



FEMALE WORK PARTICIPATION IN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS OF TRENDS IN INFORMAL SECTOR

Economics

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ABSTRACT

Throughout history men and women have contributed to producing and reproducing the social world around them, both on a day-to-day basis and over long periods of time. Yet the nature of this partnership and the distribution of responsibilities within it have taken different forms over time. Until recently, paid work in Western countries was predominantly the sphere of men. Over the past few decades this situation has changed radically: more and more women have moved into the labour force. The widespread informal sector in the country is a major contributor to its development. Informal sector is the largest employer of relatively unskilled workers when skill based technological changes in production of manufactured commodities and services have always facilitated income and employment growth for the highly skilled. Informal sector has an important role to play in Indian economy. Due to globalization the scenario among women has been changing as the formal sector is shrinking and unable to provide employment opportunities to growing population. In this background the present paper attempts to study the trends in Female work participation rate in India with particular reference to Karnataka state.

KEYWORDS

Labour force participation, Informal Sector, Cultivators, Agricultural Labours.

Prelude:

Historically women were considered as a liability while the men were considered as an asset. As Tandon (1959) marked that "Women for the health and men for the war". This type of action has now become obsolete, and with the change of time, women are now considered as partners of men, in every walk of life.

United Nation Declared 1975-85 as the women's decade. This gave new impetus to study and recognize women's role in economic development. The need for women participation in development process of the nation is widely accepted by the planners and policy makers. Employment of women in industry has undoubtedly opened up new areas of participation for women, shifting their erstwhile predominant concern with house hold and family. Wage employment in industry has made them economically independent and their monetary contribution is a substantial addition to household earnings. Individual's social background play a significant role in the formation of the labour force. Therefore, it is highly essential to highlight the female work participation in general and their participation in Informal Sectors in particular.

The informal sector, informal economy or grey economy is the part of an economy that is neither taxed, nor monitored by any form of government. Unlike the formal economy, activities of the informal economy are not included in the gross national product (GNP) and gross domestic product (GDP) of a country. The informal sector can be described as a grey market in labour. Other concepts which can be characterized as informal sector can include the black market (shadow economy, underground economy), the Agorism and System D. associated idioms include 'under the table', off the books and 'working for cash'.

Although the informal sector makes up a significant portion of the economies in developing countries it is often stigmatized as troublesome and unmanageable. However the informal sector provides critical economic opportunities for the poor and has been expanding rapidly since the 1990s. As such, integrating the informal economy into the formal sector is an important policy challenge.

Estimates of women in the labor force and employment are generally lower than those of men and are not comparable internationally, reflecting that demographic, social, legal, and cultural trends and norms determine whether women's activities are regarded as economic. In many low-income countries women often work on farms or in other family enterprises without pay and others work in or near their homes, mixing work and family activities during the day. In many high-income economies, women have been increasingly acquiring

higher education that has led to better-compensated, longer-term careers rather than lower-skilled, shorter-term jobs. However, access to good-paying occupations for women remains unequal in many occupations and countries around the world. Labor force statistics by gender is important to monitor gender disparities in employment and unemployment patterns.

Review of Literature:

The review of related literature pertaining to the present study indicates that women work participation rates in India especially plays significant role in informal sector.

Kumar et al. (2016) in their study 'Gender gap and female workforce participation in agriculture in Andhra Pradesh'; reveals that, the proportion of both cultivators and agricultural labor has fallen for males and females in 2011. The proportion of women agricultural labor is higher than males in all the state; reasons could be that more males have moved out of the agricultural labor force but women still tend to be employed as wage labor in agricultural activities. It is imperative therefore, to provide technical knowledge and skills to build capacity of women agricultural labor to harness their potential to contribute towards sustainable agricultural growth. And the variables like sex ratio, female literacy rate were found to be negative and significantly correlated with female work participation rate whereas percent of scheduled caste population was positive indication that the presence of a large population of scheduled caste provides more women to the work force.

Vijay et al. (2015) in their study 'Decline in Rural Female Labor force Participation in India: A Relook into the causes' opines that rural female labor force participation is due to a complex mix of several forces working simultaneously. While the focus is on education and income effect it revealed that the lack of sufficient non-farm jobs in rural areas has forced women to stay out of the labor market. The wage conditions prevalent in the rural labor market show that female workers have experienced a better hike in wages/salaries; it implies that the gender gap in terms of wages/salaries has started declining. But the opportunities available in rural India which are compatible with their education levels are dying out.

