

# An Analysis of the Socio-Economic Status of Scheduled Caste Women in Manipur

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**Abstract:** *The Constitution of India guarantees social and economic justice, including security, equality of status and opportunities, and assurance of the individual's dignity for all citizens. The current study looks at the socio-economic standing of Scheduled Caste women in Manipur, a historically underprivileged group that experiences discrimination on three fronts: gender, caste, and class. Despite their favourable sex ratio and high urban concentration, the current study shows that the existing demographic trends have not ensured gender-equal empowerment. There are notable differences in both labour market dynamics and educational attainment. Women contribute the majority of the marginal workforce and dominate the household industry sector. The results show that constitutional protections have not yet eliminated the interlocking barriers of regional disparities and patriarchal structures, with a female economic dependency rate that is almost twice as high as the male rate and a persistent gap between actual and "wanted" fertility.*

**Keywords:** Social and economic status, regional disparities, patriarchal structures, and gender-sensitive policies

## 1. Introduction

Women's empowerment has become a key concept in modern discourse, playing an essential role in the government's development programs. Comprising nearly half of the global population, women contribute significantly to global progress. India's economic and social development has been shaped by the caste system and regional disparities, reflecting a highly hierarchical society and significant social disparities. Scheduled Castes (SCs) represent a historically marginalised segment of Indian society, deeply shaped by social exclusion, landlessness, and spatial segregation (Kumar, 2016). Over time, the caste structure has evolved with the occupational shifts and modernisation, but it remains influential in society. Dalit women are placed at the absolute bottom of the social hierarchy in India, as they face systematic and structural discrimination threefold: as Dalits, as poor, and as women (Pradeep, 2014). Manipur is a small state in northeastern India, home to diverse communities including Meiteis (the major group), Pangals, tribals, and the Lois (who are recognised as Scheduled Castes). In Manipur, the Scheduled Castes were recognised only following the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes List (Modification) Order of 1956. Under this order, seven communities are recognised as Scheduled Caste Communities in Manipur. They are: (i) Lois, (ii) Yaithibis, (iii) Namsudra, (iv) Patni, (v) Dhobi (or Dhupi), (vi) Muchi/ Ravidas, and (vii) Sutradhar (Devi, The Lois of Manipur: Andro, Khurkhul, Phayeng and Sekmai, 2002).

In Manipur, the Scheduled Castes are officially known as 'Loi'. The term 'Loi' has been defined as a group of people who belong to lower social strata, and it literally means 'subdue or exiled people' who paid tribute to the king of Manipur. They are one of the economically and socially backwards people of Manipur. According to Cheitharol Kumpapa, Loi villages are the villages where several prisoners and social offenders are sent for exile as a punishment (Parratt, 2005; Devi, 2002). Though the Lois

belong to the Meitei society, they are treated as untouchable by the orthodox Meiteis or Vaishnava Meiteis. However, women are treated as equal halves of their male counterparts in the Loi family, and they are also given equal importance in the family (Devi, 2002).

The Indian Constitution incorporates robust safeguards, including reservations in government jobs and educational institutions for SCs, to enhance their social, political, economic, and educational progress. Despite extensive government schemes aimed at improving SCs' socio-economic conditions, SCs continue to face enduring social and economic hurdles, and these initiatives have fallen short of their goals. This paper analyses the SC community in Manipur and provides insights to inform future policy measures by the Indian government.

## 2. Review Of Literature

**Singh** (2014) investigated the socio-economic conditions of SC communities in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. The study showed that most SC households depend on daily wages for their income. It also indicated that some families face poor socio-economic circumstances, while others have improved over time for some SC individuals, thanks to greater access to education and reservation policies across various sectors.

**Thingbaijam & Das** (2015) show that Manipuri women play a pivotal role in the socio-economic and cultural life of society. They dominate both rural and urban markets through buying and selling, participate actively in agriculture and related activities, and have seen a rise in entrepreneurship and self-help groups, along with increased employment opportunities across various sectors. They conclude that, ultimately, women's status is a key factor influencing societal progress and development.

**Kanna & Sujatha** (2023) show in their study that under cooperative federalism, India's central and state

governments work together to allocate financial and human resources to support SCs and STs. States implement educational programs such as stipends, uniforms, hostels, residential schools, innovative teaching methods, and mid-day meals to improve access and retention. Economically, states promote initiatives such as cooperatives, cottage and small-scale industries, land redistribution, minor irrigation, and wage or self-employment schemes to ensure inclusive benefits. These efforts are aligned with central strategies through the Special Component Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), which allocate proportionate funds across ministries for SC/ST welfare. To shield these groups from exploitation and violence and to advance social justice and general upliftment, states also enforce laws like the Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955, and the SCs and STs (Prevention of Atrocities) POA Act, 1989.

