

Testing the U-Shaped Female Labour Force Participation Hypothesis in the 21st Century: A Comparative Panel Data Analysis of Selected Commonwealth Nations

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ABSTRACT-

Unemployment today happens to be the background of overall global human unrest and sufferings. The pangs of it are more felt in the technologically advanced countries as compared to the developing or under- developed countries. However, the dimensions of unemployment vary from country to country. Practically all the nations of the world are confronted with the ever-increasing demand of employment. Needless to say, the government finds itself helpless before this crisis. The economies of all the nations of the world are adversely affected by the ever-rising menace created by unemployment. Obstacles created by it are a difficult nut for the government to crack. Apart from conventional approaches this problem needs, a radically new concerted effort to minimize its rise globally.

The present study tries to show the efforts made by the 6 countries of Commonwealth of Nations of the world during the span of 12 years to promote women. The objectives of the paper are to analyze the population growth rate, to know about total Female labour force, to investigate present level of unemployment of women and to highlight the main causes of unemployment of 6 selected Commonwealth countries of the world. All information furnished in this paper is based on the collection of secondary data regarding population, its growth rate, labour force specially Female, growth rate of Female unemployment.

It has been observed that there is positive correlation between female population and female labour force participation rate except Australia and Guyana. It has shown increasing trends in female labour force participation rate among 4 selected countries of Commonwealth of Nations.

Key Words- Female Labour Force Participation, Women Unemployment, Commonwealth of Nations, Empirical Study, Population Growth.

Introduction-

The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of 53 independent and sovereign states (one of whose membership is currently suspended). Most are former British colonies, the Commonwealth exercises power over the others as is the case in a political union. Rather, the relationship is one of an international organisation through which countries with diverse social, political, and economic backgrounds are regarded as equal in status and cooperate within a framework of common values and goals as outlined in the Singapore Declaration issued in 1971. Such common values and goals include the promotion of democracy, human rights, good governance, the rule of law, individual liberty, egalitarianism, free trade, multilateralism, and world peace which are carried out through multilateral projects and meetings which include the Commonwealth Games held once every four years. The symbol of this free association is Queen Elizabeth II who serves as the titular Head of the Commonwealth. This position, however, does not imbue her with any political or executive power over any Commonwealth member states; the position is purely symbolic, and it is the Commonwealth Secretary-General who is the chief executive of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth was first officially formed in 1931 when the Statute of Westminster gave legal recognition to the sovereignty of dominions. Known as the "British Commonwealth", the original members were the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland, and Newfoundland, although Australia and New Zealand did not adopt the statute until 1942 and 1947 respectively. In 1949, the London Declaration was signed and marked the birth of the modern Commonwealth and the renaming to its present name. The newest member is Rwanda, which joined on 29 November 2009. The most recent departure was The Gambia, which severed its connection with the Commonwealth on 3 October 2013. Presently, of the states that are members of the Commonwealth of Nations, three are in Europe, twelve in North America, one in South America, eighteen in Africa, eight in Asia, and eleven in Oceania. There are seven former members, four of which no longer exist as independent entities (but form part of current member states). The members have a combined population of 2.2 billion people, almost a third of the world population, of which 1.21 billion live in India, and 95% live in Asia and Africa combined.

Currently sixteen of the member states are Commonwealth realms with the Head of the Commonwealth also as their head of state, five others are monarchies with their own separate monarchs (Brunei, Lesotho, Malaysia, Swaziland, Tonga) and the rest are republics.

Concept of Women Empowerment-

Women's empowerment has become the goal or ultimate objective of many development policies and programmers and it is leading to a demand for indicators of empowerment, both to reveal the extent to which women are already empowered, and also to evaluate, if such policies and programmers have

been effective towards their stated aims.

The empowerment of women is focused on reducing poverty, increasing democratic governance, preventing crisis and creating recovery for those impacted worldwide. This increases the voice of women in their local communities as well as within the workplace where influential and decision making roles can be obtained and ultimately the traditional role of women has been changed to include movement towards gender equality.

The issues related to women, have attracted the attention of the socialists, academicians, political thinkers and economists both in developing as well as developed countries, partially due to the observance of the International Decade of Women (1975-85) and partially because of the widely accepted truth that a society built on the inequality of men and women involves wastage of human resources, which no country can afford.

Thus with swelling literatures on empowerment of women and with voluminous amount of public expenditure on women empowerment schemes, it becomes imperative to understand the concept of empowerment of women so as to have a better understanding of its policy implications. In 21st centuries women are emphasizing on the position, role and values.