Verick & Chaudhary (2014) found that women continue to face many barriers to enter labor market and to access decent work. They disproportionately face multiple challenges regarding access to employment, choice of work, working conditions, employment security, and equality in wage, discrimination and balancing work and family responsibilities. In addition, women are heavily represented in the informal sectors of the economy.

Bhalla & Kaur (2011) in their study 'labor force participation of women in India: some facts, some queries', reveal that, India has one of the lowest labor force participation rates for women in the world; more accurately, one of the lowest rate for urban women. In rural India, poverty considerations lead to greater lowest female participation rate, a finding confirmed by individual level data analysis of the NSS data for the last 25 years; the lowest female work participation rates in India, unlike for developed economies, are for the age group 15-59 years; as such, a large portion of the school going population, ages 15-24, is included in the eligible work force.

Butt et al. (2010) study indicates that, the rural women along with men play an important role in the agricultural sector like crop production, livestock production as well as cottage industry. But they have incomplete access to resources, agricultural extension, education service and newest technical knowledge and information sources. It was concluded that cultural norms, male dominance and traditional belief system were the major social constraint faced by rural women as reported by more than 80% of the respondents.

Geetha (2010) in her study on "women in informal sector – A case study" focused on different types of socio – economic problems of female workers in urban informal sector. The study was based on primary data collected by using interview schedule administered to 100 female workers working in various activities in the informal sector in urban areas. Findings revealed that females in informal sector were overburdened with work and exploitation. It has recommended that at the policymaker level, required policy should be prepared and appropriate steps should be taken to improve working and living condition of female workers in this sector.

Naik (2009) in his study on "Informal Sector and Informal Workers in India" focused on informal sector employment with an objective, to study the informal sector employment and informal employment scenario across sectors states, industry group etc. in India. This study is based on secondary data collected by the NSSO report for 1999-2000 and 2004-05 through quinquennial surveys on Employment - Unemployment. This study indicates that, the estimated number of informal sector workers in 2004-05 was 394.90 million in India contributing 86 % of total workers. There is positive and significant correlation between informal sector employment and the incidence of poverty in the state. The percentage share of informal sector workers in the poor states is more than developed states, and actualization or the amount of contractual labor increase in the formal sector is matter of great concern for policy makers.

Nisha (2008) study brings out that laborers got maximum number of days of employment in weeding followed by harvesting and postharvest operations. The woman labor had maximum unemployed days in summer as this is the off season for agriculture in the study area which compelled the women laborers to seek employment opportunities like NAREGS activities, construction work, tile making etc. the study also concluded that women unemployment in agriculture had caused a severe impact on the income of laborers, family expenditures, and their saving and debt position. It also caused migration of laborers to other activities and places. Increase workforce participation rates do not always indicates increase in the level of welfare. So it must be accompanied by higher educational capacities and asset and income.

Nanda and Raikhy (2005) attempted to examine the factors that may explain the inter-district variations in women's participation rate in work force in rural Punjab at the two points of time, i.e. 1991 and 2001. The study shows that the female workers in Punjab increased from 4.4 percent in 1991 to 23.2 percent 2001. Such quick increase in the women's participation in work force in agriculture was possible due to higher increase in female workers as main workers (i.e. 13.2 percent) as compared to marginal workers (9.2 percent). The female workers per thousand of rural workers and total workers was only 65 in 1991 and 275 in 2001. The result of the regression analysis show that rural female literacy rate, commercialization of agriculture and proportion of agricultural laborers are the most significant variables in the determination of the women's participation rate in work force in rural Punjab.

The review of the existing literature clearly highlights the important facts behind women's participation in economic activities. The majority of the works on women workforce participation in informal

sectors in previous studies have concentrated have on more agriculture and cultivation, but, their trends in household industry and other works have not been focused. Thus, the present research article tries to analyze the trend of women workforce participation across sectors with special reference to Karnataka state. In this context the present study is found to be more with lot of policy imperatives relevant.

Conceptual Analysis

Labor Force Participation Rate

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) is the proportion of people eligible to participate in the labor force who are actually participating in it by working or looking for work. It is usually expressed as a percent of the total labor force-eligible population in an economy.

