in NER than other states of India for both the rural and urban areas and the ranking of all the NER states is above the national average. Mizoram performed remarkably very well as it occupies the second highest position in rural female literacy and the highest urban literacy among the states in India. Regarding gender gap in the rates of literacy the performance of the NER states are far above the country average in both rural and urban areas. This is in line with the result derived before 10 years i.e. in 2013 (Das, 2013). The reason may be that the main focus of the states of NER is literacy and the governments of NER states are trying to invest heavily on education. Various schemes are launched by the governments to improve the quality and excellence of education in these states.

3.2. Labour Force Participation Rates of Females (FLPR)

One of the commonly seen indicators of women's progress towards equality with men is the higher levels of labour-force participation among women. Table 2 illustrates the labour force participation rates of females in NER states in comparison with the other states of India.

Table 2: Comparison of Female Labour Force Participation Rates of Females (FLPR) (in per cent) of the states of NER (in usual status)[#] of age 15 years and above, with the rest of India

States	Rural FLPR (%)	Ranking (R)	Urban FLPR (%)	Ranking (U)
States of NER				
Arunachal Pradesh	62.7	6	37.4	7
Assam	19.8	35	29	15
Manipur	30.2	29	34.2	10
Meghalaya	66	5	40.3	6
Mizoram	48	20	42.1	4
Nagaland	71.1	3	50.2	1
Sikkim	76.5	1	34.4	8
Tripura	36.9	26	27.8	18

Rest of India				
Himachal	74.8	2	40.7	5
Andaman & N. Island	52.5	13	45.9	2
Ladakh	60.5	7	44.8	3
Chhattisgarh	66.4	4	34.4	9
Rajasthan	55.8	8	23.6	28
D&N Haveli & Daman & Diu	55.6	9	26	24
Jammu & Kashmir	55.1	10	27.4	21
Kerala	40.8	25	33.6	11
Gujarat	54.5	12	26.4	23
Karnataka	42.5	23	30.3	13
Jharkhand	52.4	14	16.8	33
Madhya Pradesh	52.3	15	21.8	29
Andhra Pradesh	51.8	16	32.3	12
Maharashtra	50.2	17	27.6	20
Puducherry	49.4	18	24.8	27
Tamil Nadu	49.3	19	28.8	16
Telegana	54.8	11	27.6	19
Odisha	47.5	21	27.8	17
Uttarakhand	45.7	22	16.8	34
Lakshadweep	11.3	36	19	32
West Bengal	36.5	27	27.4	22
Punjab	28.8	31	25.5	25
Bihar	23.3	33	12.6	37
West Bengal	36.5	27	27.4	22
Uttar Pradesh	35.5	28	14.1	36
Goa	26.3	32	29.4	14
Chandigarh	29.3	30	21	30
Haryana	21.1	34	19.9	31
Delhi	3.9	37	15.1	35
Delhi	3.9	37	15.1	35
All India	41.5	24	25.4	26

Source: Rankings are done on the basis of PLFS 2022-23 data. #Usual status (US) includes both Principal activity status (PS) and Subsidiary status (SS). Principal activity status (PS) comprises the persons who worked or searching for work for 365 days. Subsidiary status (SS) includes those persons who worked for 30 days or more in addition to her/his usual principal status.

It is evident from Table 2 that out of eight NER states, the ranking of the five NER states namely Sikkim, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and Mizoram is considerably above the country average in rural India. Similarly, in urban areas also, the ranking of all the NER states is above country average in labour force participation rates of females. Therefore, it can be inferred that the gender disparities is lower in NER states regarding labour force participation rates. Higher FLPR in NER may be explained partly by the evidence that “the community-based organisation of subsistence production requires a

high level of female workforce participation” (Unnevehr & Stanford, 1985). Another factor linked with higher labour force participation levels may be higher level of educational attainment by the states of NER as analysed in Table 1. Researchers “have linked higher participation of women with rice cultivation” (Unnevehr & Stanford, 1985; Rasheed et al., 2020). All the NER states have agriculture based economy and rice is their staple food. Therefore, the high FLPR may be due to this reason.

3.3. “Status of Women who Experienced Emotional, Physical and Sexual Violence” (WEPSV)

As per data captured by the NFHS-5 (2019-21) incidence of violence, “about one-third of the women in the country are facing violence from their husband”. According to the NFHS-5 (2019-21) report, the married women (of 18-49 years) who have “experienced emotional, physical or sexual violence committed by their husband in India has slightly decreased from 33.3 per cent in 2015-16 to 32 per cent in 2019-21 but it is still very high”.