**Dodamani & Natikar** (2023) examine the complex relationships between factors that influence the lives of the SC community. The study focuses on how caste dynamics and economic conditions interact to affect political representation, wealth distribution, and access to services. It uncovers trends that shape SCs' socioeconomic paths across different historical periods, legislative efforts, and current issues. The study highlights the importance of accessible healthcare and education as vital tools for upward mobility. Overall, it promotes a comprehensive

discussion of social equity, policy effects, and the steps toward societal inclusion. The study concludes that a well-rounded strategy can help India improve the socio-economic status of SCs and create a fairer and just society for everyone.

### 3. Methodology

The present study relies on secondary source data from government departments and private agency documents, such as census reports, Socio-economic and Caste Census (SECC), and NFHS 5. Additionally, secondary data were also collected from monographs, research reports, research papers, journals, books, and the internet.

### 4. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To examine the socio-economic background of the SC women in Manipur.
- 2) To briefly analyse the role played by SC women in society.

### 5. Results and Discussions

#### 5.1. Demographic Profile of Scheduled Castes in Manipur

**Table 1:** District-wise Distribution of SC Population in Manipur by Urban and Rural (2011 Census)

District	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Senapati	535	462	997	1	2	3	536	464	1,000
Tamenglong	15	3	18	2	2	4	17	5	22
Churachandpur	230	194	424	14	5	19	244	199	443
Chandel	302	197	499	19	22	41	321	219	540
Ukhrul	100	54	154	60	34	94	160	88	248
<b>Hill Total</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>2,092</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>1,278</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>2,253</b>
Imphal East	4,081	3,734	7,815	3974	4050	8024	8,055	7,784	15,839
Imphal West	5,846	5,865	11,711	2462	2357	4819	8,308	8,222	16,530
Bishnupur	10,949	10,885	21,834	136	143	279	11,085	11,028	22,113
Thoubal	2,217	2,180	4,397	17920	18276	36196	20,137	20,456	40,593
<b>Valley Total</b>	<b>23,093</b>	<b>22,664</b>	<b>45,757</b>	<b>24,492</b>	<b>24,826</b>	<b>49,318</b>	<b>47,585</b>	<b>47,490</b>	<b>95,075</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,275</b>	<b>23,574</b>	<b>47,849</b>	<b>24,588</b>	<b>24,891</b>	<b>49,479</b>	<b>48,863</b>	<b>48,465</b>	<b>97,328</b>
<b>Total Population %</b>	<b>24.94</b>	<b>24.22</b>	<b>49.16</b>	<b>25.26</b>	<b>25.57</b>	<b>50.84</b>	<b>50.20</b>	<b>49.80</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India

Scheduled Castes (SCs) in Manipur exhibit a strong urban concentration (50.84% of the total SC population), with the Imphal Valley districts dominating over the hill areas,

especially Thoubal district at 41.7%. On the other hand, hill districts exhibit a negligible share.

**Table 2:** Sub-Groups of Scheduled Caste by Urban-Rural Residence and Gender, Manipur, Census 2011

SC Name	Total/ Rural/ Urban	Total Population			
		Persons	Persons (%)	Males	Females
All Schedule Castes	<b>Total</b>	<b>97328</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>48863</b>	<b>48465</b>
	Rural	47849	49.16	24275	23574
	Urban	49479	50.84	24588	24891
Dhupi/ Dhobi	<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>36</b>
	Rural	45	36.89	35	10
	Urban	77	63.11	51	26
Lois	<b>Total</b>	<b>85543</b>	<b>87.89</b>	<b>42520</b>	<b>43023</b>
	Rural	37996	44.42	19008	18988
	Urban	47547	55.58	23512	24035
Muchi, Ravidas	<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>68</b>
	Rural	141	74.21	84	57
	Urban	49	25.79	38	11
Namasudra	<b>Total</b>	<b>3747</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>1976</b>	<b>1771</b>
	Rural	3617	96.53	1910	1707
	Urban	130	3.47	66	64
Patni	<b>Total</b>	<b>3664</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>1928</b>	<b>1736</b>
	Rural	3630	99.07	1911	1719
	Urban	34	0.93	17	17
Sutradhar	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>39</b>
	Rural	76	82.61	45	31
	Urban	16	17.39	8	8
Yaithibi	<b>Total</b>	<b>1532</b>	<b>1.57</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>778</b>
	Rural	842	54.96	431	411
	Urban	690	45.04	323	367