According to ILO the labor force participation rate is a measure of the proportion of a country's working age population that engages actively in the labor market, either by working or by looking for work. As the sum of the employed and (searching) unemployed, this indicator signals the relative size of the supply of labor available to engage in the production of goods and services. People are counted as a part of the labor force if they are engaged in activities that are included in the System of National Accounts or are available and searching for work in such activities. Persons are classified as not being in the labor force if they are attending an educational institution, engaged in household duties, retired, or infirm or disabled (and other reasons).

As per UNDP Labor force participation rate is defined as the section of working population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment. People who are still undergoing studies, housewives and persons above the age of 64 are not reckoned in the labor force. Investopedia defines it as a measure of an economy's active workforce. The formula for the number is the sum of all workers who are employed or actively seeking employment divided by the total working-age population. It omits people of working age who aren't seeking work or are unable to work, including full-time students and homemakers, the disabled, prisoners, and retirees.

Formula:

The labour force population is found by rearranging the formula used to find the participation rate, by dividing the labour force by the participation rate:

$$LFPR = LF/P \times 100$$

Where,

LFPR = Labor Force Participation Rate

LF = Total Number of persons in the labor force

P = total population 15 years old and over

Female labor participation rate

Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate is calculated by dividing female labor force participation rate by male labor force participation rate and multiplying by 100.

Formal and Informal Sector

The formal sector is defined as the one where activities are taxed and monitored by the government and the activities involved are included in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In contrast to formal economy is the informal sector which is neither taxed nor included in the GDP and Gross national product (GNP) of a country.

Formal sectors represent all jobs with specific working hours and regular wages and the worker's job is assured. The workers are employed by the government, state or private sector enterprises. It is a licensed organization and is liable to pay taxes. It includes large-scale operations such as banks and other corporations. Conversely, informal or unorganized sectors are the ones where the employees or the workers do not have regular working hours and wages and are exempted from taxes. It is mainly concerned with the primary production of goods and services with the primary aim of generating employment and income on a small scale. A street vendor selling his farm products on the street to generate and earn his daily bread is an example of informal economy. Rag pickers, moneylenders, brokers are considered as a part of an informal economy. It is also described as the grey economy.

Global Scenario

Over the last two decades, the global female labor force participation rate (age group 15+) has declined, despite strong growth in emerging

and developing countries; from 51.3% in 1998 to 48.5% in 2018 (ILO modeled estimates, <http://www.ilo.org/ilostat>). Though more than 307 million women have joined the labor market in the past 20 years, women still account for just 39.2% of the global labor force. As education enrollment rates have risen across the world, labor force participation rates have fallen among school-age youth (a positive trend for both young men and women). Thus, despite falling female labor force participation rates, the gender gap has narrowed slightly; from 27.5 percentage points in 1998 to 26.6 percentage points in 2018 (ILO modeled estimates, age group 15+).

Globally, two billion people – more than 61% of all employed people – work in the informal economy (ILO) adding that 93% of the world's informal employment is in emerging and developing countries, with the level of education seen as a key factor. “Globally, when the level of education increases, the level of informality decreases,” the report says, adding that people who have completed secondary and tertiary education are less likely to be in informal employment. “The high incidence of informality in all its forms has multiple adverse consequences for workers, enterprises and societies and is, in particular, a major challenge for the realization of decent work for all and sustainable and inclusive development,” Rafael Diez de Medina, Director of ILO's Department of Statistics, said in a statement.

Agriculture is the sector with the highest level of informal employment (93.6%) around the world. The industry (57.2%) and service (47.2%) sectors are relatively less exposed to informality, especially the service sector in the Arab States and Asia and the Pacific. However, when informal employment is the main source of employment, especially in emerging and developing countries, a high level of informality is observed in all sectors.

Indian Scenario

Trends in female labor force participation rates in India have been particularly puzzling. Female participation rates fell from 34.1% in 1999–2000 to 27.2% in 2011–2012, and the latest 27.4% percent in 2015–16. Research has posited several reasons behind this decline, including the increased school enrollment of girls and young women and lack of job opportunities for women, to the income effect and mis-measurement of female labor force participation.

Concomitantly, there has been a marked improvement in the human development indicators, with sizeable decline in fertility rates, illiteracy and gender education gap. All of this should ordinarily have led to higher female labour force participation conventionally, and in the long run, fall in female fertility rates; rising income levels and improvement in education outcomes have been associated with rising share of women in the labour force.

