

A Study on the Occupational Status of Women of Matigara Community Development Block, Darjiling District, West Bengal

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Introduction

Occupation or work basically shows the means of earning. *An analysis of a population's economic composition unfolds the diverse economic, demographic and cultural attributes of an area, which form the basis for region's social and economic development* (Chandna, 2012). Occupational status of a woman reveals her purchasing power, affordability of better educational and health care services and also the ability to maintain better standard of living. A woman can participate in any kind of work, be it trade, service or business. Her participation in economically productive activity has a significant role to play in her empowerment. A financially independent woman can take her own decisions in a better manner. *Labour force participation of females depends on, among other factors, their marital status, the number of children born to them, social customs, as well as the attitude of society towards female participation in the labour force* (Bhende & Kanitkar, 2011). A study of female workers helps us to understand the employment pattern and status of economically empowered women in any area.

Objectives

This study aims to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To find out the occupational status of women of Matigara Community Development Block;

2. To find out the rural urban disparity of occupational status of women of Matigara Community Development Block.

Database

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected through household survey while secondary data has been collected from Census of India.

Methodology

Relevant literatures were studied, objectives were formulated and questionnaire was framed in the pre field stage of the study. Following Yamane's formula (1967), 396 households were selected as sample households from Matigara Community Development Block. Random Sampling without Replacement Method was applied to select the households. To acquire the requisite information, women of the households were selected as respondents. After collecting the data, it was tabulated, analysed, presented and interpreted. Statistical techniques were applied and maps were prepared. Data was represented using cartographic techniques like bar diagram and pie graph.

The following methodologies were adopted for the study:

1. Percentage to Total= $\frac{\text{Individual Value}}{\text{Total Value}} \times 100$
2. Female Work Participation Rate= $\frac{\text{Total Female Workers}}{\text{Total Female Population}} \times 100$

The Study Area

Matigara Community Development Block is spread over an area of 143 km². There are 72 villages in the block out of which 59 are inhabited villages. The study area has six Census towns. Matigara CD Block has five Gram Panchayats namely, Atharakhai, Matigara I, Matigara II, Patharghata and Champasari. Matigara Community Development Block has a total population of 197,278 out of which 1,01,023 are males and 96,255 are females, (Census, 2011). The study area has a rural population of 1,35,583 and 61,695 urban population (Census, 2011).Siliguri is the nearest city.

Results and Discussions

Female Work Participation Rate:

Female Work Participation Rate represents the percentage of female workers in total female population. Higher FWPR in any region means presence of higher percentage of economically independent women in that area. The highest female work participation rate is found in Mohorgon tea garden (45.80%) whereas Galmakhari has the lowest female work participation rate (3.57%). Among the Census towns, Tari has the highest female work participation rate (28.30%) whereas Kalkut has the lowest female work participation rate (13.85%).

Table 1: Female Work Participation Rate (FWPR) of Villages of Matigara Community Development Block (2011)

Sl. No.	Village	FWPR	Sl. No.	Village	FWPR
1	Sevoke Hill Forest	22.29	31	Mahatram	32.72
2	Sevoke Forest	17.83	32	Udaysingh	22.56
3	Kamala Barir Chhat	10.00	33	Salbari Chhat Pratham Khanda	9.26
4	Khok Long Chhat	13.64	34	Dhukuria	23.53
5	Khoklong	12.47	35	Nichitpur	39.05
6	Bara Adalpur Dwitiya Khanda	42.40	36	Baniakhari	29.92
7	Khaprail	22.46	37	Guria	16.31
8	Patan	19.18	38	Nimai	28.06
9	Fulbari Pataner Chhat	40.54	39	Jugibhita	9.44
10	Ruhinir Chhat	21.43	40	Panchakulguri	15.72
11	Khopolasi	12.04	41	Gouri	39.70
12	Jhauguri	23.63	42	Lalsara Chhat	16.49

13	Jhauguri Chhat	23.29	43	Dumriguri Chhat	22.46
14	Rajpauri	28.32	44	Bataliguri	10.29
15	Chamtaguri Chhat	21.66	45	Lachka	6.35
16	Chamta	37.50	46	Rangia	29.12
17	Panchanai	18.44	47	Nengtichhara	37.19
18	Nunu bairagi	20.00	48	Kawakhari	12.71
19	Mohorgon Tea Garden	45.80	49	Pelku	7.99
20	Purba Karai Barir Chhat	10.74	50	Thiknikata	13.71
21	Galmakhari	3.57	51	Kauakhali	17.48
22	Champasari Chhat	3.92	52	Kalam	14.72
23	Karaibari	8.67	53	Patiram	20.02
24	Sisabari	20.75	54	Tomba	15.32
25	Rupan Chhat	28.04	55	Matigarahat	18.85
26	Palash	14.12	56	Gaurcharan	20.86
27	Kalabari	8.94	57	Bara Gharia	8.67
28	Malahar	15.76	58	Daknikata	29.03
29	Mahishmari	32.96	59	Ujanu	54.38
30	Jadubhitar Chhat	14.10	Source: <i>Computed from Census of India, 2011</i>		

