

Trends on the Status of Female Labour Force Participation in India

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Abstract: It is the fact that investing in human capital is one of the most effective means of reducing poverty and encouraging sustainable development of women in the country. We need to be thankful to the fight for women's rights, increasing participation of women in the job market and to the right to vote, women have emerged from the strictly private sphere to which they were formerly restricted. Women have broken the implicit social contract that for more than hundreds of years, confined them to home, child bearing, household tasks and fieldwork, while men worked outside the home. In employment also in the present scenario women have crossed all the boundaries and are working in every field. Recent days women are excelling in the fields which were once done by only men. In this context, the present paper is tried to analyze the latest trends of female work force participation in India

Keywords: Women Employment, Human Capital, Workforce Participation.

I. Introduction:

There is little denying the fact that investing in human capital is one of the most effective means of reducing poverty and encouraging sustainable development. In recent decades, there have been large gains, no doubt on comparable levels, in basic rights and opportunities, in life expectancy and enrolment ratios for women. The twentieth century has witnessed rapid transformations in labour market structures in both developed and developing countries. The changes have been so dramatic that the work place in these countries is no longer a man's preserve. Women in large numbers have joined the labour force and taken up paid employment. Thanks to the fight for women's rights, increasing participation of women in the job market and to the right to vote, women have emerged from the strictly private sphere to which they were formerly restricted. Women have broken the implicit social contract that for more than hundreds of years confined them to home, child rearing, household tasks and fieldwork, while men worked outside the home.

In employment opportunities too, women in India today have stormed all male bastions. Be it piloting aircraft, heading multinational corporations, holding top bureaucratic positions, leading industrial houses, making a mark as photographers, filmmakers, chefs engineers and even as train and lorry drivers, women have made it to all hitherto considered male bastions in India (Geeta Sharma). However, in the context of the developing world, lack of education has forced many women into the risky "informal" economy as street traders, domestic servants, home workers and seasonal laborers. This in turn reflects a continuing belief that there is little benefit in educating a girl when she could be working in the market place or fields. There still are large gender disparities in basic human rights, resources, and economic opportunity, and in political rights. Yet, women usually receive less education than men.

In Present day situation women are equal to men even in population. There are many countries where women are more than men. Women are been empowered from many years, but there is no proper equality shown with men in many areas. This hasn't developed in many professions as well. In India, women are worshipped according to the Vedas and Upanishads from early ages. Now- a-days women are allowed to work with men but equal chances are not given. Opportunities for women are very less when compared to men as they have broader scope of work at any place in the country.

According to the Deloitte report titled Empowering Women & Girls in India for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 95 per cent or 195 million women are employed in the unorganized sector or are in unpaid work.

The female labour force participation in India has fallen to 26 per cent in 2018 from 36.7 per cent in 2005, amid lack of access to quality education and underlying social, economic barriers limiting the opportunities for women, says a Deloitte report.

As per the report, the education ecosystem needs to go through a set of system strengthening initiatives, including the introduction of digital and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education in schools, which in turn will introduce girls to various career choices.

"Specifically in the India context, the female labour force participation has had a decadal fall from 36.7 per cent in 2005 to 26 per cent in 2018, with 95 per cent (195 million) women employed in the unorganized sector or in unpaid word," the Deloitte report noted.

II. Review of Literature:

Akarippadathu Franca (2009) few allocation for socio-economic and sanitation is very low and during some years nothing is spent under this head. The amount is to be spent for starting new dispensaries and strengthening the old ones. The underlying assumption in arguments for women's employment is that economic independence is the first pre-requisite to moving towards

gender equality. The concept viewed in the context of opportunity in employment on the board spectrum of women's employment at one end are women working all and paid jobs and other end are higher professional women works.