Research Design and Coverage

The study covers an analytical understanding of women empowerment in 21st century of 6 selected countries of the Commonwealth of Nations. The researcher has selected from the most populated country of each six continents of the world, which are the members of the Commonwealth of Nations. The names of the countries are as under:

Sr. No.	Name of the Country	Name of the Continent
1.	Australia	Oceania
2.	Canada	North America
3.	Guyana	South America
4.	India	Asia
5.	Nigeria	Africa
6.	United Kingdom	Europe

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the present study are:

- (i) To analyze the population growth rate of 6 selected countries of the Commonwealth of Nations.
- (ii) To know about total labour force specially female labour force of the countries.
- (iii) To investigate present level of female labour force participation rate.
- (iv) To highlight women empowerment in 21st century.

Hypotheses-

The study will verify the following statements:-

- 1 There is increasing trend in female labour force participation rate.
- 2 Awareness have been developing for getting job among women.

Methodology-

This paper is based on secondary data available on population, its growth rate, total labour force, women labour force participation rate and its growth. The study covers a time period of 14 years from 2015-2025 of 6 selected countries of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Statistical Data-

Collection of secondary data available is regarding population, its growth rate, total labour force, an women labour force participation rate etc. The statistical data and information have been processed through the various statistical tools like- ratio, percentage, **correlation** and growth rate.

Population and Its Percentage Growth

The total population of a country refers to all the inhabitants living within its geographical boundaries. The data presented in the table illustrates the population trends of six selected Commonwealth countries over the period 2015 to 2025.

The table clearly indicates a consistent and increasing trend in the population of all selected countries.

Australia shows a steady rise in population from 23.8 million in 2015 to 27.2 million in 2025, reflecting gradual but continuous growth.

Canada also demonstrates a similar upward trend, increasing from 35.1 million in 2015 to 40.5 million in 2025.

Guyana, although having a very small population compared to other countries, shows a slight but steady increase from 0.75 million in 2015 to 0.83 million in 2025.

India, the most populous country among the selected nations, shows a significant rise in population from 1,311 million in 2015 to 1,463 million in 2025, highlighting its large and continuously growing population base.

Nigeria also records a strong growth trend, increasing from 182.2 million in 2015 to 237.5 million in 2025, showing one of the fastest growth rates among the selected countries.

The United Kingdom shows relatively slow but consistent growth, increasing from 65.1 million in 2015 to 68.5 million in 2025.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above data, it can be concluded that all selected Commonwealth countries have shown a continuous increase in population over the given period. However, the rate of growth varies from country to country, with India and Nigeria showing the highest absolute increases, while countries like Guyana and the United Kingdom show relatively slower growth.

Table 1.1 A

Population of 6 selected countries of the Commonwealth of Nations (Millions)

Country	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2020	Year 2021	Year 2022	Year 2023	Year 2024	Year 2025
Australia	23.8	24.2	24.6	25	25.4	25.7	25.9	26.2	26.6	26.9	27.2
Canada	35.1	35.5	36	36.5	37	38	38.2	38.9	39.3	40	40.5
Guyana	0.75	0.76	0.77	0.78	0.78	0.79	0.8	0.8	0.81	0.82	0.83
India	1311	1324	1339	1353	1366	1380	1393	1410	1428	1443	1463
Nigeria	182. 2	186	190. 9	195. 9	201	206.1	211. 4	216.7	223.1	230	237. 5
United Kingdom	65.1	65.6	66	66.4	66.8	67.1	67.3	67.6	67.9	68.2	68.5

Source [Data based on recent World Bank / UN population estimates. \(Worldometer\)](#)

Table 1.1A presents the population trends of six selected member countries of the Commonwealth of Nations from 2015 to 2025, measured in millions. The data reveals a steady increase in population across all countries during the ten-year period. India recorded the largest population growth, rising from 1,311 million in 2015 to 1,463 million in 2025, making it the most populous country among those selected. Nigeria also experienced rapid population growth, increasing from 182.2 million to 237.5 million, reflecting high birth rates and expanding demographics. Canada and Australia showed moderate but consistent growth throughout the years. United Kingdom demonstrated slower population growth, increasing gradually from 65.1 million to 68.5 million. Meanwhile, Guyana remained the least populated country, with a small rise from 0.75 million to 0.83 million. Overall, the table highlights continuous population growth trends among Commonwealth countries, though the pace of increase varies significantly depending on each country’s economic, social, and demographic conditions.