Table 2: Female Work Participation Rate (FWPR) of Urban Centres of Matigara Community Development Block (2011)

Sl. No.	Census Town	FWPR
1	Kalkut	13.85
2	Tari	28.30
3	Bairatisal	16.80

4	Jitu	18.00
5	Mathapari	24.21
6	Bara Mohansingh	15.07

Source: Computed from Census of India, 2011

Occupational Status:

Table 3: Female Workers in Matigara Community Development Block

Residence	Total	Percent
Rural	110	21.44
Urban	21	11.60

Source: Field Survey, 2021

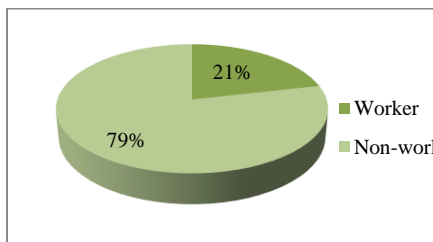


Fig 1: Female Workers (Rural) in Matigara Community Development Block

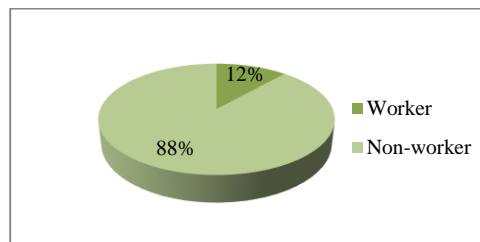


Fig 2: Female Workers (Urban) in Matigara Community Development Block

In Matigara Community Development Block, percentage of women engaged in any economically productive activity is greater in rural area (21%) than the urban area (12%). This may be due to the fact that the poor economic condition of rural households leads the women to find any work that will help them in fulfilling the monetary needs of the family. Women of households where the male members are working as carpenters, painters or labourers engaged in any type of work to augment their household income.

Caste Wise Occupational Status

Table 4: Caste Wise Occupational Status in Matigara Community Development Block

Caste	Rural		Urban	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
General	17	15.45 %	6	28.57 %
Scheduled Caste	46	41.82 %	8	38.10 %
Scheduled Tribes	26	23.64 %	3	14.29 %
OBC	21	19.09 %	4	19.05 %
Total	110	100 %	21	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2021

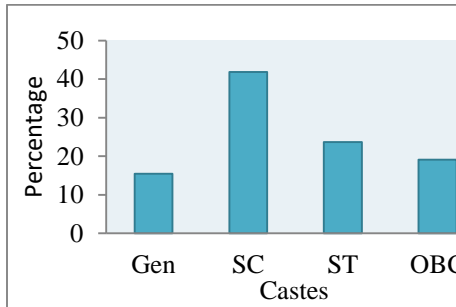


Fig 3: Caste Wise Occupational Status

(Rural) in Matigara CD Block

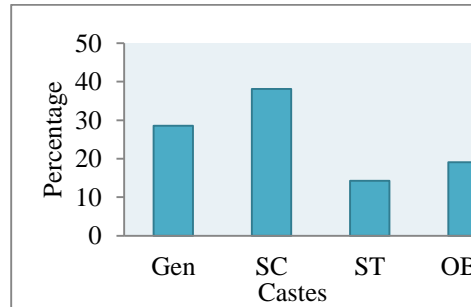


Fig 4: Caste Wise Occupational Status

(Urban) in Matigara CD Block

Caste wise analysis of female workers shows that in rural areas of the study area, out of the total female workers, 41.82% are Scheduled Caste (SC) women, 23.64% are Scheduled Tribes (ST) and 19.09% and 15.45% are OBC and general category women. In urban areas, 38.10% female workers belong to SC category, 28.57% belong to general category, and 19.05% and 14.29% are OBC and ST women.

Occupational pattern:

The type of economically productive activity the women are associated with shows the occupational pattern of the female workers. In both rural and urban areas, one can find numerous types of occupation. We can find female workers

belonging to various ethnic or social groups engaged in variety of occupations. The range of earnings however is very high.

Table 5: Occupational Composition of Women of Matigara Community Development Block

Categories of Occupation	Total	Percent
Business	32	24.43
Service	7	5.34
Labourers	31	23.66
Pottery	16	12.21
MGNREGS	30	22.90
Others	15	11.45
Total	131	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 5 shows the occupational composition of women of the study area. Highest percentage of the female workers (24.43%) are engaged in business involving those working in grocery shops, tailor shops at own home premises and eateries. 23.66% of the female workers are labourers.

