

Financial Inclusion of Women and Gender Equity for Sustainable Development in Manipur

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Abstract:

Women belong to the female section and an important part of human population was being neglected over the centuries. History gives the picture of men went out to work while women were expected to stay at home and take care of household and domestic management. The duty to earn the income entirely goes to men and women are excluded in the matter of financial activities. Gender equity and sustainability are very much connected with the financial inclusion of women. If women are financially sound with that of men, the participation in economic and social activities will increase, and then finally to the point of gender equity. In a modern monetary economy, financial strength will be an important component to empower the person, the institution and the country. Women are lacking behind men and the empowerment of women requires the financial inclusion at the root level, then the possibility of other social participation to them. So, the present problem of equity and sustainability can be minimized with this very concept of financial inclusion of women.

In Manipur, women are becoming an important leader at present and participation in economic activities has increased. The gap of gender equity is diminishing. It is how women are directly or indirectly included in financial services in one way or another. The findings will provide useful information for policy makers and reformers, students and academicians that can help broaden their understanding of the idea of financial inclusion of women and ultimately to the path of equity and development.

Key words: Financial inclusion, Gender Equity, Women and Development

Introduction:

Financial inclusion of women will be the core issues for bringing gender equity and sustainability in the economy. Women belong to the female section and an important part of human population was being neglected over the centuries. History gives the picture of men went out to work while women were expected to stay at home and take care of household and domestic management. The duty to earn the income entirely goes to men and women are excluded in the matter of financial activities. Gender equity and sustainability are very much connected with the financial inclusion of women. If women are financially sound with that of men, the participation in economic and social activities will increase, and then finally to the point of gender equity. Many studies have already been conducted on the issues of women and development and a wide spectrum of results has been generated. But only a few researchers have been done on the theme of financial inclusion of women and gender equity in that. Those who have done some research work in this regard could cover only a few aspects of women development.

Financial inclusion for economic growth, gender equity for social justice and sustainability are the important issues in the era of 21st century socio-economic development of a country. In Manipur, financial inclusion of women and social equality apart from other socio-economic issues are one of the core issues of the developing economy of the state. If we look at the economic profile of the State, majority of the women are under the control of the men. They are lacking of their share with that of men and there is the need for policy intervention for the socio economic empowerment of women community.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine the financial inclusion of women in Manipur
2. To analyze the relationship of financial inclusion and equality in general and financial inclusion of women and gender equity in particular
3. To derive the sustainability in development from the principle of gender equity

Research Methodology:

The analysis is entirely based on secondary data. The methodological discipline will start with the existing secondary data like summaries, journals, different research papers, bibliographical works, general works, specialized works and reports from government sources, diaries, manuscripts and related records of financial literacy of women. The collected material will be examined and presented with an analytical outlook of the objectives, approach and contents of this proposed research study, with a view to deriving the basic framework of hypothesis and reference. A method of analytical and formulative-research is applied in the present study. The objective is to gain familiarity with a phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it. In this type of research the emphasis is not on finding exactly the cause – effect relationship but mainly on the analysis of the impact, contribution and transformation aspects with the help of relevant indicators especially formulated for this purpose by the researcher.

United Nations Initiative for Women:

In 1975, The First World Conference on Women was held by The UN Commission on the Status of Women in the city of Mexico and the decade between the years of 1975 and 1985 was declared as the "United Nations Decade for Women" by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The main theme of the "United Nations Decade for Women" was identified in the framework of determining and reaching the goals of "Equality, Development and Peace"; improving women's status on national; regional and international levels; preventing gender/sex discrimination against women; providing the equal opportunities for women to participate in the production and benefit equally from the development opportunities. The "Action Plan", determining the measures for the improvement of women's status, was accepted in the Second World Conference on Women, held in Copenhagen, in 1980. Right after the Second World Conference on Women and a minute discussion of the party members, a Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was formed.

The Third World Conference on Women was held in Nairobi in 1985 and far-reaching strategies were determined for the improvement of women's status after a general evaluation of the "United Nations Decade for Women" (Palaz, 2005:319,320). The Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, in 1995. It recognized the issues of women's rights as human right.

The sixtieth session of the commission on the status of women took place at the United Nations headquarters in New York from 14 to 24 March 2016. The UN women convened an expert group meeting (EGM) from 2 to 4 November 2015 in New York and decided for "women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development". The UN Women, becomes operational in Jan. 2011.

Recently, in 2017 the 61 session of UNs Commission on the status of Women was convened. In the Session Ms. Dubravka Simonovic United Nations special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences were made a reference to the coming 5th world conference on Woman emphasizing Gender equality and on the prevention of violence against women. The 5th WCW will be held in India in 2022.