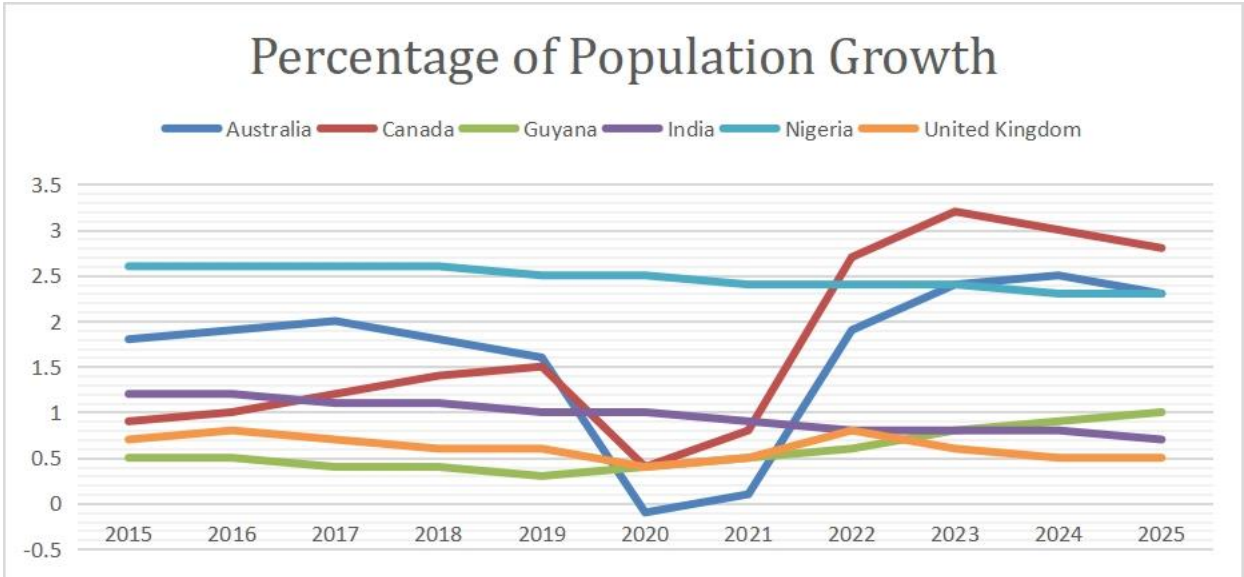
Table 1.1b

Percentage of Population Growth of 6 selected countries of the Commonwealth of Nations

Country	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2020	Year 2021	Year 2022	Year 2023	Year 2024	Year 2025
Australia	1.4	1.2	1.8	1.9	2	1.8	1.6	-0.1	0.1	1.9	2.4
Canada	1.0	0.9	0.9	1	1.2	1.4	1.5	0.4	0.8	2.7	3.2
Guyana	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.8
India	1.6	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1	1	0.9	0.8	0.8
Nigeria	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.4
United Kingdom	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.6

Source [Data based on recent World Bank / UN population estimates. \(Worldometer\)](#)

Fig-1.1



Source [Data based on recent World Bank / UN population estimates. \(Worldometer\)](#)

The table presents the percentage of population growth of six selected countries of the Commonwealth of Nations from 2015 to 2025 and reveals varying demographic trends among these countries. Australia shows fluctuating growth throughout the period. Its population growth rate increased from 1.4 percent in 2015 to 2 percent in 2019, but later declined sharply and reached -0.1 percent in 2022, indicating negative growth. However, the country recovered significantly and reached 2.4 percent in 2025. Canada demonstrates a steadily increasing trend, especially after 2022, rising from 1.0 percent in 2015 to 3.2 percent in 2025, which is the highest growth rate among all selected countries. Guyana maintains comparatively low but stable growth rates, gradually increasing from 0.4 percent to 0.8 percent during the study period. India exhibits a continuous declining trend in population growth, decreasing from 1.6 percent in 2015 to 0.8 percent in 2025, reflecting demographic transition and reduced birth rates. Nigeria records the highest consistently stable growth rates ranging between 2.4 and 2.7 percent throughout the years. The

United Kingdom shows minor fluctuations and remains below 1 percent for most years. Overall, the table highlights contrasting demographic patterns among developed and developing Commonwealth countries.

Percentage of Population of Women-

Table 1.2

Percentage of Population of Women of 6 selected countries of the Commonwealth of Nations
(%age)

Country/ Years	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Australia	50.3	50.3	50.3	50.2	50.2	50.2	50.2	50.2	50.2	50.1	50.1
Canada	50.4	50.4	50.4	50.4	50.4	50.4	50.4	50.3	50.3	50.3	50.3
Guyana	49.1	49.1	49	49	48.9	48.9	48.8	48.8	48.7	48.7	48.7
India	48.3	48.3	48.3	48.3	48.4	48.4	48.4	48.4	48.4 1	48.4 2	48.4 2
Nigeria	49.1	49.1	49.1	49	49	49	48.9	48.9	48.9	48.8	48.8
United Kingdom											

Source [Data based on recent World Bank / UN population estimates. \(Worldometer\)](#)

From 2015 to 2025, the table shows relatively stable gender distribution percentages across the listed countries, with only slight changes over time. Australia remained close to 50.3% in 2015 and gradually declined to 50.1% by 2025, indicating a very balanced demographic structure. Canada also showed strong stability, maintaining around 50.4% for most years before slightly decreasing to 50.3% after 2022. Guyana experienced a small but continuous decline from 49.1% to 48.7%, suggesting a modest demographic shift over the decade. India displayed almost no variation, staying around 48.3–48.42%, which reflects a highly consistent trend throughout the years. Similarly, Nigeria decreased gradually from 49.1% in 2015 to 48.8% in 2025. Overall, the data indicates that population gender ratios in these countries remained highly stable over the ten-year period, with only marginal increases or decreases. The changes are minimal, suggesting no dramatic demographic transformation during this timeframe.