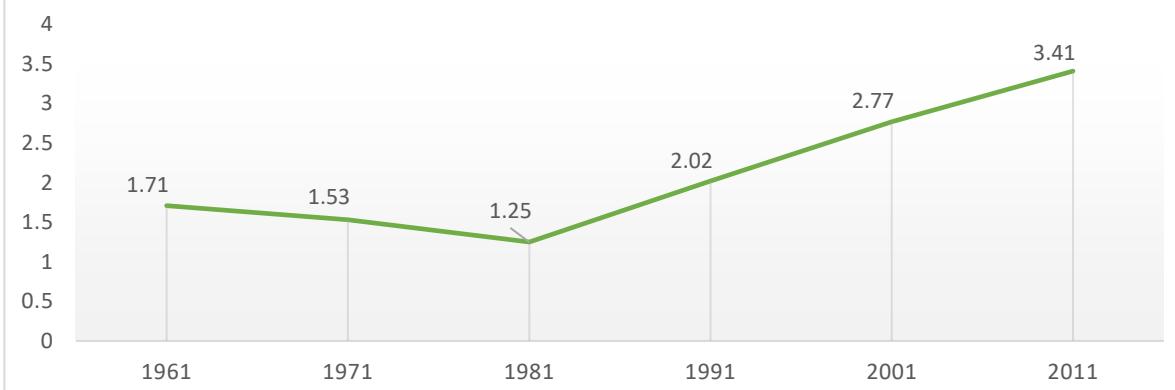
#### Author's calculations

Source: Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India

The SC population in Manipur is predominantly Loi, comprising the largest sub-group (87.89%), followed by Namasudra (3.85%), and others. Moreover, Loi and

Dhupi/Dhobi have a significant urban presence across various communities.

**Graph 1:** Trend of the Scheduled Caste Population growth of Manipur in Percentage



Source: Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India

Graph 1 shows the SC population trend in Manipur from 1961 to 2011. It declined in 1971 and 1981 but increased from 1991 onward, indicating steady growth likely due to

better living conditions and healthcare. Overall, it reflects positive demographic development.

#### 5.2. Sex Ratio

**Table 3:** Sex Ratio of SC Population of Manipur by region, census 2011

Region	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio
Rural	24,275	23,574	47,849	971
Urban	24,588	24,891	49,479	1012
Total	48,863	48,465	97,328	992

\*Author's calculations

Source: Office of the Registrar General &amp; Census Commissioner, India

SC sex ratio in Manipur reflects near gender parity at 992 females per 1000 males, slightly above the state average of 985 as per the 2011 Census. In the urban region, the higher sex ratio (1012) reflects reduced son preference, enhanced

female survival, or male labour migration, contrasting typical Indian deficits. The rural deficit (971) signals economic pressures compelling male mobility.

### 5.3. Literacy Rate

**Table 4: Gender Disparities in Literacy Rates among Scheduled Castes in Manipur, 2011 Census (Age 7+)**

SC Name	Total/ Rural/ Urban	Literate					Absolute Gap	Gender Parity Index
		Person s	Male s	Males (%)	Female s	Females (%)		
All Schedule Castes	Total	64488	3531 1	72.27	29177	60.20	12.06	0.83
	Rural	30086	1685 8	69.45	13228	56.11	13.33	0.81
	Urban	34402	1845 3	75.05	15949	64.08	10.97	0.85
Dhupi, Dhobi	Total	101	79	91.86	22	61.11	30.75	0.67
	Rural	37	32	91.43	5	50.00	41.43	0.55
	Urban	64	47	92.16	17	65.38	26.77	0.71
Lois	Total	56879	3086 3	72.58	26016	60.47	12.11	0.83
	Rural	23975	1331 9	70.07	10656	56.12	13.95	0.80
	Urban	32904	1754 4	74.62	15360	63.91	10.71	0.86
Muchi, Ravidas	Total	136	99	81.15	37	54.41	26.74	0.67
	Rural	89	62	73.81	27	47.37	26.44	0.64
	Urban	47	37	97.37	10	90.91	6.46	0.93
Namasudra	Total	2474	1419	71.81	1055	59.57	12.24	0.83
	Rural	2387	1375	71.99	1012	59.29	12.70	0.82
	Urban	87	44	66.67	43	67.19	-0.52	1.01
Patni	Total	2276	1243	64.47	1033	59.50	4.97	0.92
	Rural	2256	1234	64.57	1022	59.45	5.12	0.92
	Urban	20	9	52.94	11	64.71	-11.76	1.22
Sutradhar	Total	69	41	77.36	28	71.79	5.56	0.93
	Rural	55	34	75.56	21	67.74	7.81	0.90
	Urban	14	7	87.50	7	87.50	0.00	1.00
Yaithibi	Total	959	521	69.10	438	56.30	12.80	0.81
	Rural	486	275	63.81	211	51.34	12.47	0.80
	Urban	473	246	76.16	227	61.85	14.31	0.81

\*Author calculations

Source: Primary Census Abstract for Scheduled Castes, Manipur, Census of India 2011. Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India.