In the South Asian region, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are much better than India and Nepal where informalisation of jobs is high, especially among the younger population. Close to 81% of all employed persons in India make a living by working in the informal sector, with only 6.5% in the formal sector and 0.8% in the household sector. Among the five South Asian countries, informalisation of labor is the highest in India and Nepal (90.7%), with Bangladesh (48.9%), Sri Lanka (60.6%) and Pakistan (77.6%) doing much better on this front. In fact, formal employment in Bangladesh is the highest in the region at 13.5%, but it also has high household employment at 26.7%, says a new report by the International Labor Organization.

Almost all of agricultural employment (94.7%) is informal in the Asia-Pacific region, and it reaches a high of 99.3% in Southern Asia, which includes India. In the industrial sector, informal jobs represent a higher share at 68.8% than in the services sector at 54.1%.

Objectives of the present study:

The objectives of the present study are,

1. To examine the female work participation ratio in India.
2. To analyze the distribution and percentage of female workers across different sectors in India.
3. To evaluate the decadal growth of female workers.

Methodology:

The study is based on secondary data collected by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) for 2011-12 through 68th round of surveys on “Employment and Unemployment”. The collected data are

presented to showcase the work participation ratio systematically through the use of simple percentages, coefficient variance, decadal growth rates, tables and graphs.

Brief analysis of the data:

A brief analysis of the women workers in India and Karnataka; and percentage of cultivators, agricultural laborers, workers in household industries and other workers in India is as follows.

Table 1: State-wise Workforce Participation Rate in India (2011).

State/Union Territory	Rural			Urban			Combined		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
A&N Islands	17.9	59.1	39.8	17.7	60.35	40.47	17.81	59.59	40.08
Andhra Pradesh	44.6	58.4	51.5	19.1	54.14	36.75	36.16	56.98	46.61
Arunachal Pradesh	39.5	48.5	44.1	21.3	50.91	36.97	35.44	49.06	42.47
Assam	23.7	53.1	38.7	14.9	56.79	36.41	22.46	53.59	38.36
Bihar	20.2	46.7	34	10.4	44.9	28.62	19.07	46.47	33.36
Chandigarh	14.2	62.2	42.6	16	56.34	38.17	16	56.51	38.29
Chhattisgarh	46.3	56.4	51.3	17.4	53.09	35.66	39.7	55.59	47.68
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	33.4	56.8	45.9	14.7	66.51	45.48	25.25	61.57	45.73
Daman & Diu	15.9	58.2	38.6	14.5	75.12	53.58	14.89	71.48	49.86
Delhi	9.7	49.3	31.1	10.6	53.08	33.34	10.58	52.99	33.28
Goa	22.6	55.5	39.1	21.5	57.48	39.89	21.92	56.76	39.58
Gujarat	32	57.1	44.9	11.4	57.18	35.73	23.38	57.16	40.98
Haryana	20.8	50.1	36.4	12.1	51.15	32.95	17.79	50.44	35.17
Himachal Pradesh	47.4	59	53.3	19.9	55.72	39.22	44.82	58.69	51.85
Jammu & Kashmir	20.8	46.3	34.2	14.5	52.68	35.23	19.11	48.11	34.47
Jharkhand	35	50.8	43	10.1	46.72	29.26	29.1	49.76	39.71
Karnataka	38.8	9.8	49.4	20.8	57.81	39.66	31.87	59	45.62
Kerala	20.2	53.6	36.3	16	51.76	33.12	18.23	52.73	34.78
Lakshadweep	12.6	52.3	32.9	10.5	44.56	28.01	10.96	46.25	29.09
Madhya Pradesh	39.3	54.3	47	15.1	51.66	34.18	32.64	53.56	43.47
Maharashtra	42.5	56.7	49.8	16.8	55.16	36.95	31.06	56	43.99
Manipur	41.2	52.4	46.9	33.2	49.87	41.41	38.56	51.58	45.09
Meghalaya	35	47	41	23.6	47.68	35.63	32.67	47.17	39.96
Mizoram	41.9	53.9	48	31.1	50.89	40.98	36.16	52.35	44.36
Nagaland	52.3	55.7	54	25.9	47.95	37.44	44.74	53.42	49.24
Odisha	29.7	56.5	43.2	14.1	54.08	34.81	27.16	56.11	41.79
Puducherry	21.1	54.2	37.4	16.1	54.41	34.84	17.63	54.36	35.66
Punjab	14.3	54.9	35.6	13.2	55.51	35.75	13.91	55.15	35.67
Rajasthan	42.7	51.7	47.3	12	50.75	32.27	35.12	51.47	43.6
Sikkim	44.6	61	53.3	24.8	57.52	41.9	39.57	60.16	50.47
Tamil Nadu	41.2	60	50.7	21.8	58.54	40.16	31.8	59.31	45.58
Tripura	26.3	55.3	41.1	16	56.97	36.76	23.57	55.77	40
Uttar Pradesh	18.3	47.4	33.4	11.3	48.94	31.16	16.75	47.71	32.94
Uttarakhand	32.9	49.1	41	11.3	50.98	32.36	26.68	49.67	38.39
West Bengal	19.4	57.2	38.7	15.4	56.84	36.69	18.08	57.07	38.08
Average (%)	30.24	52.87	42.73	17.00	54.12	36.62	26.30	54.39	41.01
S.D. (%)	11.98	8.61	6.57	5.71	5.83	4.87	9.68	5.11	5.64
C.V. (%)	39.63	16.29	15.38	33.59	10.77	13.30	36.82	9.40	13.75