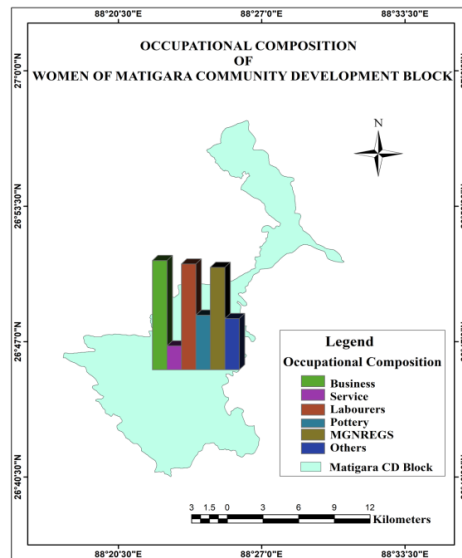


Fig 5: Occupational Composition of Women of Matigara Community Development Block

This group constitutes those who are working as tea garden labourers, local factory workers and workers engaged in local construction works. 12.21% of the women were found to be engaged in pottery in their own home. 5.34 % women were engaged in service which included jobs as office helper and clerk in local private schools and colleges. In others, those are included who work as helpers in shops, tutors, maids and insurance agents.

Level of Education and Occupational Composition:

In determining the type of economically productive activity a worker is associated with, his/her educational level or level of educational attainment is a major factor. A person can shift his/her activity from agricultural to non-agricultural one by attaining higher educational level. Illiteracy and low level of education act as a hindrance whenever any person tries to get a skilled job.

Table 6: Level of Education and Occupational Composition (%) in Villages of Matigara Community Development Block

Occupation	Illiterate	Below Primary	Primary	Secondary	HS	Graduate
Business	0.00	5.71	9.09	53.85	40	0
Service	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	60	0
Labourers	36.84	34.29	36.36	0.00	0	0
Pottery	15.79	20.00	9.09	0.00	0	0
MGNREGS	36.84	28.57	45.45	46.15	0	0
Others	10.53	11.43	0.00	0.00	0	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 7: Level of Education and Occupational Composition (%) in Urban Centres of Matigara Community Development Block

Occupation	Illiterate	Below Primary	Primary	Secondary	HS	Graduate
Business	0	100	83.33	60	0	0
Service	0	0	0.00	20	0	60
Pottery	100	0	16.67	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0.00	20	100	40
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: *Field Survey, 2021*

The study between education and occupation shows that illiterate women are engaged as labourers or pottery making or depend on the MGNREGS for contributing additional income to the family income, but as they attain a higher level of education to secondary level, they are engaged in their own business and those who have studied till the Higher Secondary level are also engaged in the service sector. The scenario is similar in the census towns, as the uneducated women are engaged in pottery making while the women who have completed their education at the secondary, higher secondary level or are graduates are engaged in their own business or engaged in services or other work sectors.

Age Specific Occupational Status:**Table 8: Age Specific Occupational Status in Matigara Community Development Block**

Age Group	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60	60-65	65-70	70-75	75-80
Rural	0	14	21	19	23	13	9	6	3	0	1	1	0
Per cent	0	12.73	19.09	17.27	20.91	11.82	8.18	5.45	2.73	0	0.91	0.91	0
Urban	1	2	4	7	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Per cent	4.76	9.52	19.05	33.33	4.76	9.52	9.52	0	4.76	4.76	0	0	0

Source: *Field Survey, 2021*

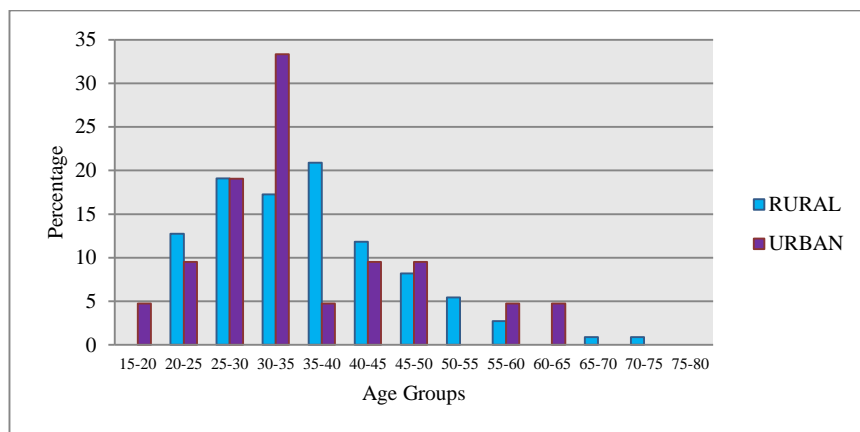


Fig6: Age Specific Occupational Status in Matigara Community Development Block

Table 8 showing the age specific occupational status reveals that the percentage of working women is the highest (20.91 %) in the age group of 35-40 years in rural area where they are working as construction workers, grocery shops, tutors and as office helpers in schools. In the age group of 15-20 years, 60-65 years and 75-80 years, there are no female workers. We find highest percentage of female workers in the age group of 30-35 years in the urban area where they work as nurse, tutor and insurance agent or has own shop. In the age group of 50-55 years, 65-70, 70-75 and 75-80 years, there are no female workers.