Table 3 illustrates the % of married women of age 18-49 who have ever went through sexual, physical and emotional violence conducted by their husbands. It is revealed from the table that the violence committed by their husbands is highest in Karnataka and lowest in Lakshadweep. The violence is below the country average in all the NER states except Manipur and Assam as this is the negative gender based development parameter. Higher is the percentage value lower is the status of women. Here the fact needs to be remembered that the women generally do not open their mouth against their husbands in shyness to the society and in fear of breaking up their relationships. However, those women who are educated and societies are liberal they can openly speak up their conditions. Otherwise the majority of the women generally hide their truth.

Table 3: Comparison of the percentage of married women (18-49 years) in NER who have “experienced emotional, physical or sexual violence committed by their husbands” with that of other states of India

States	2019-20	Ranking
States of NER		
Arunachal Pradesh	26.6	16
Assam	34.3	7
Manipur	41.6	3
Meghalaya	21.1	21
Mizoram	11.9	31
Nagaland	11	33
Sikkim	21.3	20
Tripura	23.2	19
Rest of India		
Andaman & N. Island	18.3	24
Andhra Pradesh	33.4	8
Bihar	42.5	2
Chandigarh	11.8	32
Chhattisgarh	21	22
D&N Haveli & Daman & Diu	17.7	26
Delhi	25.8	18
Goa	9.7	35
Gujarat	16.1	27
Haryana	20.6	23
Himachal	10.7	34
Jammu & Kashmir	12.8	30
Jharkhand	32.8	9
Karnataka	48.4	1
Kerala	12.9	31
Ladakh	27.7	15
Lakshadweep	1.3	36
Madhya Pradesh	31	12
Maharashtra	28.2	14
Odisha	32.4	10
Puducherry	31	12
Punjab	13.4	28
Rajasthan	26.3	17
Tamil Nadu	39.7	5
Telegana	40.4	4
Uttar Prdeash	37.3	6
Uttarakhand	17.8	25
West Bengal	29.7	13
All India	31.9	11

Source: Rankings are done on the basis of NFHS-5 (2019-21) data

3.4. Status of the Crimes Against Women (CAW)

Table 4 depicts the reality that except Mizoram and Nagaland the rate of occurrence of various crimes against women is higher in NER states than the country average. This is a negative gender-based parameter as lower the percentage value implying more favorable for the society. It is a matter of serious concern that Assam, a major state of NER occupied the worst position regarding various crimes committed against women among the states of India.

3.5. Participation of Women in Management (WPM)

It is revealed from Table 5 that “the percentage of female workers in usual status (ps+ss) working in senior level and middle level management positions” are higher in NER than the country average except Assam, Nagaland and Tripura. It is a remarkable success for the NER that the first, second, third and fourth positions are occupied by the North Eastern states in this regard.

3.6. Participation of Women in Parliament (WPP)

It is revealed from Table 6 that except Meghalaya and Tripura, the participation of women in NER is below the country average.

3.7. Average Wage Earnings of Women (AWW)

The important fact revealed from Table 7 is that the rural gender gap in average wages (per day) from casual labour work other than public works in Current Weekly Status is slightly above the national gap in Assam, Meghalaya and except Tripura. The urban gender gap in wages earnings has come out much higher in Sikkim whereas the rural gender gap has shown negative in Tripura in the report. The data are not available for Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur regarding this parameter. However, there is less urban wage gap in all the NER states except a marginally high wage gap for Meghalaya.

Table 4: Comparison of “state-wise rate (per lakh women) of incidence of various crimes against women” in NER with other states of India

States	2022	Ranking
States of NER		
Assam	21.8	1
Meghalaya	19.98	3
Sikkim	17.86	5
Tripura	16.85	7
Arunachal Pradesh	12.04	13
Manipur	9.43	16
Mizoram	5.51	30
Nagaland	3.65	32
Rest of India		
Andaman & N. Island	12.69	11
Andhra Pradesh	7.99	21
Bihar	6.36	29
Chandigarh	11.45	14
Chhattisgarh	6.64	27
D&N Haveli & Daman & Diu	17.1	6
Delhi	4.66	31
Goa	7.49	23
Gujarat	1	36
Haryana	8.07	20
Himachal	8.49	19
Jammu & Kashmir	12.43	12
Jharkhand	13.35	9
Karnataka	8.84	18
Kerala	2.58	34
Ladakh	-	
Lakshadweep	7.03	25
Madhya Pradesh	6.45	28
Maharashtra	7.31	24
Odisha	20.17	2
Puducherry	3.33	33
Punjab	7.69	22
Rajasthan	14.32	8
Tamil Nadu	1.12	35
Telegana	13.14	10
Uttar Pradesh	9.22	17
Uttarakhand	9.84	15
West Bengal	19.74	4
All India	7.03	25