Source: Census 2011 data, Office of the Registrar General, India.

Workforce participation rate is more or less equal for rural and urban males, but there is a huge gap in rural and urban female's workforce participation. The above table 1 depicts the percentage of labor workforce of both male and female of all states in India for the year 2011. In India, the data shows that the labor work participation among rural female is on an average of 30.24% against the average of 52.87%

of rural males. Whereas, in the urban areas the female work participation rate is 17.00% against an average of 54.12% of male participation. At all India level, in rural areas the female workforce participation differs at (SD 11.98%) to its average than the male workforce participation, whereas in urban areas the male workforce participation differs at (SD 5.83%) to its average than the female workforce participation. Looking into the coefficient variation in the rural to urban female work participation, it is 39.63% in Rural and 33.59% in urban areas. With regard to Male work participation the coefficient variation is 16.29% in rural and 10.76% in urban areas.

The data with regards to labour work participation in Karnataka state reveals that out of 49.4% of total workforce in rural the female work participation is 38.8% whereas male participants are only 9.8%, on the other hand, out of 39.66% of the total workforce in urban area, the female labor participation is 20.8% which is comparatively lower than the male work participation of 57.81%. While comparing both rural and urban work participation, the table clearly shows that male work participation is more, that is 59% whereas female work participation is 31.87%. Wage differentiation between male and female will always remain the main reason for the less participation of women in work. The data shows the counter effect on the participation of both male and female, percentage of women in rural is more than men because they are tied up with certain limitations to work within certain boundaries with specific work, while men come out of the village and work in the urban areas hence participation of men is more in the urban areas whereas, many women have limited options.

The percentage of female workers in different sectors in India and Karnataka for the year of 2011 is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Occupation wise distribution of Informal workers in India and Karnataka (2011).

Sl. No.	Nation / State	Male/female/ Total	Total Workers	Percentage to total workers			
				Cultivators	Agricultural Laborers	Household Industry	Other workers
1	India	Male	331865930	24.92	24.66	2.95	47.20
		Female	149877381	24.01	41.11	5.71	29.18
		Total	481743311	24.64	29.96	3.81	41.60
2	Karnataka	Male	18270116	26.02	17.97	2.40	53.61
		Female	9602481	19.03	40.33	4.94	35.71
		Total	27872597	23.61	25.67	3.28	47.44

Source: office of the Registrar General, Census report 2011.India.
Note: workers include both main workers and marginal workers.

The above table 2 shows that in India as on (2011) there are 481.74 million total informal workforce, among them 331.86 million are male and 149.88 million are female. While looking into the occupation wise distribution of informal workers, 24.64% are cultivators among them (24.92%) are male and (24.01%) are female. A total of 29.96% of workforce have concentrated in agriculture sector and among them 24.66% are male and 41.11% are female. Besides, in the household industries a total of 3.81% of informal workforce can be seen out of which 2.95% constitute male and 5.71% are female workers. On the contrary 41.60% of workforce is indulged in other works that include construction industry, street vending, hawkers and artisans etc., among these occupation 47.20% are male and 29.18% are females.