Financial Inclusion and Women: a line of attack for gender equity

Lot of literature was found on the issues of financial inclusion in India but there is little on the issue of Women and financial inclusion. 100 percent financial inclusion of women is needed for some amount of

gender equity in the beginning. Gender equity is a multi equity concept in the sense that it includes financial equality, socio-cultural equality, equality in political participation and overall equality of men and women in the various matters of economic and non-economic activities in a mature society. Socio-economic and political participation of women were becoming a correlated terms in the literature of equality of men and women. Government cannot enforce the women for social participation. But, policy initiative for economic participation and laws can be framed for political attainment from the side of government. So, it will be the duty of the government to bring 100 percent financial inclusion of women through providing employment and financial services including financial literacy programme. However, a frontal attack from all section of the society is also necessary for remaining part of gender equality.

According to United Nations, 2015 report, Many women remain dependent upon their husbands, and about one in three married women from developing countries has no control over household spending on the purchase of major commodities. Only about 1/10 of that earned females are not consulted about the way their own earnings are spent (United Nations, 2015). Above all, women often have limited opportunities for education and its relative attainment, employment in and out of the economy, the inheritance of assets and land ownership, control over their income spending and cases about financial futures. Lot of policy initiatives is needed for the upliftment of women community with the national and international organization.

In Manipur, since quite long in the past, womenfolk took an initiative role on the issues of economic problem of the family and so also other social problem. Mention can be made on the issues of Women war against British in 12th December 1939 and women participation in market activities commonly known as “Ima Market”. (In 1939, ban on export of rice from Manipur imposed in the wake of floods was revoked. This caused acute scarcity of rice (staple food grain of Manipuri’s) and sky rocketing of its price. A large crowd of Meitei women by their valiant demonstration at Imphal forced the authorities to re-impose the ban. This incident is commonly known as the second Nupi-lan. It is being remembered as Nupi-lan Numit every year to pay tribute to brave women who saved the people from starvation.)

At present women are becoming an important Social and political leader and participation in economic activities also increases. Mira Paibi, Chanura Marup, women society and other village level self help groups are the important women society that promotes the participation of women on Economic and social activities. The gap of gender equity is diminishing. It is how women are directly or indirectly included in financial services in one way or another.

Table 1: Economic Profile of Women in Manipur

Total Population	2,570,390	Women population	1,280,219
Population density	115	Sex Ratio	992
Literacy rate	79.2(total)	Female literate	808,166 (72.4)
Males	86.1	Female illiterate	472,053 (27.6)
Gender gap in literacy rate	13.7	Females worker	493,590
		Females non-worker	786,629
Females work participation rate	38.6	Females main worker	300,494(60.9)
Females cultivators	186,992	Females marginal worker	193,096(39.1)
Females agricultural labourer	67,015		
Females household industrial worker	69,520	Other worker	170,063

Source:

1. Government of India, Basic Statistics of North Eastern Region 2015, North Eastern Council Secretariat
2. Government of Manipur, Economic Survey 2017-18, Directorate of Economics and Statistic
3. Government of Manipur, Gender Statistics Manipur 2006, Directorate of economics and Statistics

Gender Equity and Sustainable Development:

Sustainable development is a multi-dimensional problem and it is not possible with the development of one particular section of humanity. Equality of all kinds (use and exploitation of Human and Natural resource) is the very concept of sustainable development. The present development should not compromise the future, the development of men should not compromise the development of women and my growth and development should not compromise the development of yours (other) and vice versa. It should not harm the other entity. Development without producing any harmful effect to the other section should be the slogan of sustainable development. Sustainability can be achieved with proper policy streamline for all humanity and collective responsibility. It should be regular, practicable and disciplinary basis. Otherwise, all plans will be collapse. The urgent requirement is the multi-action for sustainability. A big push from all section of knowledge and simultaneous initiative by all humanity is the urgent need for sustainability.

Now, for the sustainable development gender equity will be the top most priority. Men and women are equal before sustainable development. Development with one hand is not a sustainable. Both men and women will be employed equally to bring sustainability. All the resources, human and natural resources will be equally employed at the optimum amount with environmental discipline. That is how the concept of gender equity will be the means for sustainable development.

Conclusion:

It is the appeal and suggestion of every society and economy for the participation of women in economic activities. House hold activities are non economic in nature and it should be equally share between men and women. In this regard financial inclusion (100 percent for women, men at some percent) and employment for women can be initiated. Financial inclusion will be the first priority for a woman which is the possible way of equity and then ultimately can focus on development. The dream of sustainable development can be achieve with equal footing of men and women in the society though it is very much connected with environment and its resource use. Our series of attack will be on financial and social inclusion, equality thereby sacrifices from one section for the other and to the point of most debatable issues of sustainable development. Equal share, same resource use, human morality, equal development, common agenda and bridging the gap of rich and poor, are the challenges of development for sustainability. However, the care of women is just like the care of our environment. We neglected women development and so also our environment, a neglected development so called Sustainable development" was emerged at present. So the issues of sustainability can be solved if we solve the problem of women and its related dimension at the earliest.

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