Source: Rankings are calculated from the “Report of Crime in India, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs & Women and Men in India 2022”

Table 5: Comparison of “the percentage of female workers in usual status working in senior level and middle level management positions” in NER with other states of India

States	2021	Ranking
States of NER		
Arunachal Pradesh	22.9	8
Assam	13.9	22
Manipur	31.1	3
Meghalaya	30.9	4
Mizoram	41.5	1
Nagaland	8.3	28
Rajasthan	10.1	26
Sikkim	32.5	2
Tripura	17.7	17
Rest of India		
Andaman & N. Island	7.2	31
Andhra Pradesh	30.3	5
Bihar	7.3	30
Chandigarh	15.2	19
Chhattisgarh	12.8	23
D&N Haveli & Daman & Diu	1.8	34
Delhi	22	10
Goa	22	10
Gujarat	19.1	13
Haryana	12.1	25
Himachal	12.7	24
Jammu & Kashmir	4.6	32
Jharkhand	14.2	21
Karnataka	26.5	6
Kerala	21.7	11
Ladakh	-	-
Lakshadweep	-	-
Madhya Pradesh	18.8	14
Maharashtra	16	18
Odisha	19.5	12
Puducherry	26.1	7
Punjab	7.7	29
Rajasthan	10.1	26
Tamil Nadu	22.2	9
Telegnana	17.8	16
Uttar Pradesh	9.8	27
Uttarakhand	3.4	33
West Bengal	14.6	20
All India	18.1	15

Source: Rankings are calculated from the “Annual Bulletin on Additional Indicators, Periodic Labour Force Survey, July 2019-20 & 2020-21, National Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation”

Table 6: Comparison of the women participated in 17th Lok Sabha, 2019 (percent of total seats) in NER with that of the rest of India

States	2019	Ranking
States of NER		
Meghalaya	50	2
Tripura	50	2
Arunachal Pradesh	10	13
Assam	7	15
Manipur	0	17
Mizoram	0	17
Nagaland	0	17
Sikkim	0	17
Rest of India		
Andaman & N. Island	0	
Andhra Pradesh	16	9
Bihar	8	14
Chandigarh	100	1
Chhattisgarh	27	4
Delhi	14	11
Gujarat	23	6
D&N Haveli & Daman & Diu	0	17
Goa	0	17
Haryana	10	13
Himachal	0	17
Ladakh	0	17
Maharashtra	17	8
Jammu & Kashmir	0	17
Karnataka	7	15
Jharkhand	14	11
Lakshadweep	0	17
Madhya Pradesh	14	11
Odisha	33	3
Puducherry	0	17
Punjab	15	10
Rajasthan	12	12
Tamil Nadu	8	14
Telegana	6	16
Uttar Pradesh	14	11
Uttarakhand	20	7
West Bengal	26	5
All India	14	11

Source: Rankings are calculated from the NFHS-5 (2019-21) data

Table 7: Comparison of “average wage earnings (in Rs.) per day from casual labour work other than public works” in CWS[#] for NER with that of other states/UTs of India

