

Category of Workers (Main and Marginal Workers) Based on Census 2011: An Analysis of Occupational Structure by Gender of East Siang Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The occupational structure of a population reflects the economic and social characteristics of a region. Using Census 2011 data, this study examines the distribution of workers across four occupational categories—Cultivators, Agricultural Labourers, Household Industry Workers, and Other Workers—with a gender-based analysis. The findings indicate that cultivation remains the dominant occupation, accounting for 50.18% of all workers, followed by Other Workers (39.73%). Agricultural Labourers constitute 8.86% of the workforce, while Household Industry Workers represent only 1.23%. Gender disparities are evident across occupational categories. Males dominate employment in household industries and other non-agricultural occupations, whereas females have a relatively higher representation in cultivation and agricultural labour. The study highlights the ongoing dependence on agriculture while indicating a gradual shift toward diversified employment opportunities. The findings contribute to understanding labour force composition and provide insights for rural development and employment policy.

Keywords: Census 2011, Occupational Structure, Cultivators, Agricultural Labourers, Household Industry, Other Workers, Gender, Rural Economy.

1. Introduction

The occupational composition of a population serves as an important indicator of economic development and social transformation. The Census of India classifies workers into four broad occupational categories: Cultivators, Agricultural Labourers, Household Industry Workers, and Other Workers. This classification helps understand the dependence of the workforce on agriculture and the extent of economic diversification.

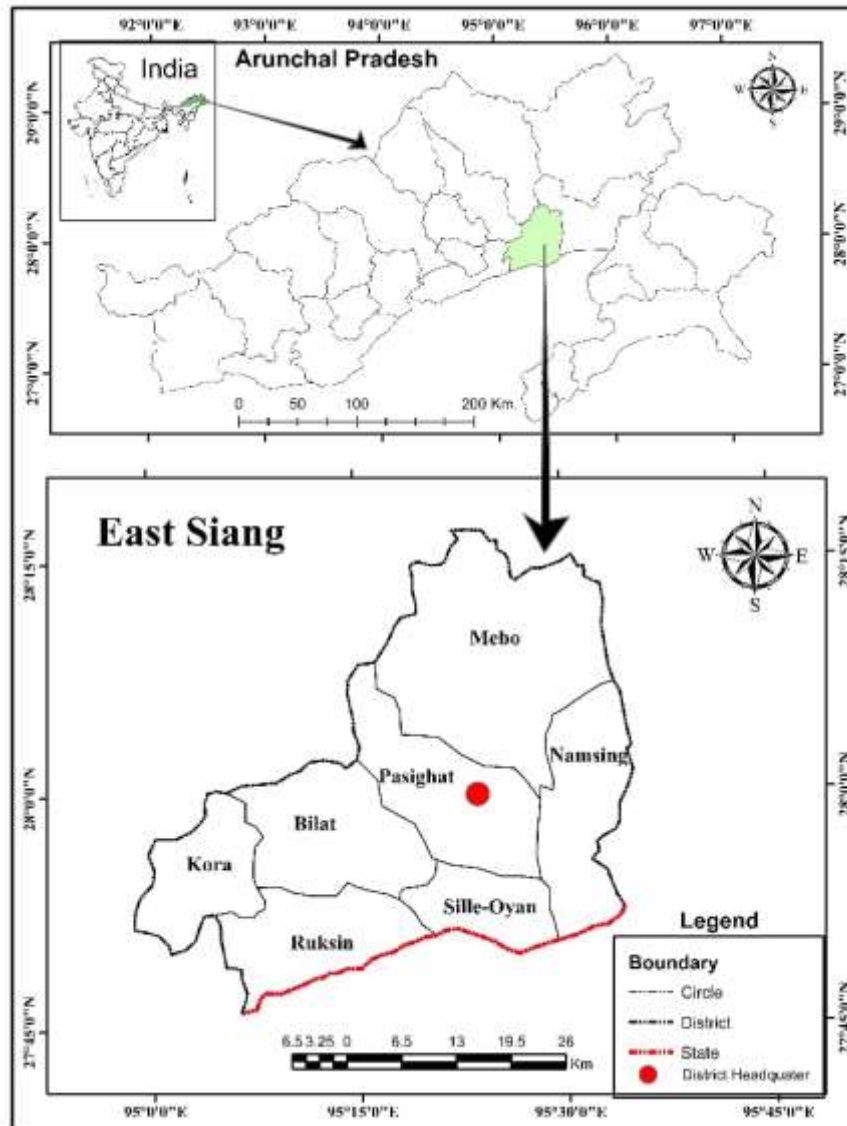
In developing economies, agriculture often remains the primary source of livelihood. However, structural transformation gradually shifts workers from agriculture to industrial and service sectors. Examining the occupational distribution also reveals gender inequalities, employment opportunities, and patterns of rural development. This paper analyses Census 2011 worker data to assess the occupational structure and gender differences among workers.

2. Study Area

The present study was conducted in **East Siang District**, located in the eastern part of **Arunachal Pradesh**, India. The district lies approximately between **27°43' N and 29°20' N latitude** and **94°42' E and 95°35' E longitude**. It covers an area of about **3,603 km²**, with **Pasighat** serving as the district headquarters. Pasighat, established in 1911, is the oldest town in Arunachal Pradesh and is often referred to as the "Gateway to Arunachal Pradesh." East Siang is characterized by diverse topography ranging from river valleys and alluvial plains in the south to undulating hills and mountainous terrain in the north. The **Siang River**, which enters India from Tibet (where it is known as the Tsangpo), is the principal river flowing through the district. After entering the plains near Pasighat, it eventually joins the Dibang and Lohit rivers to form the Brahmaputra in Assam. The river and its tributaries significantly influence the district's drainage pattern, agriculture, and socio-economic activities.