Anand Sharma and Sanjoy Saha (2015) This article is done with the NSSO data, this study tried to reveal an overall picture of female employment in India. The type of employment, wage differentials, work participation, employment potentiality were described in this paper. It looked for rural-urban differences and inter-state disparities. The study focusing mainly basically on the disadvantaged women makes appropriate recommendations for improving the employment potentialities of women in India.

Datt (2007) the author made a comprehensive study of socio economic aspects of the workers working in both organized and unorganized sectors. The article analyzed the NSS data to identify the specific socio economic aspect of the workers. Primarily among the total workforce, approximately 92% are working in the unorganized sector, while around 8% are working in the organized sector. The study is divided between agricultural sectors and non agricultural sectors. Both the sectors have organized and unorganized sectors where working conditions differ significantly. The author tried to understand the situation in terms of poverty as the criteria. It is observed that both in the agricultural as well as non agricultural sectors, incidence of poverty is more among the workers belong to unorganized sectors. In case of organized sector workers, incidence of poverty is more in the agricultural sector. Lack of technology and market orientation is the primary cause of this kind of phenomenon.

David A.Cotter, Joan M.Hermesen (2001) This study analyses how the demand for female labour affects gender discrimination in labour force participation. In this article the authors developed a measure of the gendered demand for labour by indexing the degree to which the occupational structure is skewed usually toward male or female workers. The gender difference in labour force participation across time and space is with this measure of demand of the female force.

Essays UK (2018) This article is all about women employment in India, what are the different stages women have come out in India to be part of India's economy in the present days. How women are becoming a part of economy GDP growth of the country. This also tells about the current status of women working in India, their lifestyle, working style. How work life balance is very important for them to manage and balance one's life. It showed the relationship how it is maintained between the work-life and family, what are the consequences of imbalance and they can be rectified.

Manju and Anjali Hooda (2017) This paper attempts to analyze the women empowerment in India. In 21st Century women empowerment has become a very important concern to the government as well. But when it is considered in reality, it is still an illusion. We are observing in our day to day life in practical life how women are facing social evils. This study reveals that women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts taken by the government.

III. Objectives:

1. To find out the latest trends on female labour force participation in India
2. To identify the reasons behind low female employment in India

IV. Statement of the Problem:

Women employment is the major source in recent days which is useful for development of the economy growth to any country. Women in recent days are working in any kind of fields along with men, whereas in olden days many domains are dominated by men. Economic Development of India has increased a lot after women started working in various areas. But, in recent days this employment rate is decreasing fast which is resulting in lowering the economic growth of the country. Reasons for this should be identified and important measures have to be taken to increase the rate of women employment.

V. Women and Work in India

Women form an integral part of the Indian workforce. The total number of female workers in India is 149.8 million and female workers in rural and urban areas are 121.8 and 28.0 million respectively (source: census, 2011). Out of total 149.8 million female workers, 35.9 million females are working as cultivators and another 61.5 million are agricultural laborers. Of the remaining female workers, 8.5 million are in household industry and 43.7 million are classified as other workers.

As per Census 2011, the work participation rate for women is 25.51 percent as compared to 25.63 percent in 2001. The Worker Population Rate (WPR) for women in rural areas is 28.7 percent as compared to 15.7 percent in urban areas based on 3rd EUS (2012-13) and same is 35.1 percent in rural area as compared to 17.5 in urban area under 4th EUS (2013-14). As per 3rd and 4th Annual Employment Unemployment Survey launched by Labour bureau in October, 2012 and December, 2013 the overall Female Labour Force Participation rate has increased from 25.0 percent to 29.6 percent and under 5th EUS (2015-16) the same has decreased to 25.8 percent.

As per annual Employment Review conducted by Directorate General of Employment, during 2012, total employment in the organized sector is 295.79 lakh. Out of total 295.79 lakh workers, employment of women in organized sector (Public and Private) is 60.54 lakh which constitute 20.5% of total employment in organized sector. Of this, 0.94 lakh women were employed in whole sale and retail trade and restaurants & hotels during 2011-12.