States	Rural		Urban		Rural	Urban
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Gender Gap	Gender Gap
States of NER						
Arunachal Pradesh	524.3	501.19	487.2	400	23.11	87.2
Assam	431.68	242.45	496.54	325.37	189.23	171.17
Manipur	591.1	0	531.93	500	-	31.93
Meghalaya	476.66	324.55	453.85	269.85	152.11	184
Mizoram	465.37	0	483.74	488.02	-	-4.28
Nagaland	439.51	0	462.72	487.87	-	-25.15
Sikkim	596.3	0	604.24	44.15	-	560.09
Tripura	456	646.74	490.45	381.53	-190.74	108.92
Rest of India						
Andaman & N. Island	616.03	465.12	680.48	0	150.91	-
Andhra Pradesh	599.41	339.66	592.63	357.79	259.75	234.84
Bihar	392.16	330.4	428.04	339.11	61.76	88.93
Chandigarh	450	400	494.99	433.95	50	61.04
Chhattisgarh	275.96	202.01	311.4	232.34	73.95	79.06
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	310	244	390	0	65.6	-
Delhi	600	0	558.28	600	-	-41.72
Goa	765.35	0	820.55	487.11	-	333.44
Gujarat	359.69	283.69	424.78	228.54	76	196.24
Haryana	511.29	345.49	501.68	339.85	165.8	161.83
Himachal	488.88	406.97	512.43	400	81.91	112.43
Jammu & Kashmir	515.98	0	540.27	474.22	-	66.05
Jharkhand	394.05	374.69	417.18	385.1	19.36	32.08
Karnataka	453.84	267.88	545.93	322.56	185.96	223.37
Kerala	845.63	418.86	903.26	493.54	426.77	409.72
Ladakh	574.62	0	800	0	-	-
Lakshadweep	768.82	0	795.27	400	-	395.27
Madhya Pradesh	337	261.43	366.87	248.84	75.57	118.03
Maharashtra	364.77	245	495.08	274.87	119.77	220.21
Odisha	364.82	303.53	399.84	330.51	61.29	69.33
Puducherry	508.36	198.33	634.15	507.8	310.03	126.35
Punjab	416.39	337.83	430.2	301.74	78.56	128.46
Rajasthan	431.25	367.27	461.78	274.59	63.98	187.19
Tamil Nadu	600.05	291.52	648.67	382.73	308.53	265.94
Telegana	569.89	395.56	631.72	445.51	174.33	186.21
Uttar Pradesh	384.79	251.09	415.88	315.75	133.7	100.13
Uttarakhand	476.27	600	487.87	500	-123.73	-12.13
West Bengal	368.61	234.82	409.13	317.83	133.79	91.3
India	416.14	286.66	515.34	332.85	129.48	182.49

Source: Gender gaps are calculated from PLFS-2022-23. Note: Zero (0) Cell value means there is no sample observation. [#]Current weekly status (CWS) implies those persons who work or who want to work for at least one hour.

3.8. Control over cash earnings of Women and Men (CCE)

Table 8 illustrates gender gap in the process of decision making in families. The control of cash earnings by women and men over their income and amount of women's earnings are shown in the table which shows that “the gender gap in decision making process” is highest in one of the NER states i.e. Tripura (19.8) followed by Mizoram (16.2) and Nagaland (6.9.) In other NER states like Assam, and Meghalaya, the gender gap is below national average while the gap is even zero and negative in Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim.

3.9. Women’s participation in Decision Making Process (WDP)

Table 9 shows the % of married women (15-49 years) who can generally take three decisions by “themselves or jointly with their husbands” during 2019-21. In this regard, it is a remarkable achievement of all NER states that all states performed very good showing the active participation of women in “decision making process in the family”. This table holds the opinion that women’s status is comparatively better in the states of NER than other states of India (Das, 2013; Bordoloi & Bedamatta, 2022).

3.10. Gender gap related to Health (GPH)

Table 10 illustrates maternal care indicators for births to mothers (age 15-49). In case of % of women who have received all kinds of antenatal care, the condition of NER states is very dismal. Except Manipur, Mizoram, and Sikkim, the status of NER states is below national average. Similarly, regarding the indicator of % of deliveries having postnatal health checkup for the mother, the condition is even worse as all the NER states performed far below the national average.

Table 8: Comparison of women's and men's control over income in NER with other states of India (2019-21)

