

# Reducing Gender Disparity with Urban Transformation: A Case Study of Bongaigaon District of Assam

Pranati Das

Sikkim University

E-mail: mepranatidas@rediffmail.com

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**Abstract**—Urbanization is a global phenomenon and it is taking place in India at a faster rate. Urbanizations is not only transforming rural areas into a modern prospective urban centre but also opening up the minds of people in every aspects of life. According to the 2011 Census, the urban population grew to 377 million showing a growth rate of 2.76% per annum during 2001-2011. On the other hand, compared to 73% male working age population, participation of women is as less as 47 percent. Though urbanization is taking place in country like India but still women are lagging behind. This paper tries to examine whether transformation of urban areas helps to reduce gender disparities in our society or not. Women should be empowered as decision makers in very small unit of the society that is in household. Here we would try to focus on the women whether they are equally taking part in the decision making in the household along with their male counterparts. The paper attempts to understand the obstacles in the way of the gender equality in our society. A sample size of 75 households will be taken and female will be considered as the interviewer in this survey.

**Keywords:** Urbanisation, transformation, disparity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality is the idea and situation that women and men are not equal. Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals wholly or partly due to their gender. It arises from differences in socially constructed gender roles [1]. Disparity in general refers to inequalities in some quantity between two or more groups. Gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the important issues of Millennium Development Goals which is taken for the improvement of women in the society [2]. On the other hand urbanization is a process refers to the population shift from rural to urban areas, the gradual increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas and the ways in which each society adapts to the change. It is predominantly the process by which towns and cities are formed and become larger as more people begin living and working in central areas. Urbanization makes the areas developed, but with this transformation, women's decision making capacity should be transformed. As in many aspects women are neglected and deprived of equality in the society. There are different

dimensions of gender disparity but we are considering here the lack of decision making power in the household.

## 2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In some underdeveloped countries women are inadequately treated in terms of education, health, or legal rights [3]. In the most favourable countries, women earn less than men: gender equality in the labour market alone is unattainable, because of systemic connections to inequalities in families, politics and civil society [4]. The process of modernization leads simultaneously towards both democratization and a rise in the proportion of women in public life. Industrialization leads to occupational specialization, rising educational levels, and increasing levels of income. But economic development also brings unforeseen cultural changes that transform gender roles and make the emergence of democratic institutions increasingly likely [5]. In poor countries gender inequality have a monopoly and men earn more than women in essentially all societies [6].

## 3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the paper is to examine the status of women in household decision making process consequent upon urban transformation.

## 4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study depends on both primary and secondary data. As the secondary data, the information will be drawn mainly from Millennium development goal reports and International Labour organization. The purpose of the study is on the role of education in empowering women through micro finance in Assam. As the secondary sources do not reflect the desire objective of the study completely, primary data will be given more emphasis. For the purpose, a well structured questionnaire will be framed. A sample of 75 women will be taken for the questionnaire survey. For the purpose 3 representative semi-urban areas has been selected from the district of Bongaigaon that are Natunpara, Jogighopa and Abhayapuri. To collect the sample of 75 the study has

collected 25 samples from areas. Besides, descriptive statistics and percentage has been used to determine the status of the women in the selected district.

### 5. SCENARIO OF URBANIZATION AND GENDER DISPARITY

In this section the study tries to focus on the overall scenario of urbanization in India. The pattern of population in urban areas and census reports is analysed in the below section.

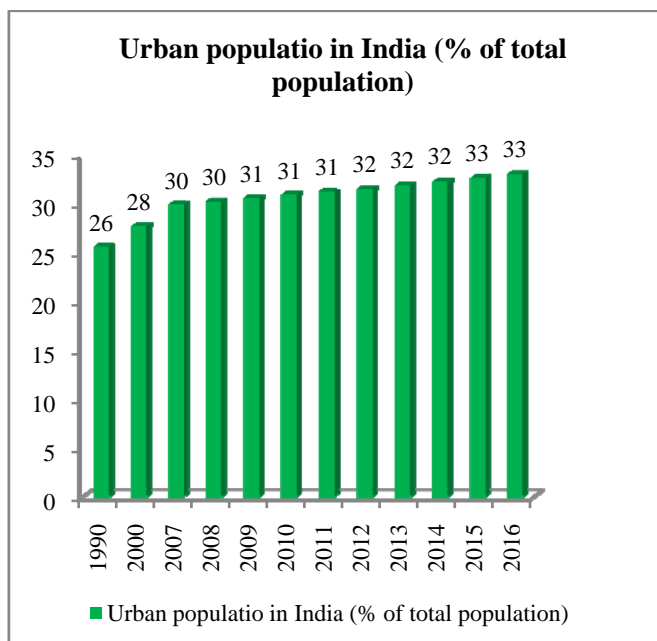


Figure 1: Urban Population in India (% of total population)

In the above figure we can see the raising trend of population in urban area.

Table 1: Indices of Urbanization: Comparison between 2011 and 2001

Indices	2001	2011
Urban Population	286.10	377.20
Number of cities and towns	5161	7935
a. Statutory towns	3799	4041
b. Census towns	1362	3894
c. Metropolitan cities (+1 million)	35	53
Annual experimental growth rate (census decade) %	2.74	2.76
Percentage of urban to total population	27.81	31.16
a. Percentage of population in cities with >100000 population	68.62	70.24
b. Percentage of population in towns with <100000 population	31.38	29.76
c. Percentage of population in metropolitan cities (+1 million)	37.82	42.62

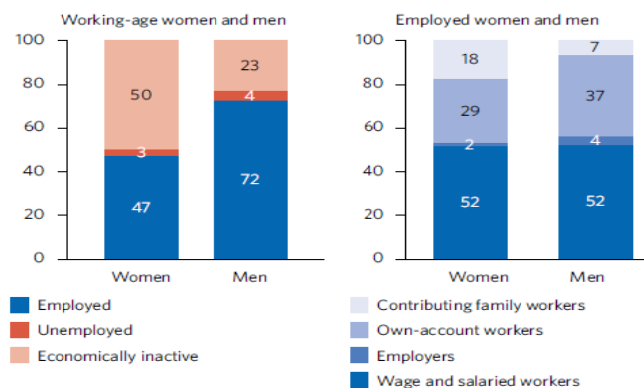
Source: Census 2011

The table comparative change of rate of population in India in the census 2001 and 2011 has been given.