VI. Training of Women Workers

In tune with Government of India's stress on empowering the women workers, special efforts were made by Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education & Development (erstwhile Central Board of Workers Education) to have more participation of Women Workers in Boards various training programs. During the year 2017-18 (upto November 2017) 1, 25,284 women participated in Boards various training Programs. Among 1, 25,284 total women workers, 61,248 were from SC category and 18,775 from ST Category.

The Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education & Development (formerly CBWE) also conducts 2-days special training programmes for women workers in which only women participants of various categories in unorganized sector are enrolled. Till November, 2017, 288 such special programmes for women workers were conducted in which 10595 numbers of workers participated. The women are made aware about their rights and duties, and provisions under various Labour Legislation in respect of women and child welfare and various other provisions of the Central and State Government related to women for upliftment of women and children i.e. on health and hygiene, total care etc.

VII. Employment of Women – Protective Legal Provisions

1. The Beedi and Cigar workers (Conditions of employment) Act, 1966
2. The Plantation Labour Act, 1951
3. The Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970
4. The Inter State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment & Conditions of Service) Act, 1979
5. The Factories Act, 1948
6. The Mines Act, 1952
7. The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961
8. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
9. Employee's State Insurance Act 1948 read with The Employee's State Insurance (Central) Regulation, 1950
10. The Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976
11. The Iron Ore Mines, Manganese Ore Mines and Chrome Or Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1976
12. The Lime Stone and Dolomite Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1972
13. The Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1946
14. The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996
15. The Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946

VIII. Statistical Profile on Women employees in India:

Statistical Profile on Women Labour was evolved on account of necessity felt by the Social Institutes, Policy Planners and Researchers to have a complete and up-to-date statistics on important aspects of women labour, both in the organized as well as unorganized sectors in India. The primary objective of this publication is to provide comprehensive and recent most statistics on important aspects of Women Labour in India at one place and also to study the gender variation. The present issue of the Statistical Profile on Women Labour is the tenth in this series.

The women labour constitutes an important segment of the labour force in India and their participation in the labour force is gradually increasing in the labour market. Wage work in India, as elsewhere, in a number of fields is sharply differentiated along sexual lines. There are only a few occupations, which are exclusive preserve of either men or women. Even, when men and women work in the same industry, one can find clear distinction between men's and women's work.

The present issue of Statistical Profile on Women Labour rests on the premise that there were pertinent job related differences between men and women which could be identified by the statistical tables presented in this volume. Statistical Profile has been presented in six segments viz. Population, Employment, Employment Service & Training, Wages and Earnings, Trade Unions and Social Security.

Table No. 1: Total Workers in India as per 2011 census

Population / Workers	Persons		Male	Female
Population	Total	1210569573	623121843	587447730
Workers		481743311	331865930	149877381
% of workers		39.79	53.26	25.51
Population	Rural	833463448	427632643	405830805
Workers		348597535	226763068	121834467
% of workers		41.83	53.03	30.02
Population	Urban	377106125	195489200	181616925
Workers		133145776	105102862	28042914
% of workers		35.31	53.76	15.44

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India.

Note: Workers include both main workers and marginal workers

IX. Women in Organized and Unorganized Sectors

Almost 400 million people (more than 85% of the working population in India) work in unorganized sector and of these about 120 million are women. According to an estimate, by the National Commission on Self-Employed Women (1988a), of the total number