Labour Force:

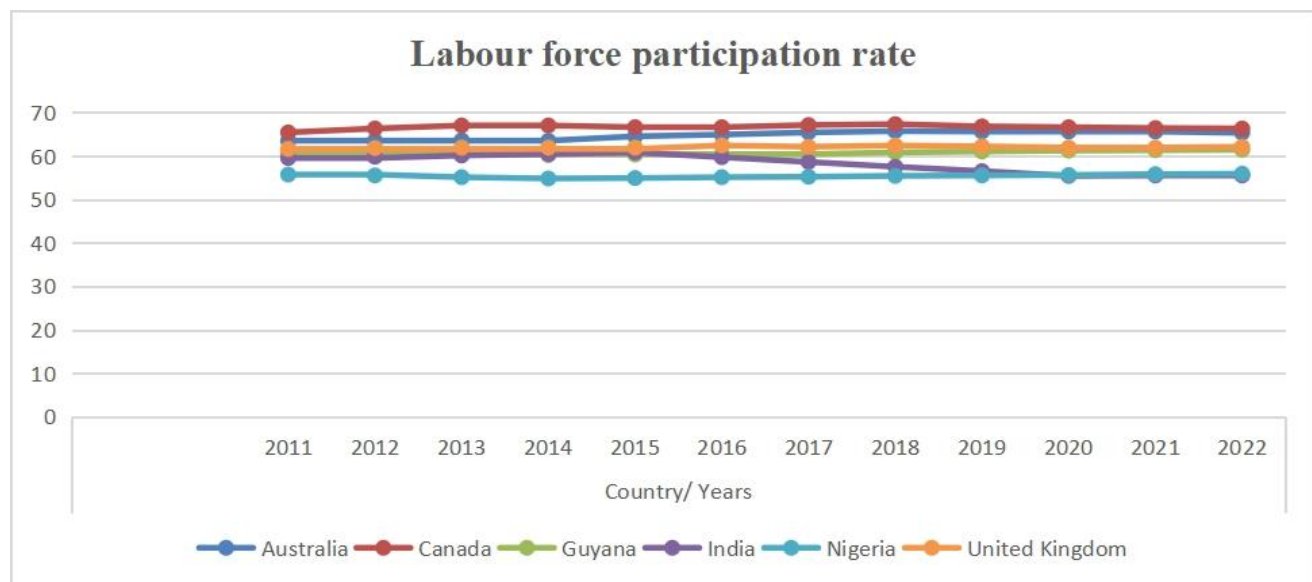
In a single sentence I can say that Labour Force can be explained as the members of the population who are able to work. Labour Force. It is the measure of those participating in paid employment in a given country.

Table 1.3
Labour force participation rate (Percentage) of 6 Selected Countries of the Commonwealth of Nations (Millions)

Country/ Years	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Australia	63.5	63.5	63.6	63.5	64.5	64.9	65.4	65.7	65.6	65.6	65.6	65.3
Canada	65.4	66.3	67	67	66.6	66.6	67.1	67.3	66.8	66.6	66.4	66.3
Guyana	60.4	60.4	60.3	60.2	60.3	60.4	60.5	60.8	61	61.2	61.3	61.4
India	59.5	59.8	60.1	60.4	60.8	59.7	58.6	57.5	56.5	55.4	55.5	55.5
Nigeria	55.7	55.5	55.1	54.8	54.9	55.1	55.2	55.4	55.5	55.6	55.8	55.9
United Kingdom	61.6	61.8	61.9	61.9	61.9	62.4	62.1	62.4	62.2	61.9	61.9	62.1

Source: CIA World Factbook & Different census of India.

Fig- 1.3



Source: CIA World Factbook & Different census of India.

