



Women Employment in Punjab: An Inter-District Analysis

KEYWORDS

Gender disparities, Rural-urban gap in employment, Female unemployment rate

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ABSTRACT

The participation of women in the national economy both as producers and consumers is very limited. The status of women is directly connected with their economic position which depends on opportunities for participation in economic activities. Though the female work participation rate is increasing, but at a very low rate still it is much lower than the male work participation rate in both rural and urban areas. Punjab has the lowest female work participation rate in the country not only this, female unemployment rate is greater than male unemployment rate.

Introduction

Women labour constitutes a significant portion of the total labour force. However, labour market does not play fair to them. Their labour does not receive expected attention and sometimes becomes marginalized in the process of development. Generally they have no equal access to the labour market. They are predominantly employed in the labour intensive unskilled jobs with less security of tenure and lower wages, while their male counterparts have access to the capital intensive jobs with greater stability, higher wages and better career prospects. Though the female work participation rate is increasing, but at a very low rate still it is much lower than the male work participation rate in both rural and urban areas. Women in the service sector are very meagre compared to the total employable population of women. Due to low participation in workforce, they are accorded low status of workers. As a result, there is wage difference in men and women for the same work and consequently there is concentration of women in low paying sector such as agriculture.

Objectives of the Study

1. to analyse gender disparities in employment in Punjab at district level;
2. to investigate inter-district variations in work participation rate in Punjab;
3. to analyse unemployment rate in Punjab.

Data Sources and Methodology

To achieve the objective of the study, the data regarding work participation rate have been collected from various Census Reports, National Sample Survey Organization Reports, Economic Survey Reports and National Human Development Reports. For the analysis of the data simple averages, percentages and growth rates of employment have been calculated.

Main Findings of the Study

The female work participation rate in India revealed an increasing trend. It increased from 19.7 per cent in 1981 to 25.6 per cent in 2011. Female work participation rate fluctuated widely in Punjab during the period from 1981 to 2011, when the male work participation rate has remained stable. Female work participation rate in Punjab increased from 2.3 per cent in 1981 to 13.9 per cent in 2011 (Table 1). It has been observed that female work participation rate shows decreasing trend in rural Punjab and increasing trend in urban Punjab during 2001-2011. On the other hand, difference between male and female work participation rate is found to be very high in India as well as in Punjab. This difference is large in urban areas than that of rural areas not only at state level but at the national level also. In spite of this, a significant difference is found between rural and urban female work participation rate both at the state and national level.

Table 1: Work Participation Rate and Gender Gap in India and in Punjab (Percentage).

| | 1981 | | | 1991 | | | 2001 | | | 2011 | | |
|---------------|------|--------|------------|------|--------|------------|------|--------|------------|------|--------|------|
| | Male | Female | Gender Gap | Male | Female | Gender Gap | Male | Female | Gender Gap | Male | Female | Gap |
| INDIA | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rural | 53.8 | 23.1 | 30.7 | 52.5 | 26.7 | 25.8 | 52.4 | 31.0 | 21.4 | 53.0 | 30.0 | 23.0 |
| Urban | 49.1 | 8.3 | 40.8 | 48.9 | 9.2 | 39.7 | 50.9 | 11.6 | 39.3 | 53.8 | 15.4 | 38.4 |
| Total | 52.6 | 19.7 | 32.9 | 51.6 | 22.3 | 29.3 | 51.7 | 25.6 | 26.1 | 53.3 | 25.5 | 27.8 |
| PUNJAB | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rural | 54.5 | 6.9 | 47.6 | 55.0 | 4.4 | 50.6 | 54.9 | 23.4 | 31.5 | 54.9 | 14.3 | 40.6 |
| Urban | 52.0 | 4.2 | 47.8 | 52.3 | 4.5 | 47.8 | 53.1 | 10.4 | 42.7 | 55.5 | 13.2 | 42.3 |
| Total | 53.2 | 2.3 | 50.9 | 54.2 | 4.4 | 49.8 | 53.6 | 19.1 | 34.5 | 55.2 | 13.9 | 41.3 |

Source: Census of India, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011.

Gender Gap in Work Participation Rate at District Level

Table 2 revealed that the highest female work participation rate had been recorded in Mansa district i.e. 27.1 per cent while lowest female work participation rate had been recorded in Sangrur district i.e. 10.8 per cent. There has been considerable decline in female work participation during the last decade. The highest decline is observed in SBS Nagar i.e. 21.8 per cent and the lowest in Gurdaspur and Kapurthala i.e. 2.1 per cent each during 2001 to 2011. Table 2 also reveals the significant gender gap in work participation rate in all the districts of Punjab. The highest gender gap in work participation rate has been recorded in Fatehgarh Sahib district i.e. 45.5 per cent and lowest in Mansa district i.e. 29.4 per cent in 2011.