Table 4 reveals clear gender gaps in literacy among the Scheduled Castes in Manipur. Female literacy rates lag behind those of males across all communities and areas, with the overall SC population showing 60.20% female literacy compared to 72.27% for males. The Gender Parity Index of 0.83 confirms females face a marked educational disadvantage.

Rural areas exhibit wider gaps, as evidenced by the literacy rates of all SC females in Manipur at 56.11%, compared to

69.45% for males, resulting in an absolute gap of 13.33%. Urban settings narrow this to 64.08% female versus 75.05% male, with an absolute gap of 10.97%. Groups like Sutradhar achieve near equality in urban zones (GPI 1.00), while rural Dhobi females lag severely at 50.8%. Dhobi records the largest gap (30.75 points total), underscoring uneven progress within SC populations.

However, the Gender Parity Index of 0.83 for the SC population in Manipur indicates that females still lag

behind males across most groups and areas. Across the state, SC females are ~10 points below Manipur's average of ~70.26%. This suggests that ongoing caste-gender

obstacles exist even with advancements in urban areas. Focused investments in rural areas could help build on urban successes and improve overall equality.

**Table 5:** District-wise literacy rate of SCs in Manipur by sex, census 2011

State/ District	Literate			Gender gap in literacy	GPI
	Total (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)		
<b>India</b>	66.1	75.2	56.5	18.7	0.75
<b>Manipur</b>	76.1	83.4	68.8	14.6	0.82
<b>Thoubal</b>	81.3	88.9	73.8	15.1	0.83
<b>Imphal West</b>	81.1	87.8	74.5	13.3	0.85
<b>Imphal East</b>	70.4	74.6	65.9	8.7	0.88
<b>Bishnupur</b>	68.1	77.4	58.9	18.5	0.76
<b>Senapati</b>	58.1	69	45.6	23.4	0.66
<b>Tamenglong</b>	61.9	70.6	25	45.6	0.35
<b>Churachandpur</b>	72.8	82.4	62	20.4	0.75
<b>Ukhrul</b>	71	76.7	60.3	16.4	0.79
<b>Chandel</b>	66.7	80.5	46.5	34	0.58

\*Author's calculations

Source: Office of the Registrar General of India

Table 5 presents the Scheduled Caste (SC) literacy rates across Manipur districts, alongside state and national benchmarks from the 2011 Census.

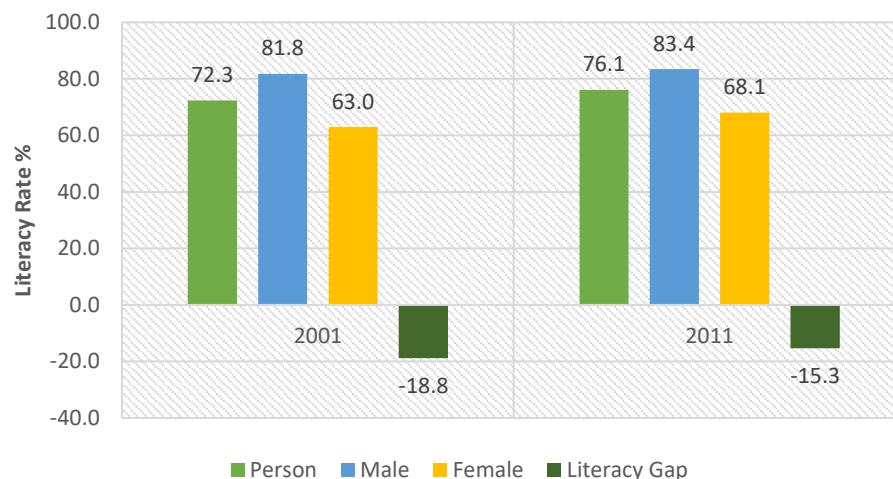
Thoubal has the highest SC literacy at 81.3% (73.8% female), followed by Imphal West (81.1%). Senapati records the lowest at 58.1% total (45.6% female), highlighting stark regional divides within Manipur.

All districts show female SC literacy lagging behind their male counterparts, with gaps widest in Tamenglong (45.6

points) and Senapati (23.4 points), far exceeding the state SC average of ~14.6 points. Imphal West narrows this to 13.3 points (GPI 0.85), matching state patterns.