Table 1.4

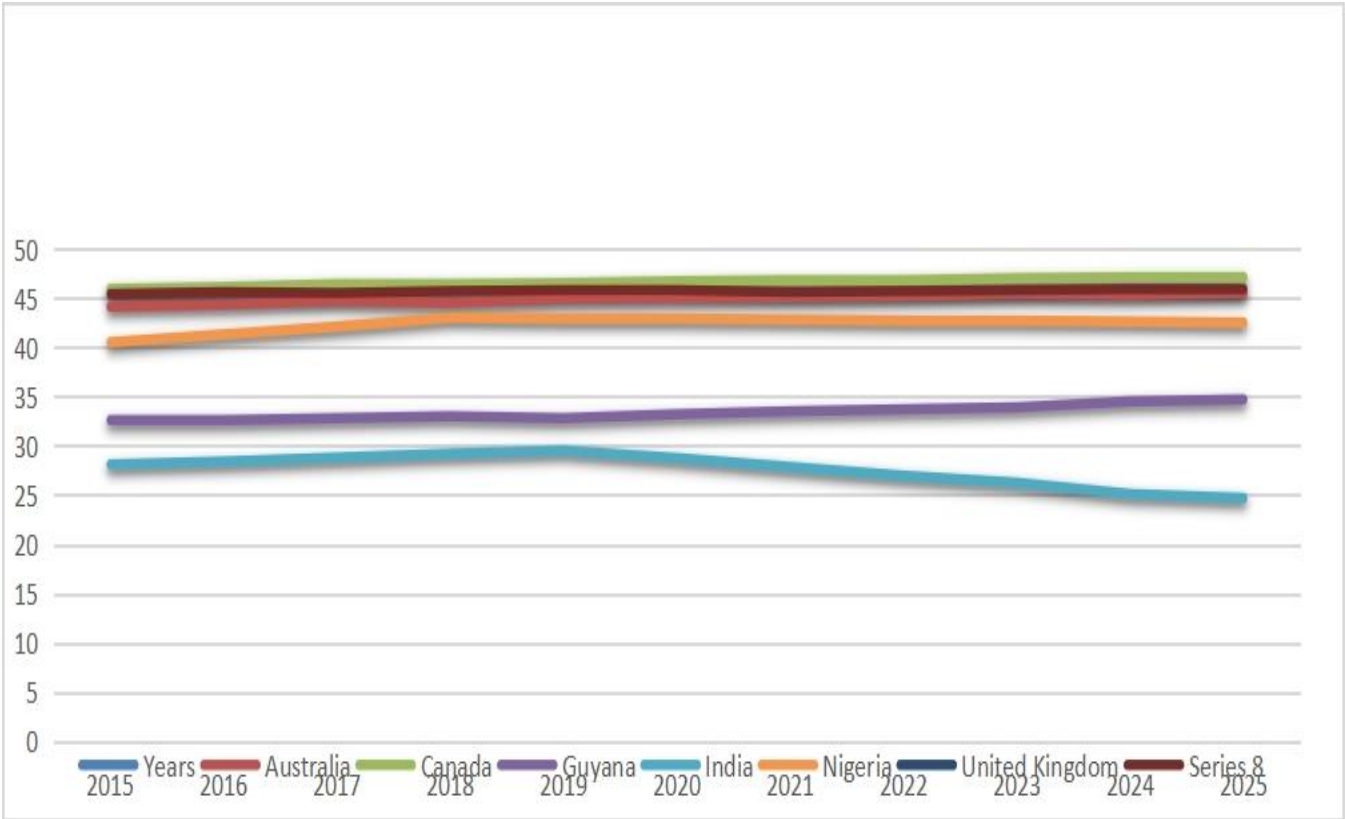
Total Female Labour Force- (% of Total Labor Force) of 6 Selected Countries of the Commonwealth of Nations

Country/ Years	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Australia	44.10	44.30	44.70	44.50	44.90	45.00	45.10	45.20	45.40	45.30	45.50
Canada	45.90	46.10	46.40	46.40	46.50	46.70	46.80	46.80	47.00	47.10	47.10
Guyana	32.60	32.70	32.80	33.00	32.80	33.20	33.50	33.70	33.90	34.50	34.70
India	28.10	28.40	28.80	29.20	29.51	28.75	27.85	26.96	26.25	25.10	24.70
Nigeria	40.50	41.30	42.10	43.00	42.90	42.90	42.80	42.70	42.70	42.60	42.50
United Kingdom	45.40	45.60	45.50	45.70	45.80	45.80	45.60	45.70	45.80	45.90	45.90

Source: CIA World Factbook & Different census of India.

Fig- 1.4

Labour force participation rate (Female-Male Ratio)



Source: CIA World Factbook & Different census of India.