Table 2: District-wise Work Participation Rate in Punjab.

| | 2001 | | | 2011 | | | Decade Gap | |
|-----------------|------|--------|------------|------|--------|------------|------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Gender Gap | Male | Female | Gender Gap | Male | Female |
| Gurdaspur | 51.3 | 13.1 | 38.2 | 52.6 | 11.0 | 41.6 | 1.3 | -2.1 |
| Kapurthala | 52.8 | 14.6 | 38.2 | 55.3 | 12.5 | 42.8 | 2.5 | -2.1 |
| Jalandhar | 53.7 | 12.8 | 40.9 | 55.8 | 12.9 | 42.9 | 2.1 | 0.1 |
| Hoshiarpur | 50.6 | 17.6 | 33.0 | 51.0 | 11.2 | 39.8 | 0.4 | -6.4 |
| SBS Nagar | 55.5 | 33.2 | 22.3 | 54.3 | 11.4 | 42.9 | -1.2 | -21.8 |
| Fatehgarh Sahib | 54.9 | 18.9 | 36.0 | 57.0 | 11.5 | 45.5 | 2.1 | -7.4 |
| Ludhiana | 55.6 | 16.5 | 39.1 | 56.4 | 14.2 | 42.2 | 0.8 | -2.3 |
| Moga | 53.9 | 24.5 | 29.4 | 55.6 | 14.2 | 41.4 | 1.7 | -10.3 |
| Firozpur | 53.3 | 18.9 | 34.4 | 55.7 | 16.7 | 39.0 | 2.4 | -2.2 |
| Mukatsar | 55.0 | 22.8 | 32.2 | 57.3 | 14.7 | 42.6 | 2.3 | -8.1 |
| Faridkot | 53.5 | 20.6 | 32.9 | 56.6 | 12.6 | 44.0 | 3.1 | -8.0 |
| Bathinda | 55.2 | 27.5 | 27.7 | 58.3 | 18.1 | 40.2 | 3.1 | -9.4 |
| Mansa | 54.3 | 25.6 | 28.7 | 56.5 | 27.1 | 29.4 | 2.2 | 1.5 |
| Patiala | 53.3 | 18.0 | 35.3 | 54.8 | 12.4 | 42.4 | 1.5 | -5.6 |
| Amritsar | 52.7 | 15.5 | 37.2 | 55.8 | 15.6 | 40.2 | 3.1 | 0.1 |
| Tarn Taran | 52.8 | 19.4 | 33.4 | 53.2 | 12.6 | 40.6 | 0.4 | -6.8 |
| Rupnagar | 51.7 | 25.5 | 26.2 | 52.3 | 14.3 | 38.0 | 0.6 | -11.2 |
| SAS Nagar | 54.2 | 19.8 | 34.4 | 53.5 | 15.6 | 37.9 | -0.7 | -4.2 |
| Sangrur | 54.2 | 22.3 | 31.9 | 55.3 | 10.8 | 44.5 | 1.1 | -11.5 |
| Barnala | 56.3 | 30.9 | 25.4 | 56.1 | 11.2 | 44.9 | -0.2 | -19.7 |
| Punjab | 53.6 | 19.1 | 34.5 | 55.2 | 13.9 | 41.3 | 1.6 | -5.2 |

Source: Census of India, 2001 & 2011.

Rural-urban analysis revealed that Mansa district has highest female work participation rate in rural area i.e. 30.5 per cent and SAS Nagar has highest female work participation rate in urban area i.e. 16.4 per cent (Table 3). While Hoshiarpur district has lowest female work participation rate in rural areas i.e. 10.6 per cent while Sangrur district has

lowest female work participation rate in urban area i.e. 9.7 per cent. The difference between rural and urban female work participation rates is observed in all the districts. Mansa district had highest and Barnala district had lowest gap in rural-urban female work participation rate i.e. 15.9 & 0.5 per cent respectively.