Manipur's SC rates (76.1% total) surpass India's SC average (66.1%). Female SC GPI averages 0.82 district-wide, below state GPI (0.83), confirming compounded caste-gender barriers, especially in hill districts like Ukhrul and Tamenglong. These patterns suggest targeted policies for remote SC females could lift statewide parity.

**Graph 2: Gender Literacy Gap of SCs of Manipur**



\*Author's calculations

Source: Office of the Registrar General of India

Graph 2 presents the literacy gap between males and females of the Scheduled Castes of Manipur. The literacy gap decreased from 18.8 in 2001 to 15.3 in 2011. The

literacy rates of both male and female have increased, with female literacy showing a significant jump from 63.0% to 68.1%.

#### 5.4. Work Participation Rate

Table 6: Gender Disparities in SC Work Participation, Manipur, Census 2011

SC Name	Total/ Rural/ Urban	Total Workers					Non-Workers				
		Person s	Male s	M (%)	Female s	F (%)	Person s	Male s	M (%)	Female s	F (%)
All Schedule Castes	Total	44684	26349	58.97	18335	41.03	52644	22514	42.77	30130	57.23
	Rural	21452	13111	61.12	8341	38.88	26397	11164	42.29	15233	57.71
	Urban	23232	13238	56.98	9994	43.02	26247	11350	43.24	14897	56.76
Dhupi, Dhobi	Total	74	65	87.84	9	12.16	48	21	43.75	27	56.25
	Rural	34	33	97.06	1	2.94	11	2	18.18	9	81.82
	Urban	40	32	80.00	8	20.00	37	19	51.35	18	48.65
Lois	Total	39618	22791	57.53	16827	42.47	45925	19729	42.96	26196	57.04
	Rural	17113	10041	58.67	7072	41.33	20883	8967	42.94	11916	57.06
	Urban	22505	12750	56.65	9755	43.35	25042	10762	42.98	14280	57.02
Muchi, Ravidas	Total	102	90	88.24	12	11.76	88	32	36.36	56	63.64
	Rural	68	58	85.29	10	14.71	73	26	35.62	47	64.38
	Urban	34	32	94.12	2	5.88	15	6	40.00	9	60.00
Namasudra	Total	1745	1231	70.54	514	29.46	2002	745	37.21	1257	62.79
	Rural	1698	1195	70.38	503	29.62	1919	715	37.26	1204	62.74
	Urban	47	36	76.60	11	23.40	83	30	36.14	53	63.86
Patni	Total	1365	1058	77.51	307	22.49	2299	870	37.84	1429	62.16
	Rural	1352	1050	77.66	302	22.34	2278	861	37.80	1417	62.20
	Urban	13	8	61.54	5	38.46	21	9	42.86	12	57.14
Sutradhar	Total	49	35	71.43	14	28.57	43	18	41.86	25	58.14
	Rural	44	31	70.45	13	29.55	32	14	43.75	18	56.25
	Urban	5	4	80.00	1	20.00	11	4	36.36	7	63.64
Yaithibi	Total	673	392	58.25	281	41.75	859	362	42.14	497	57.86
	Rural	425	240	56.47	185	43.53	417	191	45.80	226	54.20
	Urban	248	152	61.29	96	38.71	442	171	38.69	271	61.31

\*Author's calculations

Source: Office of the Registrar General of India

The data reveals a significant disparity between the number of male and female workers across all SC categories in Manipur. Of the total SC workers, 58.97% are male and 41.03% are female. There is a high volume of non-workers in the SC community, with females making up the majority at 57.23% of this group.

The Work Participation Rate (WPR) can be calculated as,

$$\text{Male WPR} = \left( \frac{\text{Total Male Workers}}{\text{Total Male Population}} \right) \times 100 \\ = \left( \frac{26349}{48863} \right) \times 100 = 53.92\%$$

$$\text{Female WPR} = \left( \frac{\text{Total Female Workers}}{\text{Total Female Population}} \right) \times 100 \\ = \left( \frac{18335}{48465} \right) \times 100 = 37.83\%$$

$$\text{WPR gap} = \text{Male WPR} - \text{Female WPR} \\ = 53.92\% - 37.83\% \\ = 16.09\%$$

Over half of the SC male population (53.92%) is employed, while only about one-third of SC females participate, creating a 16.09% gender gap. This suggests males have greater access or societal expectations for employment. Since the WPR includes children and elderly, these figures also indicate the community's dependency.