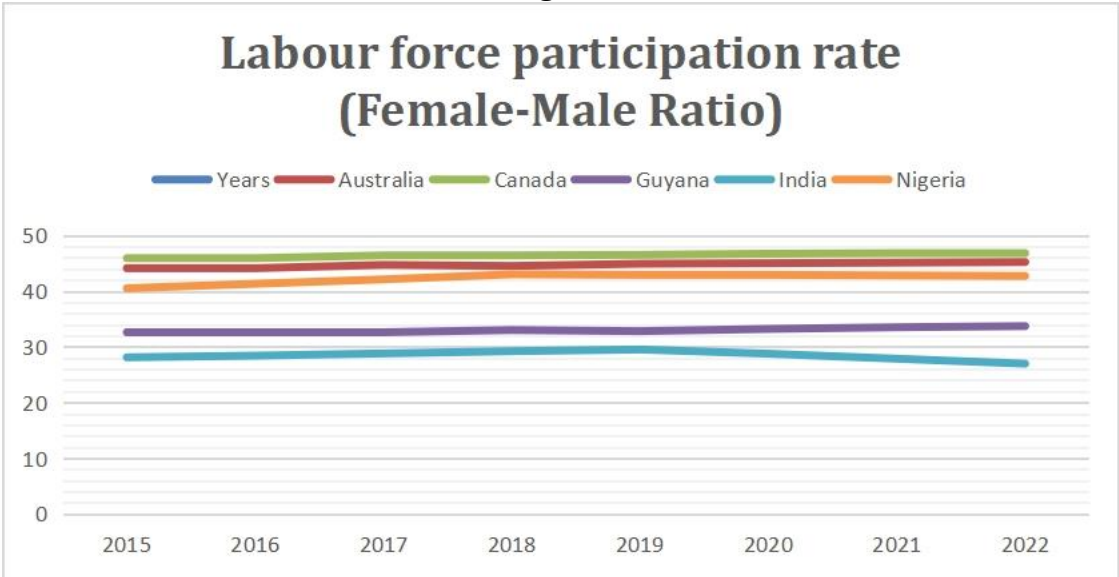
Table 1.5

Labour force participation rate (Female-Male Ratio)

Country	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Australia	0.79	0.80	0.80	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.82	0.82
Canada	0.84	0.85	0.86	0.85	0.86	0.86	0.87	0.87
Guyana	0.48	0.48	0.49	0.50	0.50	0.51	0.52	0.52
India	0.44	0.42	0.41	0.39	0.37	0.35	0.36	0.36
Nigeria	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76
United Kingdom	0.79	0.80	0.79	0.80	0.80	0.81	0.81	0.81

Source: CIA World Factbook & Different census of India

Fig- 1.5



Source: CIA World Factbook & Different census of India.

Based on Table 1.5, Canada and Australia show the highest female-to-male labour force participation ratios, steadily increasing up to 0.87 and 0.82 by 2026. The UK and Nigeria remain relatively stable (~0.81 and 0.76). Conversely, Guyana (~0.52) and India exhibit the lowest ratios, with India experiencing a notable decline from 0.44 to 0.36.

Unemployment -

The unemployment rate can be defined as the number of people actively looking for a job divided by the labour force. Changes in unemployment depend mostly on inflows made up of

- ❖ Un-employed people starting to look for jobs,
- ❖ Of employed people who lose their jobs and look for new ones and
- ❖ Of people who stop looking for employment.

Table 1.6**Percentage of Unemployment of the countries of the Commonwealth of Nations**

Country	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Australia	6.50	6.30	6.00	5.10	5.10	4.90	4.40	4.20	5.60	5.10	5.10	5.20
Canada	7.10	7.60	7.80	7.00	6.80	6.40	6.00	6.20	8.30	8.00	7.50	7.20
Guyana	28.10	24.50	24.40	25.80	24.80	28.50	20.20	21.40	20.20	21.00	21.00	21.70
India	7.32	8.80	9.50	9.20	8.90	7.80	7.20	6.80	10.70	10.80	9.80	6.30
Nigeria	28.10	24.50	24.40	25.80	24.80	28.50	20.20	21.40	20.20	21.00	21.00	21.70
United Kingdom	5.30	5.20	5.00	4.80	4.70	2.90	5.30	5.60	7.60	7.90	8.10	7.90

Source: CIA World Factbook & Different census of India.