The district experiences a **humid subtropical to subtropical highland climate**, with warm summers, mild winters, and heavy rainfall during the southwest monsoon. Annual precipitation is generally high, supporting dense tropical and subtropical forests with rich biodiversity. The fertile river valleys are suitable for agriculture, while the surrounding forests provide important ecological and economic resources.

The population of East Siang is predominantly composed of the **Adi tribe**, including subgroups such as Minyong, Padam, Pasi, Milang, Shimong, Karko, Ashing, and Bori. Agriculture is the primary occupation, with paddy cultivation being the dominant farming activity. Horticulture, livestock rearing, fishing, and small-scale trade also contribute to the local economy. Traditional customs, indigenous knowledge, and cultural festivals such as **Solung** play a vital role in the social and cultural life of the district. Owing to its unique physiographic setting, rich natural resources, diverse tribal population, and ecological significance, East Siang District provides an ideal study area for research related to agriculture, natural resource management, biodiversity, environmental studies, socio-economic development, and climate-related investigations.



3. Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To examine the occupational distribution of workers based on Census 2011.
2. To analyse the proportion of workers engaged in different occupational categories.
3. To compare male and female participation across occupational groups.
4. To understand the dependence of the workforce on agriculture and non-agricultural activities.

4. Methodology

The study is based on **secondary data** obtained from the **Census of India 2011**. The analysis employs descriptive statistical methods, including frequency distribution and percentage analysis.

The occupational categories considered are:

- Cultivators
- Agricultural Labourers
- Household Industry Workers
- Other Workers

Gender-wise comparisons have been made using percentage distributions.

5. Literature Review

Several studies have examined occupational diversification and workforce participation in India.

Government of India (2011) reported that agriculture continues to employ a large proportion of India's workforce despite declining contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Census highlighted significant regional variations in occupational composition.

Kundu (2012) observed that rural labour markets are gradually diversifying with increasing employment in construction, transport, trade, and services, although agriculture continues to dominate employment in many regions.

Bhalla and Singh (2015) emphasized that structural transformation has resulted in a gradual decline in cultivators and an increase in non-farm employment. However, female workers remain concentrated in agricultural occupations.

Desai and Dubey (2018) argued that gender disparities persist in occupational opportunities because women continue to face limited access to education, skill development, and formal employment.

The present study supports these observations by demonstrating the dominance of agriculture while highlighting the increasing importance of non-agricultural occupations.

6. Data Presentation

Table 1: Category of Workers (Main and Marginal), Census 2011

Population	Cultivators	%	Agricultural Labourers	%	Household Industry Workers	%	Other Workers	%
Persons	20,185	50.18	3,365	8.86	493	1.23	15,979	39.73
Male	10,381	51.42	1,956	58.12	300	60.85	10,954	46.43
Female	9,804	48.57	1,609	47.81	193	39.14	5,025	30.21

Source: Census of India, 2011.

7. Analysis and Discussion

The occupational distribution indicates that **cultivation** remains the principal occupation, engaging **20,185 workers (50.18%)**. This demonstrates the continued dependence of the population on agriculture for livelihood.

Agricultural labourers account for **3,365 workers (8.86%)**, indicating that a considerable section of the workforce depends on wage employment in agriculture rather than land ownership. Such workers are generally more vulnerable to seasonal unemployment and income insecurity.

Employment in **household industries** is very limited, with only **493 workers (1.23%)**. This suggests a relatively weak rural industrial base and limited opportunities in traditional cottage and small-scale industries.

The category of **Other Workers** includes workers engaged in manufacturing, construction, trade, transport, government services, education, healthcare, and other non-agricultural occupations. This group accounts for **15,979 workers (39.73%)**, indicating an emerging diversification of employment beyond agriculture.

Gender-wise Analysis

The data reveal noticeable gender differences.

Male workers account for **51.42% of cultivators**, indicating slightly higher male participation in farming activities. Among agricultural labourers, males constitute **58.12%**, reflecting their greater involvement in wage-based agricultural work.

Household industry employment is predominantly male, with **60.85%** of workers being men, while women constitute **39.14%**. This may reflect differences in ownership, access to capital, and market participation.

The greatest gender disparity is observed among **Other Workers**, where males account for **46.43%** compared with **30.21%** for females. This indicates better male access to formal employment, skilled occupations, and service-sector jobs.

Female workers remain substantially dependent on agricultural occupations, reflecting limited occupational diversification compared with men.

Overall, the occupational structure suggests a transitional economy where agriculture remains dominant while non-agricultural employment is expanding. However, gender inequality continues to influence occupational opportunities.

8. Conclusion

The Census 2011 data demonstrate that agriculture continues to be the backbone of employment, with more than half of the workforce engaged as cultivators. Although nearly 40% of workers are employed in non-agricultural occupations, household industries contribute only a small share to employment generation. The study also reveals significant gender disparities, with male workers having greater representation in household industries and other non-agricultural sectors, while women remain concentrated in agriculture.

These findings suggest the need for policies promoting rural industrialization, skill development, entrepreneurship, and women's economic empowerment. Expanding non-farm employment opportunities and improving access to education and vocational training can contribute to balanced and inclusive economic development.

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