$$\text{Female Economic Dependency Rate} \\ = \frac{(100 - \text{WPR})}{\text{WPR}} \times 100 \\ =$$

$$\frac{(100 - 37.83)}{37.83} \times 100 \\ =$$

$$164.34 \\ \text{Male Economic Dependency Rate} \\ = \frac{(100 - \text{WPR})}{\text{WPR}} \times 100 \\ =$$

$$\frac{(100 - 53.92)}{53.92} \times 100 \\ =$$

$$85.45$$

The Female Economic Dependency Rate measures the number of non-working individuals supported by every 100 workers. The Female Economic Dependency Rate of 164.34 indicates that for every 100 female workers, approximately 164 women do not work. This high ratio indicates a lack of financial independence among SC women. On the contrary, the Male Economic Dependency Rate of 85.45 shows that for every 100 male workers, there are only about 85 non-working males. As this number is below 100, it indicates that the male population is largely self-sustaining.

The female dependency rate is nearly double that of the male rate. This suggests that men disproportionately carry the economic burden within families, while women are consigned to non-economic or “non-worker” roles. A dependency rate of 164.34 for females indicates a high degree of vulnerability to poverty. Although these women are “non-workers” in census terms, many are likely performing unpaid household work that is essential for the household but not captured in these participation rates.

**Table 7 (a):** Distribution of Main Workers (15 years & above) of the Scheduled Caste Population of Manipur by Sex (2011 Census)

SC Name	Total/ Rural/ Urban	Main Workers					
		P	P %	M	M %	F	F %
All Schedule Castes	<b>Total</b>	35024	<b>78.38</b>	24000	<b>68.52</b>	11024	<b>31.48</b>
	Rural	16434	76.61	11858	72.16	4576	27.84
	Urban	18590	80.02	12142	65.31	6448	34.69
Dhupi, Dhobi	<b>Total</b>	70	<b>94.59</b>	64	<b>91.43</b>	6	<b>8.57</b>
	Rural	33	97.06	32	96.97	1	3.03
	Urban	37	92.50	32	86.49	5	13.51
Lois	<b>Total</b>	31014	<b>78.28</b>	20809	<b>67.10</b>	10205	<b>32.90</b>
	Rural	13057	76.30	9114	69.80	3943	30.20
	Urban	17957	79.79	11695	65.13	6262	34.87
Muchi, Ravidas	<b>Total</b>	94	<b>92.16</b>	84	<b>89.36</b>	10	<b>10.64</b>
	Rural	62	91.18	53	85.48	9	14.52
	Urban	32	94.12	31	96.88	1	3.13
Namasudra	<b>Total</b>	1311	<b>75.13</b>	1098	<b>83.75</b>	213	<b>16.25</b>
	Rural	1272	74.91	1067	83.88	205	16.12
	Urban	39	82.98	31	79.49	8	20.51
Patni	<b>Total</b>	1050	<b>76.92</b>	930	<b>88.57</b>	120	<b>11.43</b>
	Rural	1039	76.85	922	88.74	117	11.26
	Urban	11	84.62	8	72.73	3	27.27
Sutradhar	<b>Total</b>	44	<b>89.80</b>	32	<b>72.73</b>	12	<b>27.27</b>
	Rural	39	88.64	28	71.79	11	28.21
	Urban	5	100.00	4	80.00	1	20.00
Yaithibi	<b>Total</b>	589	<b>87.52</b>	376	<b>63.84</b>	213	<b>36.16</b>
	Rural	361	84.94	232	64.27	129	35.73
	Urban	228	91.94	144	63.16	84	36.84

\*Author's calculations

**Source:** Office of the Registrar General of India

**Table 7 (b):** Distribution of Marginal Workers (15 years & above) of the Scheduled Caste Population of Manipur by Sex (2011 Census)