Table 1.6 presents the unemployment percentages of selected member countries of the Commonwealth of Nations from 2014 to 2025. The data highlights noticeable differences in unemployment trends among the countries, reflecting varying economic conditions, labor market structures, and national policies. Australia maintained relatively low unemployment rates throughout the period. The rate declined steadily from 6.5% in 2014 to 4.2% in 2021, indicating strong employment opportunities and economic stability. However, unemployment rose slightly after 2021, reaching 5.2% in 2025, possibly due to global economic uncertainties and labor market adjustments. Canada also showed moderate unemployment levels, fluctuating between 6% and 8%. The country experienced an increase during 2022 and 2023, when unemployment reached 8.3% and 8% respectively, before gradually improving to 7.2% by 2025. Guyana recorded the highest unemployment levels among the selected countries for most years. The unemployment rate remained above 20% throughout the period, peaking at 28.5% in 2019. Although there was some improvement in later years, unemployment remained significantly high at 21.7% in 2025, suggesting persistent structural and economic challenges. India experienced fluctuating unemployment rates. The percentage increased from 7.32% in 2014 to 10.8% in 2023, reflecting challenges such as population pressure, underemployment, and economic disruptions. However, a significant decline to 6.3% in 2025 indicates improvement in employment generation and economic recovery. Nigeria displayed trends similar to Guyana, with unemployment rates remaining very high across the years. The data suggests continuing economic difficulties, limited industrial growth, and dependence on informal employment sectors. Meanwhile, United Kingdom recorded comparatively lower unemployment rates. The country experienced a decline from 5.3% in 2014 to 2.9% in 2019, demonstrating strong labor market performance before unemployment rose again in the following years. Overall, the table reveals that unemployment patterns differ greatly across Commonwealth countries, depending on economic development, industrialization, labor policies, and external economic conditions.

Table 1.7 Correlations Spearman's rho between Female Labour Force & Unemployment

Spearman's rho		Australia	Australia	Canada	Canada	Guana	Guana	India	India	Nigeria	Nigeria	UK	UK
		FLF	UE	FLF	UE	FLF	UE	FLF	UE	FLF	UE	FLF	UE
Australia FLF	CC Sig. (2-t)	1 .	- 0.387 0.214	.977** 0	0.172 0.594	.968** 0	-.694* 0.012	- .795* 0.002	0.109 0.737	0.12 0.711	-.694* 0.012	.813* 0.001	.726** 0.008
Australia UE	CC Sig. (2-t)	- 0.387 0.214	1 .	- 0.437 0.155	.676* 0.016	- 0.419 0.175	0.225 0.482	0.05 0.878	0.217 0.498	- .723** 0.008	0.225 0.482	- 0.324 0.304	0.045 0.89
Canada FLF	CC Sig. (2-t)	.977** 0	- 0.437 0.155	1 .	0.17 0.598	.975** 0	-.697* 0.012	- .792* 0.002	0.163 0.614	0.158 0.624	-.697* 0.012	.847* 0.001	.729** 0.007
Canada UE	CC Sig. (2-t)	0.172 0.594	.676* 0.016	0.17 0.598	1 .	0.154 0.632	- 0.274 0.389	- 0.301 0.342	.713** 0.009	- 0.506 0.093	- 0.274 0.389	0.217 0.498	0.411 0.185
Guana FLF	CC Sig. (2-t)	.968** 0	- 0.419 0.175	.975** 0	0.154 0.632	1 .	-.650* 0.022	- .813* 0.001	0.091 0.778	0.157 0.627	-.650* 0.022	.820* 0.001	.738** 0.006
Guana UE	CC Sig. (2-t)	-.694* 0.012	0.225 0.482	-.697* 0.012	- 0.274 0.389	-.650* 0.022	1 .	.656* 0.02	- 0.246 0.442	0.053 0.87	1.000** .	- 0.309 0.328	- .722** 0.008
India FLF	CC	-.795**	0.05	- .792**	- 0.301	- .813**	.656*	1	0.035	0.362	.656*	- 0.548	- .944**
	Sig. (2-t)	0.002	0.878	0.002	0.342	0.001	0.02	.	0.914	0.247	0.02	0.065	0
India UE	CC Sig. (2-t)	0.109 0.737	0.217 0.498	0.163 0.614	.713** 0.009	0.091 0.778	- 0.246 0.442	0.035 0.914	1 .	0.028 0.931	- 0.246 0.442	0.274 0.389	0.133 0.68
Nigeria FLF	CC Sig. (2-t)	0.12 0.711	-.723** 0.008	0.158 0.624	- 0.506 0.093	0.157 0.627	0.053 0.87	0.362 0.247	0.028 0.931	1 .	0.053 0.87	0.277 0.383	- 0.429 0.165
Nigeria UE	CC Sig. (2-t)	-.694* 0.012	0.225 0.482	-.697* 0.012	- 0.274 0.389	-.650* 0.022	1.000** .	.656* 0.02	- 0.246 0.442	0.053 0.87	1 .	- 0.309 0.328	- .722** 0.008

UK FLF	CC Sig. (2- t)	.813** 0.001	- 0.324 0.304	.847** 0.001	0.217 0.498	.820** 0.001	- 0.309 0.328	- 0.54 8 0.06 5	0.27 4 0.38 9	0.277 0.383	- 0.309 0.328	1 .	0.48 0.11 4
UK UE	CC Sig. (2- t)	.726** 0.008	0.045 0.89	.729** 0.007	0.411 0.185	.738** 0.006	- .722** 0.008	- .944* 0	0.13 3 0.68	- 0.429 0.165	- .722** 0.008	0.48 0.114	1 .