Table 3: District-wise Rural-Urban Work Participation Rate in Punjab, (2011)

| | Rural | | | Urban | | |
|-----------------|-------|--------|------------|-------|--------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Gender Gap | Male | Female | Gender Gap |
| Gurdaspur | 51.8 | 10.7 | 41.1 | 54.4 | 11.8 | 42.6 |
| Kapurthala | 54.8 | 11.6 | 43.2 | 56.0 | 14.3 | 41.7 |
| Jalandhar | 55.2 | 11.6 | 43.6 | 56.4 | 14.1 | 42.3 |
| Hoshiarpur | 50.4 | 10.6 | 39.8 | 53.0 | 13.8 | 39.2 |
| SBS Nagar | 54.5 | 11.5 | 43.0 | 53.6 | 11.0 | 42.6 |
| Fatehgarh Sahib | 56.7 | 12.0 | 44.7 | 57.6 | 10.2 | 47.4 |
| Ludhiana | 55.8 | 16.3 | 39.5 | 56.8 | 12.7 | 44.1 |
| Moga | 55.4 | 13.7 | 41.7 | 56.1 | 16.0 | 40.1 |
| Firozpur | 55.9 | 18.8 | 37.1 | 55.0 | 11.0 | 44.0 |
| Mukatsar | 58.1 | 16.1 | 42.0 | 55.3 | 11.0 | 44.3 |
| Faridkot | 57.1 | 12.8 | 44.3 | 55.8 | 12.2 | 43.6 |
| Bathinda | 59.6 | 20.9 | 38.7 | 55.9 | 13.1 | 42.8 |
| Mansa | 57.0 | 30.5 | 26.5 | 54.3 | 14.6 | 39.7 |
| Patiala | 55.1 | 10.8 | 44.3 | 54.4 | 14.8 | 39.6 |
| Amritsar | 54.8 | 16.5 | 38.3 | 56.6 | 14.8 | 41.8 |
| Tarn Taran | 53.3 | 12.9 | 40.4 | 52.6 | 11.0 | 41.6 |
| Rupnagar | 52.5 | 15.2 | 37.3 | 51.6 | 11.6 | 40.0 |
| SAS Nagar | 54.4 | 14.6 | 39.8 | 52.8 | 16.4 | 36.4 |
| Sangrur | 55.6 | 11.2 | 44.4 | 54.4 | 9.7 | 44.7 |
| Barnala | 56.3 | 11.4 | 44.9 | 55.8 | 10.9 | 44.9 |
| Punjab | 54.9 | 14.3 | 40.6 | 55.5 | 13.2 | 42.3 |

Source: Census of India, 2011.

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate is the proportion of persons in the labour force who are unemployed. As per the usual principal and subsidiary status, unemployment rate for rural and urban areas shows opposite trends. While rural India experienced an increase in the unemployment rate, urban India experienced a slow decline (Table 4). Further, gender disparities in terms of employment opportunities were very stark in India where female unemployment rate increased in 2004-05, while male unemployment rate declined. Table 4 reveals that in rural areas both male and female unemployment rate shows an increasing trend. Male unemployment rate increased from 1.3 to 3.1 per cent and female unemployment rate increased from 1.2 to 4.8 per cent during 1993-94 to 2004-05. Similar trend is noticed in urban Punjab. It is observed from the table that female unemployment rate increased faster than that of male unemployment rate in both rural and urban Punjab.

Table 4: Unemployment Rate by Usual Principal and Subsidiary Status

| | 1993-94 | | | 2004-05 | | |
|---------------|---------|--------|-------|---------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| INDIA | | | | | | |
| Rural | 1.4 | 0.6 | 1.2 | 1.6 | 1.8 | 1.7 |
| Urban | 4.1 | 6.3 | 4.5 | 3.7 | 6.9 | 4.4 |
| PUNJAB | | | | | | |
| Rural | 1.3 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 3.1 | 4.8 | 3.7 |
| Urban | 3.1 | 5.4 | 3.3 | 2.7 | 14.1 | 4.8 |

Source. NSSO 50th & 61st Round.

Conclusions

With the growth of population, the women labour force has increased. But the women work participation rate in the country as a whole has been significantly lower than that of men. The main reason is their unequal status in the male dominated society. Our society and culture never permit women to seek and obtain adequate education, outside employment, security and independent status. Punjab has the lowest female work force participation rate in the country. General workforce participation rates (WPR) in Punjab are lower than the national average, though these have increased since 1991 and decreased during last decade. The female work participation rates have slightly increased as main workers. But there are high disparities existing in male and female work participation rate in all the districts of Punjab. Among districts, it is notable that Mansa district has the highest female work participation rate. It is ahead of Punjab by 13.2 per cent. Not only this, female unemployment rate is greater than male unemployment rate and it is comparatively higher than that of national average. In reality, female work participation rate has remained very low in Punjab. More so, there is no recognition of female work. Now the question arises why women work is invisible? In fact, much of the women's economic activity is not reflected in statistics because women's work could never get recorded either in the population Census or their contribution in the National Accounts due to the problem of definitions.

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