SC Name	Total/ Rural/ Urban	Marginal workers					
		P	P %	M	M %	F	F %
All Schedule Castes	<b>Total</b>	9660	<b>21.62</b>	2349	<b>24.32</b>	7311	<b>75.68</b>
	Rural	5018	23.39	1253	24.97	3765	75.03
	Urban	4642	19.98	1096	23.61	3546	76.39
Dhupi, Dhobi	<b>Total</b>	4	<b>5.41</b>	1	<b>25.00</b>	3	<b>75.00</b>
	Rural	1	2.94	1	100.00	0	0
	Urban	3	7.50	0	0.00	3	100
Lois	<b>Total</b>	8604	<b>21.72</b>	1982	<b>23.04</b>	6622	<b>76.96</b>
	Rural	4056	23.70	927	22.86	3129	77.14
	Urban	4548	20.21	1055	23.20	3493	76.80
Muchi, Ravidas	<b>Total</b>	8	<b>7.84</b>	6	<b>75.00</b>	2	<b>25.00</b>
	Rural	6	8.82	5	83.33	1	16.67
	Urban	2	5.88	1	50.00	1	50.00
Namasudra	<b>Total</b>	434	<b>24.87</b>	133	<b>30.65</b>	301	<b>69.35</b>
	Rural	426	25.09	128	30.05	298	69.95
	Urban	8	17.02	5	62.50	3	37.50
Patni	<b>Total</b>	315	<b>23.08</b>	128	<b>40.63</b>	187	<b>59.37</b>
	Rural	313	23.15	128	40.89	185	59.11
	Urban	2	15.38	0	0.00	2	100.00
Sutradhar	<b>Total</b>	5	<b>10.20</b>	3	<b>60.00</b>	2	<b>40.00</b>
	Rural	5	11.36	3	60.00	2	40.00
	Urban	0	0.00	0	0	0	0
Yaithibi	<b>Total</b>	84	<b>12.48</b>	16	<b>19.05</b>	68	<b>80.95</b>
	Rural	64	15.06	8	12.50	56	87.50
	Urban	20	8.06	8	40.00	12	60.00

\*Author's calculations

Source: Office of the Registrar General of India

Table 7 shows males dominate stable employment, with 68.52% of main workers, while females comprise 75.68% of the marginal workforce. This suggests SC women participate more in the economy, often in temporary or insecure jobs. Rural SC women are more active in the marginal sector, with 3,765 female marginal workers compared to 1,253 males. Urban areas have a higher share

of main workers (80.02%) than rural areas (76.62%), indicating better access to stable jobs in cities.

The Loi community is the largest, with gender trends similar to the overall SC average. The Sutradhar community, the smallest group, has most workers (44 out of 49) as "Main-Workers," showing high job stability.

**Table 8: Industrial category of main workers of the Scheduled Caste Population of Manipur in percentage (2011 Census)**

SC Name	Total/ Rural/ Urban	Cultivators			Agricultural labourers			Household Industry			Other Work		
		P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
All Schedule Castes	Total	41.74	74.50	25.50	7.74	50.66	49.34	5.27	28.9	71.06	45.25	70.68	29.32
	Rural	39.75	79.90	20.10	4.40	67.63	32.37	6.67	21.9	78.10	49.18	73.12	26.88
	Urban	43.50	70.13	29.87	10.70	44.49	55.51	4.03	39.3	60.75	41.78	68.14	31.86
Dhupi, Dhobi	Total	4.29	100	0	0	0	0	5.71	50	50	90	93.65	6.35
	Rural	6.06	100	0	0	0	0	3.03	100	0	90.91	96.67	3.33
	Urban	2.70	100	0	0	0	0	8.11	33.3	66.67	89.19	90.91	9.09
Lois	Total	40.15	72.71	27.29	7.64	48.48	51.52	4.99	25.9	74.08	47.23	69.68	30.32
	Rural	34.53	77.37	22.63	3.71	62.68	37.32	6.39	14.4	85.61	55.37	71.95	28.05
	Urban	44.23	70.06	29.94	10.49	44.82	55.18	3.97	39.4	60.59	41.31	67.47	32.53
Muchi, Ravidas	Total	25.53	79.17	20.83	2.13	100	0	1.06	100	0	71.28	92.54	7.46
	Rural	38.71	79.17	20.83	3.23	100	0	1.61	100	0	56.45	88.57	11.43
	Urban	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	96.88	3.13
Namasudra	Total	57.51	95.76	4.24	6.41	67.86	32.14	15.03	41.6	58.38	21.05	85.87	14.13
	Rural	59.28	95.76	4.24	6.37	66.67	33.33	15.49	41.6	58.38	18.87	87.08	12.92
	Urban	0	0	0	7.69	100	0	0	0	0	92.31	77.78	22.22
Patni	Total	63.05	96.68	3.32	12.00	92.86	7.14	2.57	59.3	40.74	22.38	66.81	33.19
	Rural	63.52	96.82	3.18	12.03	92.80	7.20	2.60	59.3	40.74	21.85	66.52	33.48
	Urban	18.18	50	50	9.09	100	0	0	0	0	72.73	75.00	25.00
Sutradhar	Total	38.64	47.06	52.94	0	0	0	2.27	0	100	59.09	92.31	7.69
	Rural	43.59	47.06	52.94	0	0	0	2.56	0	100	53.85	95.24	4.76
	Urban	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	80	20
Yaithibi	Total	52.63	58.71	41.29	10.70	58.73	41.27	6.79	42.5	57.50	29.88	79.55	20.45
	Rural	68.42	60.73	39.27	3.32	58.33	41.67	6.37	56.5	43.48	21.88	78.48	21.52
	Urban	27.63	50.79	49.21	22.37	58.82	41.18	7.46	23.5	76.47	42.54	80.41	19.59

Source: Office of the Registrar General of India, Govt. of India

In Manipur's SC population, two main livelihood sectors stand out. 'Other work' employs 45.25% overall, especially in rural areas (49.18%). The second is 'cultivators,' accounting for 41.74%, mainly among Namasudra (57.51%), Patni (63.05%), and Yaithibi (52.63%).