As women’s employment in urban areas has increased and their position become better in the society and in their families while also experiencing an equality of the gendered social norms which traditionally subordinated women to men [7]. In the following picture we can see the inequality in paying wages globally.

### Globally women earn 24 per cent less than men, and gender gaps in pay persist in all regions

Distribution of working-age women and men (aged 15 and above) by labour force participation and employed women and men by status in employment, 2015 (percentage)



Note: Data for 2015 are projections. Percentages in charts may not always add to 100 because of rounding.

Source: United Nations, 2015 (The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015).

In the socio-cultural context the relationship of women's individual level characteristics to decision-making and autonomy is a key between women's status and reproductive outcome [8]. When intra household financial decisions are made by women savings and investment are often greater and repayment of debt becomes more [9]. Husbands' influence was highest for decisions concerning price range and whether to move, while wives' influence was highest in deciding on the number of bedrooms and other house features [10]. In household most of the emphasis has been on who shops and decides within specific product categories. Studies of family decision making have in reality been studies of husband-wife decision making [11].

### 6. PRIMARY DATA ANALYSIS

In this section we are trying to present the possible results which we obtained from our primary survey. Through these dates, we try to analyse the different aspect of gender disparity in household and here we give more emphasis on how the urban transformation strengthen women. We also try to analyse the descriptive statistics, which is drawn from the table and interpret the result to assess the concept of empowerment

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Obs.	Mean	SD	Max	Min
Age	75	40.72	13.54	18	77

Religion	75	1	.0	1	1
Level of Education	75	2.68	1.56	0	5
Occupation	75	1.13	0.34	1	2
Monthly Expenditure	75	20240	8070.37	2000	40000
Age of Marriage	75	21.77	5.43	13	35
No. of Children	75	1.89	1.33	0	6
Land of family	75	1.08	0.39	0	2
Income Earner	75	1.35	0.51	1	3
Consent of the husband to buy dress	75	1.24	0.42	1	2
Permission to buy major goods	75	1.03	0.16	1	2
Permission to work outside	75	1.01	0.11	1	2
Permission for one more child	75	1.01	0.11	1	2
Permission to send children to School	75	1.01	0.11	1	2
Permission to buy or sell property	75	1.04	0.19	1	2
Own land	75	1.83	0.38	1	2
Personal property	75	1.02	0.16	1	2
Independent savings	75	1.33	0.47	1	2
Whether feel comfortable to give opinion in presence of husband	75	1.21	0.41	1	2
Whether villagers listen your ideas and opinion	75	1.71	0.46	1	2
Whether take permission to go to local market	75	1.24	0.43	1	2
Whether take permission to neighbouring village	75	1.88	0.33	1	2

Source: Author's calculation based on field survey.

## 7. RESULT OF PRIMARY DATA

As our main area of concern is gender equality through decision making in household therefore the study consider 13

indicators to measure gender equality that are consent of the husband to buy dress, Permission to buy major goods, to work outside, Permission to buy or sell property, own land, Permission to send Children to school, Permission for another child, personal property, independent savings, opinion on presence of husband, Opinion publically, Visit local market without husband permission and Visit neighbouring village without husband's permission.

**Table 3: Indicators of gender disparity**

Indicators	Percentage	
	Yes	No
Consent of the husband to buy dress	76	24
Permission to buy major goods	97.33	2.67
Permission to work outside	98.67	1.33
Permission for one more child	100	0
Permission to send children to School	97.33	2.67
Permission to buy or sell property	96	4
Own land	17.33	82.67
Personal property/ Jewellery	100	0
Independent savings	68	32
Whether feel comfortable to give opinion in presence of husband	77.33	22.66
Whether villagers listen your ideas and opinion	28	72
Whether take permission to go to local market	76	24
Whether take permission to neighbouring village	88	12

Source: Author's calculation

## 8. FINDINGS

From the result of primary survey we come to know the actual status of women in our household as well as in the society. In most of the indicators that we have considered in the study showing that in most of the aspects women have to seek permission from their husband. From the data we have found that 76 percent of women can buy dresses without consent of their husband and on the other side 24 percent still seeking permission. Though women are economically independent still 97.33 percent women have to take permission to buy major goods in the household. Again 98.67 percent women seek permission to work outside. On the other hand each and every woman has discussed regarding one more children. IN most of the decision in the household women have to take permission of their husband. Only 17.33 percent of women have land in their own land and 68 percent have their savings account but a few number of women actually save money. 76 percent of women still take permission to go to the local market from their husband. 88 percent of women have to take permission to go to neighbouring village. This is the overall scenario of status of women in Bongaigaon district of Assam.

## 9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main limitation of the study is that the study is confined only to three semi-urban areas of Bongaigaon district of Assam on sample basis. Other areas are not considered. The

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result may differ if the study includes some other areas. Again we consider only 13 indices of gender equality for the study.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Gender equality is a necessity for women to uplift their status. They should be given equal opportunity in every aspects of life not only in household but also in society so that they can get chance for overall development. Though urbanization is taking place in Bongaigaon district of Assam but status of women is still lagging behind in the society.

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