Income:

A worker’s income level varies from place to place. Factors like the type of occupation, demand of the work, place of the work and sometimes the experience of the workers too has an impact on the income level of workers. Standard of living of workers is determined by his or her income level.

Table 9: Income Level (Rural) in Matigara Community Development Block

Income (Rs.)	<5000	5000-10000	>10000
Rural	71	30	9
Per cent	64.55	27.27	8.18

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 10: Income Level (Urban) in Matigara Community Development Block

Income (Rs.)	<5000	5000-10000	10000-15000	>15000
Urban	2	8	9	2
Per cent	9.52	38.10	42.86	9.52

Source: *Field Survey, 2021*

64.55% of total female workers in rural area of Matigara Community Development Block have a monthly income of less than Rs. 5000. It includes those working as maids, construction workers or tea garden labourers whereas 27.27% fall in the income group of Rs 5000-10000 and the rest i.e. a mere 8.18% fall in the income group of more than Rs. 10000. Highest percentage of female workers (42.86%) in the urban area fall in the income group of Rs 10000-15000 followed by 38.10%, 9.52% and 9.52% in the income group of Rs 10000-15000, less than Rs 5000 and higher than Rs 15000. Here, it can be observed that, majority of female workers in rural area belong to the lowest income group whereas, most of the women (42.86%) in the urban area belong to the considerably higher income group of Rs 10000-15000.

Decision Making Power:

Decision making in family matters include issues related to financial matters, health issues, personal expenses, children's education, purchasing power. A woman's educational status, occupational status and her experience affects her decision making power. Women of the study area were found to prefer joint decision making i.e. decisions taken jointly along with the other family members.

Table 11: Occupational Status and Decision Making Status of Women in Matigara Community Development Block

Working Status	Included		Not included		Total
Worker	125	94.55%	06	5.45%	131
Non-worker	470	79.85%	92	20.15%	562

Source: *Field Survey, 2021*

To see if there is an association between the occupational status of the woman and her decision making the above table shows that there is a very strong association between the occupational status of the woman and her decision making power. The women who are educated and earn a higher income has more say in the family matters than a woman who is simply a housewife.

Reasons for Working:

Table 12: Reasons for Working

Rural		Urban	
Economic Help	Self-Satisfaction	Economic Help	Self-Satisfaction
103	7	16	5
93.64%	6.36%	76.19 %	23.81%

Source: Field Survey, 2021



Fig 7: Reason for Working (Rural)

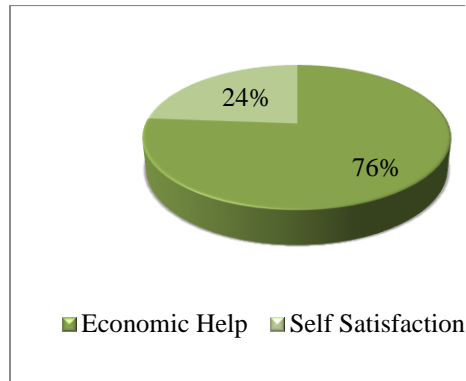


Fig 8: Reason for Working (Urban)

For augmenting the family income, 94% of the female workers in the rural area are engaged in any kind of economically productive work. Rest 6% of the female workers work for self-satisfaction though financial need is also there. 24% of the urban female earners work solely to fulfill financial needs and majority of them (76%) work for self-satisfaction. However, for female workers both in rural and urban area, maintaining balance between household and outside work is a

challenging task. Hindrances faced while doing so is increased if the women do not receive family support. The married female workers sometimes face challenges from their husbands and sometime from their in-laws. As told by the respondents, discouragement from family members is a major reason of them not continuing their job.

Conclusion

It is clear from the above discussions that the problems of female workers need to be addressed so that there is an increase in the share of female workforce and more women take part in economic activities. Not only by the Government, but initiatives taken by the NGOs and all the sections of the society will help in improving the occupational status of the women of Matigara Community Development block. There is a need to generate employment opportunities so that those willing to work are able to find a job. Proper monitoring is required to ensure timely payment of wages of those working under MGNREGS. To increase the number of female workforce, vocational training and skill development centres should be established. Those families discouraging working women need to be identified and should be made to understand how the income of women will lead to the increase in household income.

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