Table 8 reveals a significant gender divide across different industrial categories. In the cultivator sector, men constitute 74.50%, women 25.50%. Women contribute more in the Household Industry (HHI) as compared to men, with 71.06% of HHI workers being female. Male dominance in

'other work' shows that formal or service work is more accessible to men. Urban SC populations have higher agricultural labourers than rural areas, likely due to a lack of land ownership, pushing them into wage labour.

The SC population of Manipur, according to the 2011 Census, is transitioning from a traditional agrarian economy to "other work" (services/manual work). While men dominate the primary production (cultivation) and the service sector, women are the backbone of the Household Industry.

### 5.5. Fertility Rate

**Table 9:** Fertility rate of women of Manipur by background characteristics

Total fertility rate for the 3 years preceding the survey, percentage of women age 15-49 currently pregnant, mean number of children ever born to women age 40-49, and total wanted fertility by background characteristics, Manipur, 2019-21

Background characteristic	Total fertility rate	Percentage of women age 15- 49 currently pregnant	Mean number of children ever born to women aged 40-49	Total wanted fertility rate
<b>Scheduled Caste</b>	1.97	4.7	2.8	1.86
<b>Scheduled Tribe</b>	2.96	5.7	3.6	2.64
<b>Other Backward Classes</b>	1.66	4.5	3.2	1.49
<b>Other</b>	2.01	4.1	2.4	1.86
<b>Don't know</b>	*	(7.4)	*	*
<b>Total</b>	2.17	4.6	2.9	1.98

Note: Total fertility rates are for the period 1- 36 months preceding the interview. Figures in parentheses are based on 25 – 49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 125 unweighted woman-years of exposure for the fertility rates and fewer than 25 unweighted cases for currently pregnant women and has been suppressed.

Source: NFHS 5, Manipur

SC women have a TFR of 1.97, below the state average of 2.17. the actual fertility rate exceeds the "wanted" rate across all groups, indicating gaps in reproductive planning,

unmet contraceptive needs, or early marriage pressures. Low "wanted" fertility suggests unintended pregnancies, straining resources.

### 5.6. Economic Status

**Table 10:** Percentage of Economic status by social groups in rural areas of Manipur

Cat eg or ies	Landless HHs deriving a major part of their income from manual labour	HHs with salaried job in government	HHs with a salaried job in Private	The monthly income of the highest earning HH member is < 5000	Monthly income of highest earning HH member is 5000 - 10000	Monthly income of highest earning HH member is > 10000	HHs having a Kisan credit card with a credit limit of Rs. 50,000 and above	Total HHs owning irrigated land
S C	20.11	14.96	2.1	68.75	16.53	14.72	1.5	7.1
S T	7.54	13.17	2.94	64.49	22.27	13.23	0.38	3.95
Ot he rs	27.41	17.47	3.6	65.16	17.96	16.88	1.42	7.08
T ot al	16.94	15.18	3.22	64.9	20.16	14.94	0.88	5.46

Source: Socio-Economic and caste census 2011

The SC population in rural Manipur faces a "double-edged" economic reality. They are the most likely to be in the lowest income bracket and rely on manual labour, yet the

minority in stable agriculture have better access to irrigation and credit than their ST and "other" counterparts.

## 6. Conclusion

It is concluded that, despite favourable indicators among the Scheduled Caste population in Manipur, such as a near-balanced sex ratio and a strong urban presence, these factors have not translated into equal socioeconomic empowerment for women. Gender disparities remain in literacy, employment, and work quality, especially in vulnerability, with lower WPR and limited paid employment, as unpaid care work remains uncounted. Occupational segregation persists, with men in cultivation and other work, and women in household industries and insecure jobs. Despite low fertility rates among SC women, a gap between actual and desired fertility indicates unmet health needs and limited decision-making. Even though some progress has been made, caste, gender, and regional disadvantages persist. The paper urges gender and caste-sensitive policies, recognising unpaid work, improving education and skills, and increasing employment for SC women. Further research is essential to develop inclusive policies.

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