of women workers in India, about 94 percent are in the informal or unorganized sector whereas just 6 percent are in the organized or formal sector. Thus there is no exaggeration in saying that the unorganized sector in India is the women's sector. However, the plight of women in this sectors miserable as they work for extremely low wages, with a total lack of job security and social security benefits, working hours are long and working conditions are unsatisfactory. According to census 2011, women constitute 48.46 percent of the total population in India and about 25.67 percent of female population is designated as workers. Two National Labour Commissions, along with several other international and national commissions, committees and conferences in the last 50 years have documented the socio-economic conditions of workers in the unorganized sector in India. The Arjun Sengupta Committee report is a stark reminder of the huge size and poor conditions in this sector. The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS), has extensively profiled the unorganized sector and unorganized employment in its report, "The Challenges of Employment in India-An Informal Economy Perspective" (April, 2009) and suggested the measures that are considered necessary for enhancing competitiveness of the unorganized sector in the emerging global environment and generation of large scale employment opportunities on sustainable basis. The most significant finding is that the economy will experience a greater degree of informalisation of employment that will increase the already high share of informal workers from 91.8% to 93.9% by 2016-17.

X. Female Labour Participation in India:

There is a large range of female labor force participation rates across Indian states, with states in the South and East of India (such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Sikkim) generally displaying higher participation rates than those in North India (such as Bihar, Punjab and Haryana)

There is also a growing gap between male and female labor force participation rates. These gender gaps are particularly pronounced in urban areas, where they are wider, and average some 60 percentage points. In rural areas, participation gaps between males and females average around 45 percentage points.

With increasing education, labor force participation rates for women first start to decline and then pick up among highly-educated women (particularly university graduates), who experience the pull factor of higher-paying white-collar jobs. The gender gap in education in India still remains but has been narrowing over time. As the gender gap in education closes further, particularly at higher education levels, female labor force participation rates can be expected to rise. In addition to raising labor input, the resulting human capital accumulation should boost potential output.

XI. Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP):

The Female labour force participation in India has fallen from 36 percent in 2005-06 to 24 percent in 2015-16, as per the economic survey of India 2017 – 18. Female workers are highly disadvantaged in the labour market – they are in large part low-skilled informal workers engaged in low productivity, low paying work. India's gender gap in median earnings of full time employees is larger than in South Africa, Brazil and Chile, meaning most women earn far less than men in India than in these countries.

Globally the percentage of women participating in the labour force is declining. For both men and women, the labour force participation rate is declining. However, **women on average less likely participate in labour force than men.** Globally in 2018:

- Women's labor force participation rate is 48.5%, a decrease from 51.4% in 1990.
- Men's labor force participation rate is 75.0%, down from 80.0% in 1990.

Many factors contribute to this gender gap, including:

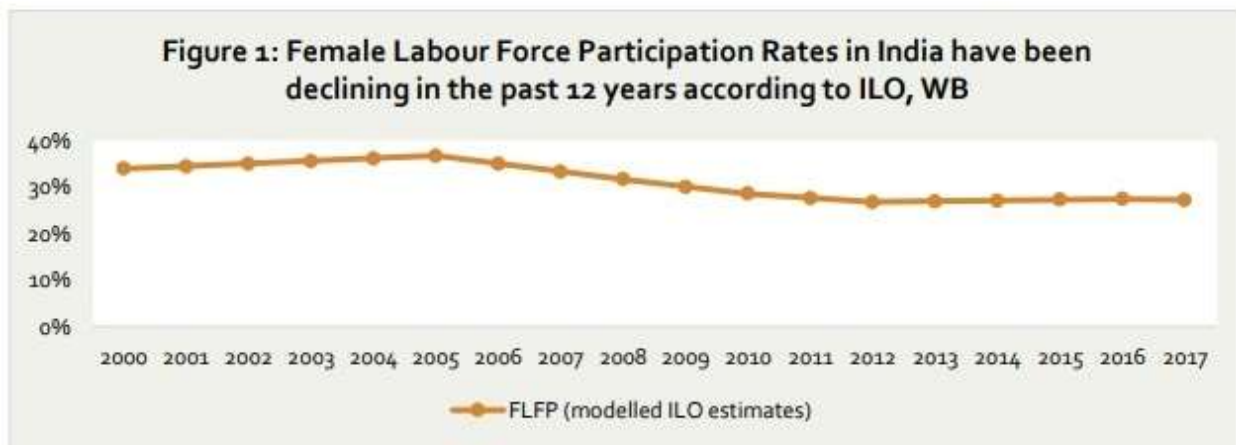
- Structural barriers and cultural restrictions.
- An increase in the number of years women spend in school.
- Lack of employment opportunities, particularly for young women.