In Karnataka as on 2011 a total of 278.27 million informal workforces can be seen, among which 182.70 million are male and 96.02 million are female workforce. With regard to occupation wise distribution 23.61% are cultivators, 25.67% are agriculture labours, 3.28% are in Household industry and 47.44% are engaged in other works, among these sectors the female work participation is more in agriculture sector i.e., 40.33% and in household industry it is just 4.94%.

It is significant to note from the overall findings that in India as well as in Karnataka the female workforce participation compared to male is

higher in agriculture works and household Industries. Other than these two sectors the proportion of workforce participation in cultivation and other works the male dominance can be seen with a slight variation in the percentage. Lack of technical skill, lack of education, wage discrimination, time and place boundaries, family responsibilities...etc might be the reasons for a significant concentration of female workers in agriculture and household activities.

Table 3: Decadal growth of female workers under broad occupational categories (1981 to 2011).

Census year	Percentage to total female population				
	Female main Workers	Cultivators	Agricultural Laborers	Household Industry	Other workers
1981	13.99	4.65	6.46	0.64	2.24
1991	15.93	5.51	7.05	0.55	2.82
2001	14.68	5.11	4.51	0.95	4.11
2011	25.5	24.0	41.1	5.7	29.2
Average	9.82	14.78	1.96	9.59	
SD	9.46	17.58	2.50	13.10	
CV	96.37	118.95	127.51	136.51	

Source: Office of the Registrar General, Census report 1981 to 2011.India.

Figure 1: Decadal percentage of female workers in different sectors in India.

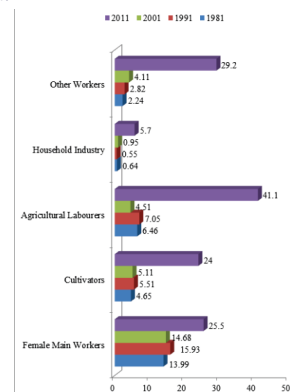


Table 3 and Figure 1 show the decadal percentage of female workers under broad occupational categories. It can be seen from the table that the female workforce participation in 1981 was 13.99% and the participation of these female workers was more in agriculture i.e. 6.46% and a very little i.e. 0.64% of the females are engaged in household industry. In the year 1991 the percentage of female workers has increased to 15.93% and their participation as agricultural laborers has also shown an increase to 7.05%. But in the year 2001 there is a sudden change in the percentage of female work participation which gradually came down to 14.68% and in agriculture sector the female workforce participation dropped to 4.51%, besides there was slight increase in the percentage of workers in household industry i.e., (0.95%). On contrary it is quite interesting to note that by the year 2011, the female work participation percentage had an increasing trend and it reached 25.5% and with this the female work participation reached the peak of 41.1% and cultivators with 24%, other workers 29.2% and household industry participation 5.7%. The decadal average percentage of increase of female workforce participants as agricultural laborer is 14.78%, 9.82% as cultivators, 9.59% as other workers and 1.96% are in household industry. The inter-decadal variation is seen high among the female workforce participation who are engaged in other works (CV 136.51%), and the decadal variation is less among the female workforce participants in agricultural sector (CV 96.37%). Comparing to the other sectors more number of female workers are engaged in agricultural sector.

Table 4: Distribution of Workers in rural and urban areas (2011). (In Millions)

Sl. No.	Category of workers	Rural			Urban			Combined		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total

1	Cultivators	35.2	28.8	33.0	2.73	3.1	2.80	24.92	24.01	24.64
2	Agricultural Labourers	34.4	48.5	39.3	4.58	9.0	5.51	24.93	41.09	29.96
3	Household Industry workers	2.6	5.0	3.4	3.72	8.8	4.80	2.95	5.71	3.81
4	Other Workers	27.8	17.7	24.3	88.97	79.1	86.90	47.20	29.18	41.60
Total workers		226.76	121.83	348.60	105.10	28.04	133.15	331.87	149.88	481.74

Source: Census 2011 data, Office of the Registrar General, India.

Table 4 shows the occupation wise distribution of workers in rural and urban areas. Out of 481.74 million of labour, majority of 331.87 million labour are males and 149.88 million labour are females in both rural and urban areas. Therefore, it can be inferred that participation of male labor force in both rural and urban area is higher than that of female labour force.