For Interpretation

The direction of the relationship between variables is represented by the sign of the coefficient:

- -1 (perfectly negative linear relationship)
- 0 (no relationship)
- +1 (perfectly positive linear relationship)

The strength of the correlation, or effect size, is the magnitude or strength of the association, and can be assessed by these general guidelines¹ (which may vary by discipline):

- $.1 < |r| < .3$... small / weak correlation
- $.3 < |r| < .5$... medium / moderate correlation
- $.5 < |r|$ large / strong correlation

Causes of Unemployment-

On the basis of the above discussion the researcher has come on the conclusion that the main causes of unemployment are as under:

- ❖ Limited demand for unskilled and less-skilled labour.
- ❖ Increase in demand for skilled labour on account of technological development and up-gradation and changes in the organization at work.
- ❖ Problems in maintaining the continued employability of labour force.
- ❖ Demand for multi-skilling.Challenges of Employment-

Many countries aid the unemployed through social welfare programs. These unemployment benefits include unemployment insurance, unemployment compensation, welfare and subsidies to aid in retraining. The main goal of these programs is to alleviate short-term hardships and, more importantly, to allow workers more time to search for a job.

A direct demand-side solution to unemployment is government-funded employment of the able-bodied poor. This was notably implemented in Britain from the 17th century until 1948 in the institution of the workhouse, which provided jobs for the unemployed with harsh conditions and poor wages to dissuade their use. A modern alternative is a job guarantee, where the government guarantees work at a living wage.

- ❖ In spite of implementing so many measures for increasing employment rate. These 9 selected G-20 countries are not in a position to provide optimum opportunity to the labour force.
- ❖ One of the most important reasons is lack of proper education and training.
- ❖ Increasing number of unskilled workers in the labour force.
- ❖ Increasing growth rate of population in comparison to providing infrastructure facilities.

Both the Hypotheses have been positively proved.

Conclusion:

The present study on “Testing the U-Shaped Female Labour Force Participation Hypothesis in the 21st Century: A Comparative Panel Data Analysis of Selected Developed and Developing Commonwealth Nations” highlights important demographic and labour market trends across six Commonwealth countries—Australia, Canada, Guyana, India, Nigeria, and the United Kingdom.

The analysis shows that population growth has remained positive across all selected countries during 2015–2025, though the rate of growth differs significantly. Developing countries such as India and Nigeria continue to show higher population levels and faster absolute increases, while developed countries like Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom exhibit relatively moderate but stable growth patterns.

In terms of labour market participation, female labour force participation (FLFP) reveals mixed but insightful patterns. Countries such as Canada, Australia, Guyana, and the United Kingdom show gradual improvement in female participation rates, reflecting better access to education, employment opportunities, and gender-inclusive labour policies. In contrast, India shows a declining trend in FLFP despite economic growth, indicating structural barriers such as unpaid domestic work burden, social norms, and limited suitable employment opportunities for women. Nigeria and Guyana display relatively

stable but lower participation levels compared to developed economies.

The correlation analysis suggests that female labour force participation and unemployment are not uniformly linked across countries. In some cases, higher participation coexists with lower unemployment, while in others, especially developing economies, both remain high due to labour market inefficiencies and informal employment structures. This confirms that female labour outcomes are shaped by multiple structural and socio-economic factors rather than population size alone.

Overall, the findings provide partial support for the U-shaped hypothesis proposed by Claudia Goldin, as countries at different stages of development show varying trajectories of female labour force participation. However, the U-shaped pattern is not uniformly observed across all selected Commonwealth nations in the 21st century, suggesting that institutional factors, education, policy interventions, and cultural norms increasingly mediate this relationship.

Suggestions-

1. **Strengthening female education and skill development** Governments should expand access to quality education and vocational training for women to improve employability in both formal and informal sectors.
2. **Creating gender-sensitive employment policies** Labour laws should promote equal pay, maternity benefits, flexible working arrangements, and safe working environments to encourage higher female participation.
3. **Expanding labour-intensive and service-sector opportunities** Developing economies should focus on sectors that can absorb more female workers, such as healthcare, education, retail, and digital services.
4. **Reducing social and cultural barriers** Awareness campaigns and community-level interventions are needed to challenge traditional norms that restrict women's participation in paid work, especially in countries like India and Nigeria.
5. **Promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment** Access to microfinance, credit facilities, and startup support for women can significantly improve economic independence and labour participation.
6. **Improving data systems and gender-disaggregated statistics** Reliable, updated, and comparable data on female labour markets should be strengthened to support evidence-based policymaking.
7. **Policy focus on care economy infrastructure** Investment in childcare, eldercare, and household support services can reduce unpaid care burden on women and increase workforce participation.

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