States	“Percentage of married women who can alone or jointly with their husband decide how their own earnings are used”	“Percentage of married women who can alone or jointly with their husband decide how their husband's earnings are used”	“Percentage of married men who can alone or jointly with their husband decide how their wife's earnings are used”	“Percentage of married men who can alone or jointly with their husband decide how their own earnings are used”	Gender Gap
States of NER					
Tripura	91.5	76.4	85.6	56.6	19.8
Sikkim	90.5	77.7	72.8	82.3	-4.6
Nagaland	97.4	93.9	95.5	87	6.9
Mizoram	95.4	89.6	90.2	73.4	16.2
Meghalaya	89.3	80.6	67.2	77.7	2.9
Manipur	84.4	80.6	93.1	80.6	0
Assam	87.5	77.7	78.5	77.6	0.1
Arunachal Pradesh	83.1	73.4	67.8	82.7	-9.3
Rest of India					
Andaman & N. Island	100	82.4	61.6	63.3	19.1
Andhra Pradesh	78.5	70.9	90.7	79.1	-8.2
Bihar	91.3	79.5	72.1	75.7	3.8
Chandigarh	85.1	92.5	90.4	94.1	-1.6
Chhattisgarh	88.9	83.3	84.1	79.8	3.5
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	76.6	82	58.8	83.3	-1.1
Delhi	95.3	79.8	72.3	72.2	7.6
Goa	99	79.8	41.9	53.8	26
Gujarat	90.5	81.2	83.9	73.1	8.1
Haryana	87.8	76.3	77.1	83.6	-7.3
Himachal	93.3	77	57.1	76.9	0.1
Jammu & Kashmir	70.5	67.9	82.6	66	1.9
Jharkhand	88.1	82.7	79.2	85.1	-2.4
Karnataka	73.9	68.2	84.6	52.8	15.4
Kerala	91	68.2	84.6	52.8	15.4
Ladakh	68.2	68.8	91.9	75	-6.2
Lakshadweep	100	80	65.9	37	43
Madhya Pradesh	85	74.3	86.5	76.5	-2.2
Maharashtra	85.1	74.1	71	73.1	1
Odisha	91.6	81	77.8	72.2	8.8
Puducherry	93.9	82.6	89.9	80.4	2.2
Punjab	91.1	84.5	84	84.9	-0.4
Rajasthan	80.1	70.6	81	69	1.6
Tamil Nadu	87.1	78.3	76.6	83.2	-4.9
Telegana	75.2	68.7	76.6	83.2	-14.5
Uttar Pradesh	85.6	75.2	76.5	76.6	-1.4
Uttarakhand	92.7	78.8	83.2	87.4	-8.6
West Bengal	89.1	72.2	64.3	66.6	5.6
India	85.1	75.4	77.6	71.8	3.6

Source: Gender gaps are calculated from NFHS-5 (2019-21), Vol. I

Table 9: Comparison of “participation of women in decision making” in NER with other states of India

States	“Percentage of women who can usually make decision alone or jointly with their husband”				
	Own health care	Making major household purchases	“Visit to their family or relatives”	“All three decisions”	“None of the three decisions”
States of NER					
Arunachal Pradesh	82.1	81.7	82.7	76.4	13
Assam	86.4	84.1	86.1	77.8	7.9
Manipur	87.9	84	89.6	77.7	5.2
Meghalaya	89.1	87.3	89.8	83.8	7.7
Mizoram	93.7	94.3	94.4	87	1.2
Nagaland	96.8	97.7	98.3	95.2	0.8
Sikkim	84.5	85	86.7	81.1	10.3
Tripura	85.3	85.2	87.2	79.5	9.1
Rest of India					
Andaman & Nicobar Island	87.6	85.1	91.7	81.9	5.5
Andhra Pradesh	70.6	75.5	74.7	61.3	16
Bihar	80.8	78.4	78.2	71	13.5
Chandigarh	94.6	91.5	93.6	91.5	5.4
Chhattisgarh	88.3	85.8	87.8	81	7.3
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	83.7	83.6	81.2	72.3	8.2
Delhi	87.1	78	83.4	72.1	8
Goa	87.6	85.5	89.3	80.5	6.9
Gujarat	85.6	81.7	86.7	75	7.8
Haryana	81.7	78.6	80.4	71.9	12.5
Himachal	87.8	81.7	88.7	75.3	6.1
Jammu & Kashmir	73.8	69.2	75.6	62.5	18.4
Jharkhand	85.7	86	85.9	79.8	9.1
Karnataka	74.4	73.4	74.7	64.5	17.3
Kerala	82.7	81.1	84.6	69.3	5.9
Ladakh	67.1	64.4	67.2	48.4	19.6
Lakshadweep	86.7	90.5	91.3	85.8	7.8
Madhya Pradesh	78.6	75.9	77.3	67.5	14
Maharashtra	82.4	78.2	80.7	69.5	10.2
Odisha	80.1	82.1	81.6	71.2	9.8
Puducherry	81.8	87.4	90.9	72.4	2.1
Punjab	87.6	84	86.5	79.6	8.6
Rajasthan	80.8	73.8	78.4	65.8	12.3
Tamil Nadu	81.9	83.4	86.2	72.7	7.2
Telangana	68.3	76.4	76.2	57.4	12.8
Uttar Pradesh	81.6	80.8	80.9	73.7	12.5
Uttarakhand	84.7	82.2	85.1	76.1	9
West Bengal	81.8	80.8	81.4	72.1	11.1
India	81.1	79.5	81.1	71	11.3