Women's Labor Force Participation Varies Across Countries

- In Australia, women's labor force participation rate reached the highest ever recorded in January 2018: 60.5%.
- In Canada, over half (61.5%) of the women participated in the labor force in 2017. Women's labor force participation rates have remained above 50% since 1980.
- In the European Union (EU-28), almost half (47.7%) of the women were employed in 2017.
- In India, women's labor force participation rate (LFPR) has fallen from 35.1% in 1990 to 27.2% in 2017.
- In Japan, women's labor force participation rate (LFPR) was 51.1% in 2017, a small increase from 48.4% in 2005.
- In the United States, 57.0% of women were in the labor force in 2017, compared to the 69.1% of all men. The rate of women's participation peaked in 1999 at 60.0%.

Women in India and many other countries have spend most of their time performing unpaid work such as, household work, child care etc when compared to men. The status of female employment in India has been the main subject of much debate of late in the national fora, due to its intrinsic relationship with female empowerment. The Economic Survey 2017-18 mentions an Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) analysis that indicates that the proportion of the women who work has steadily reduced over time, from 36 percent to 24 percent in a decade, (when examined in 2015-16) signaling a decline of 33.3 percent in Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) in these ten years. It also showed that the gender gap in Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is more than 50 percentage points in India. This gender gap is visible in the plot for Median Earnings as well. As the Survey Report notes, says women workers often constitute the most vulnerable of the workforce as they are "employed in the least secure, informal, unskilled jobs, engaged in low- productivity and low-paying work". Among peers, India performs the worst compared to Brazil, Mexico and Indonesia, according to both indicators analyzed by OECD. This is also corroborated by the estimates released by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and World Bank, as given below. They have defined FLFP as percentage of working female population in the 15 years and above demographic.

Figure No. 1: Female Labour Force Participation



Source: ILOSTAT database, 2017 ILO Labour Force Estimates

The plot above shows annual trends in the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) in India since the turn of the millennium. It stood for 34 percent in 2000, peaked at 37 percent in 2005, but declined to 27 percent in 2017, effectively reducing by the 20.5 percent since 2000.

To quote the Economic Survey 2017-18, which makes a case for the gender equality, “Addressing the meta-preference in favour of sons and empowering women with education and economic agency are critical challenges for the Indian economy”. This statement brings out the cyclical nature of the problem: neglect of the born girl child leading to the adverse health and education outcomes, which in turn, affects their own economic productivity and capacity to contribute or earn an income, impacting adult women’s mobility, decision-making power and social and eventual economic emancipation. Therefore, women’s employment is critical for (1) instrumental reasons is related to efficiency and productivity of the economy, as well as (2) the innate reason of the women’s empowerment.

Table No. 2: Labour Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate

Sl.No	State/UTs	Labour force participation rate(Per 1000)		Unemployment Rate (Per 1000)	
		Rural(Female)	Urban(Female)	Rural(Female)	Urban(Female)
1	Andhra Pradesh	561	221	34	95
2	Arunachal Pradesh	403	163	108	98
3	Assam	202	216	136	199
4	Bihar	149	76	75	147
5	Chhatisgarh	623	208	10	120
6	Delhi	187	120	92	83
7	Goa	240	250	269	113
8	Gujarat	240	250	9	19
9	Haryana	156	118	61	186
10	Himachal Pradesh	170	169	194	19
11	Jammu and Kashmir	99	122	318	130
12	Jharkand	226	130	116	190
13	Karnataka	362	264	16	31
14	Kerela	312	303	308	290
15	Madhya Pradesh	203	87	87	73
16	Maharastra	463	128	16	55
17	Manipur	330	262	33	117
18	Meghalaya	466	471	54	208
19	Mizoram	642	439	12	64
20	Nagaland	590	388	65	172
21	Odisha	196	131	116	113
22	Punjab	108	117	186	231
23	Rajasthan	250	91	123	138
24	Sikkim	331	319	351	465
25	Tamil Nadu	509	250	61	67
26	Telangana	529	267	17	148
27	Tripura	316	308	505	467
28	Uttarakhand	220	115	116	95