Further, data represents the different occupations of labour with the number of workers engaged in rural and urban areas. In rural area proportion of male labor working in cultivation is higher than that of female whereas in urban area it's slightly reverse and women dominated the cultivation field. In agriculture sector and household industry works participation of women is considerably higher than men in both rural and urban areas. Other occupations which includes constructions works, street vending and coolie was most preferred by 88.97 and 27.8 million male labour than women labour in urban and rural area respectively.

It is significant to note that female labour force dominated agricultural and household industry in both rural and urban areas even though male labor force outnumbered females in overall areas. It is observed that despite the use of technology participation of women was not reduced in agriculture and also low literacy among women made them to fall behind in cultivation.

Major trends

- Out of 481.75 million informal workers in India, 68.9% of them are male and 31.9% are female workers. On an average 42.73% of the informal workers are in rural areas and about 36.62% in urban areas.
- Out of 278.72 million workforce in Karnataka state, 59% of which are male workers and 31.87% are female workers. Data shows that 38.8% of women are working in rural area whereas 9.8% of male workers are in rural area. It is observed that percentage of women workers is higher in rural area than that of male workers.
- The occupation wise distribution of workforce shows that 41.60% are engaged in other works like construction, offering goods and services on streets and etc. which is followed by 29.96% of workforce who is in agricultural work. In the present study similar trends are noticed in even Karnataka state also.
- The decadal trend shows that, there is tremendous increase in female work participation from 14.68% in 2001 to 25.5% in 2011. Between 1981-2011 the average growth rate of female work participation as agricultural laborers is 14.78%.
- In rural as well as in urban areas the female workforce participation compared to male is higher in agriculture works and household Industries.
- Women continue to face multiple challenges disproportionately to enter the labor market and to access decent works, choice of work, working conditions, job security, wage disparity, discrimination, and balancing the competing burdens of work and family responsibilities. In addition, women are highly represented in the informal sector where their exposure to risk of exploitation is usually greater and formal protection is lower.
- Due to low labour mobility the women are not moving out of their local places and are getting engaged in such works which are easily accessible for them.

Suggestions

Bringing women's labor force participation up to that of men is essential for growth and development. Yet, unequal participation by males and females - and disparities in their wages, plagues both the

formal and informal sectors in India. Thus, the below suggestions were framed considering the insight provided in this article:

- A comprehensive approach to improving labour market outcomes for women through giving access and relevance to education and training programs, skills development, access to child care, maternity protection, provision of safe and accessible transport, along with the promotion of a pattern of growth that creates job opportunities.
- Gender responsive policies need to be contextually developed - A policy framework encouraging and enabling women's participation should be formulated with active awareness of the "gender-specific" constraints faced by most women
- Beyond standard labour force participation rates, policy-makers should be more concerned about whether women are able to access better jobs or start a business, and take advantage of new labour market opportunities that helps the development of Nation.
- The aim should not be merely to increase female labour force participation but there should be more opportunities to provide decent work that will, in turn, contribute to the economic empowerment of women.
- A female-centered job placement services could help the women in getting jobs both in formal and informal sectors and fixing a justifiable wages for their work would be an add on through which the disparity in wages could be minimized.

CONCLUSION

The overall study gives the clear picture of the work participation of both men and women in urban and rural region of India as well as Karnataka. Declining female labour force participation is a deeply worrying trend that must be reversed if India is to accelerate its economic development. Economic participation of a woman not only has bearing on her own empowerment, but also leads to better intra-household resource allocation resulting in improvements in the human capital of the next generation. Besides, to reap the demographic dividend, it is imperative that policies are made conducive for greater participation of women in the workforce.

Therefore, policy interventions should aim at increasing female labour force participation and must acknowledge the pervasiveness of gender stereotypes that lead to occupational segregation, the unequal learning and skills-development opportunities for boys and girls, and women's informal and unpaid work. Further, there is a need for India to find ways to recognize and institutionalize sharing of care work between men and women, to reduce the gender wage gap, and aggressively work towards creating a violence-free, level playing field for its women to thrive and become leaders in the economy. The perspectives of women thinking to work in different sectors have changed a lot. Women are participating in different sectors one is capable of managing all sort of work. She wants to be independent, wants to take the responsibility of the family, to give a better life to the family, and to lead a respectful life by herself. The only thing, she is required is a support from her family, encouragement for her visions and a proper training to make her succeeded both in formal as well as informal sectors.

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