Source: NFHS-5 (2019-21), Vol I

Table 10: Comparison of “maternal care indicators for births to mothers (age 15-49) during the 5 years” in NER with that of other states of India, 2019-21

States	% of “mother who have received all kinds of antenatal care” [^]	% of “deliveries having postnatal health checkup ^s for mother”
States of NER		
Manipur	46.1	76.4
Mizoram	37.3	73
Sikkim	34.9	76.4
Assam	26.9	72
Meghalaya	26.4	69.8
Tripura	15.4	75.6
Arunachal Pradesh	14.4	62.3
Nagaland	5.3	48.6
Rest of India		
Andaman & Nicobar Island	65.9	90.7
Andhra Pradesh	46.8	91.8
Bihar	7.6	65.7
Chandigarh	61.6	97.1
Chhattisgarh	29.7	91.1
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	53.6	94.8
Delhi	56.5	89.2
Goa	49	92.6
Gujarat	49	92.6
Haryana	35.3	94.1
Himachal	45.3	92
Jammu & Kashmir	23.4	86.7
Jharkhand	14.9	77.5
Karnataka	34	90.1
Kerala	69.3	85.6
Ladakh	10.4	84.6
Lakshadweep	75.4	90.7
Madhya Pradesh	32.9	88.2
Maharashtra	37.9	87.8
Odisha	49.8	93.8
Puducherry	68.9	90
Punjab	34.4	89.6
Rajasthan	21.7	87.4
Tamil Nadu	71.3	92.7
Telangana	38	91.3
Uttar Pradesh	11.9	81.8
Uttarakhand	31.4	85.8
West Bengal	48.2	73.9
India	31.2	83.2

Source: NFHS-5 (2019-21). Notes: [^]Antenatal care are the care received by the mothers “who received at least one tetanus toxoid injection, and took iron and folic acid tablets or syrup for 100 days or more”.

^s“Postnatal health checks are the health checkups within 42 days of the birth”.

4. Conclusion

It is apparent from the above analysis that the performance of the states of NER is better than the country average in both rural areas and urban areas regarding the gender gap in literacy rates and this implies that gender gaps are less in NER than other states of India. It can also be inferred from the analysis that the gender disparity is lower in NER states regarding labour force participation rates. The analysis shows that “the married women who have experienced physical, sexual and emotional violence committed by their husbands” are below country average in other NER states except for Manipur and Assam. However, it is a matter of serious concern for all that, except for Mizoram and Nagaland, the rate of occurrence of various crimes against women is more in NER states than the country average.

One of the important gender-based development parameters is women participation in management and it is revealed from the analysis that the female workers who work in senior level and middle level management positions are higher in NER than the country average except for Assam, Nagaland and Tripura. It is a remarkable success for the NER that the first, second, third and fourth positions in “senior and middle management” positions are occupied by the states of NER. Nevertheless, it is a very disappointing result that participation of women in parliament in NER is below country average except for Meghalaya and Tripura.

Examination of another important parameter revealed the fact that the gender gap in case of rural wages is marginally above the national gap only for some NER states like Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh, however, urban wage gap is almost non-existent in almost all the NER states. Gender gap in the process of decision making is one of the important gender-based development parameters and from the examination of the parameter it is evident that the gender gap in “women's and men's control over earnings and relative magnitude of women's earnings” are is highest in one of the NER states i.e. Tripura followed by Mizoram and Nagaland. No considerable gap has been observed in other NER states. Regarding the gender gap in the process of decision making like the married women “who usually make three particular types of decisions by themselves or jointly with their husband” shows a remarkable achievement by all NER states. All NER states performed very well showing active participation of women in taking decisions in

the family. This analysis may hold the perception that women's status is better in NER states.

However, the condition of NER states is very dismal regarding gender gap in health parameters. In case of the percentage of "women who received all recommended types of antenatal care", the status of NER states is below national average except in Manipur, Mizoram, and Sikkim. Similarly, regarding the indicator "percentage of deliveries with a postnatal health check for the mother", the condition is even worse as all the NER states performed far below country average.

In conclusion, it can be inferred that women's status is better NER states than any other states of India regarding the gender-based parameters like education, labour force participation, wages, involvement in decision making process, involvement in management, and physical, sexual and emotional violence committed by their husbands. Nevertheless, women's status in NER is found below average regarding health parameters, crime against women and participation in parliamentary process. The control over technology and ownership of resources can bring gender equality and may improve position of women in society which may be observed in tribal societies of the North East India.

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