29	Uttar Pradesh	121	76	200	262
30	West Bengal	199	160	91	129
31	Puducherry	341	279	136	81

Source: Report on 5th Annual Employment- Unemployment Survey 2015-16, Ministry of Labour and Employment Labour Bureau
The following section identifies and assesses government interventions in both urban and rural employment. For rural employment, the MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) provides a right-based programme to boost labour-force participation. Similarly, the Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Act 2017 provides a policy framework to make industries more women-friendly, thus having a great impact on urban female employment.

XII. Low Female Employment in India: Reasons

Due to the varied nature of the population composition and the differing statuses (both economic and social) which women enjoy across different states, the reasons for low female employment are varied. One of the chief problems which plague any analysis of female employment is the lack of government study on the status on female employment in India. While the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and Employment Unemployment Survey (EUS) do provide state wise data in female employment, there is no study which identifies women friendly sectors state wise or provides reasons for declining female employment. The following analysis provides a general view of the reasons behind low female employment however these reasons are hypothesis based on academia reports, a government study will go a long way in unearthing the forces which drive female employment and its counter, unemployment.

This analysis becomes all the more relevant as it is revealed that, in comparison to other South Asian countries, India does not perform well in terms of Female LFPR. For a period of ten years from 1990 to 2013, while Female LFPR has grown in countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan and stabilized in Sri Lanka, Female LFPR has declined in India by 6.9 percentage points, from 34.1 percent in 1990 to 27.2 percent in 2013.

Gender Differences: While an oft-cited reason leading to low economic empowerment of women, it is of paramount importance driving low female employment. Gender differences and consequently preference for the male child and adult has an impact on the economic capacities of women from birth. Male preference and consequently low regard for females leads to inadequate health and education opportunities, from a very young age. Improper nutrition and lack of education deters women from being healthy contributing members of the work force.

Access to Education leading to higher aspirations: While access to education for females has increased, many economists have theorized that as education empowers women, employment choices for them become more stringent. Both social norms and lack of quality employment opportunities have an impact on the employment options for women with secondary and tertiary education. However, this is more of an urban phenomenon, a significantly larger portion of women in the rural population are part of the work force.

Lack of Quality Employment Opportunities: This reason is especially valid for rural regions, employment opportunities in rural areas have not kept pace with the growth in the urban regions. The Unemployment Rate (UR) for women in the rural population is 47/1000 which is significantly higher when compared to male UR standing at 21/1000. While domestic duties are a major impediment to any kind of employment, few or the lack of major formal employment opportunities for rural population have particularly hurt the progress of economic empowerment for females. Even entrepreneurship opportunities for rural population are hard to come due to lack of banking infrastructure in the far-flung areas and weak market linkages in others. It is safe to say that while these factors hurt the economic interests of all population, they especially have an overwhelming impact of female employment as they are the more vulnerable gender.

XII. Conclusion:

The larger number of women, both in rural and urban areas, entering the labour force and seeking work is an illustration of demand for employment and the need for employment among women. Any employment policy for India therefore must pay specific attention to women and development of sectors that can absorb the labour supplies of women. Simultaneously, improving the skill content of women workers in order for them to be able to participate productively and receive adequate returns is another area that must be addressed. This can help in increasing the labour force of the women employees again in different areas, and resulting in the economic growth of the country.

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