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RESEARCH ARTICLE**Role of female workforce participation in development of India****Dr. R.C. Yadav**

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Key words:***Corresponding Author****Dr. R.C. Yadav****Abstract**

In India, organization has always been a male-dominated place. Women constitutes for 48.29 percent of population (Census, 2011), however, accounts for just 22.5 percent of workforce. International Labour Organization (ILO) ranks India at 121st out of 131 countries in female labour force participation (FLFP). Female workforce in public sector is even lesser than private sector. Low workforce participation rate was due to cultural and social norms which states women are suppose to be at home, do the home chores, and care for children and elderly parents whereas men are suppose to earn livelihood and complete the outside tasks. Another reason was negligence of female education specifically job oriented education. Contribution of females, engaged in agriculture and allied activities, was not counted as their own contribution and it formed the part of family head's income. Female workforce participation is directly proportional to the development of a nation. Female participation in workforce contributes enhanced standard of living and education level. It also increases Gross domestic income (GDP) and per capita income. Female workforce participation also improves health, thus, life expectancy. Cultural and social changes in Indian society will provide nurturing environment to females. Female education level should increase and especially skill development through professional and vocational training and job oriented courses. Equal opportunity to work and equal wages for equal work will boost morale of females and motivate them to be a part of working population. Safe and secure working environment encourage females for employment. Government should initiate programmes to enhance female participation at all levels (social, economic and political). Private sector organizations should also encourage women participation at workplace.

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INTRODUCTION**ROLE OF FEMALE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA**

In India, organization has always been a male dominated place. Women constitutes for 48.29 percent of population (census 2011). Labour force participation of women remains woefully low in India, and this could be a major drag, not just on the empowerment of women but on the India growth story as well. The International labour organizations ranks India at 121st out of 131 countries in female labour force participation. Female workforce in public sector is even lesser than private sector. Women's participation in the labour market is influenced by social norms governing gender roles and responsibilities as much as it is by economic and structural factors. This section reviews the factors that explain this

decline in the Indian context. Most studies discussed here are based on individual data from various NSS survey rounds and focus mainly on the role of education, income, employment opportunities or cultural factors as drivers of women's labour market participation. What emerges is that the causal mechanisms that affect women's economic activity are not really well understood and there are no simple explanations that are applicable across contexts. The factors impacting women's employment also interact among themselves making it tricky to disentangle their effect. The impact of education, for example, will depend on both economic opportunities available and cultural perceptions that govern women's work norms. This to a certain extent will also be mediated by the economic status of households. In traditional societies where the man is accorded the role of providing for the family, women's relative absence in the labour market could well reflect both their and the household's preferences, which often has class connotations. A working woman could signal economic hardship issues for the household and thus, with improving household income, there is a tendency for women to move out of the labour market. This would particularly play out when men's economic opportunities are expanding and there is a rise in their wage rates thus making it feasible for women to concentrate her energies in the reproductive sphere (Rangarajan & Kaul, 2011). Analysing 1999-2000 NSS data using logistical regression models, Olsen and Mehta (2006) find a U curve for employment by female educational status with illiterate and poorly educated women as well as those with university degrees more likely to work than middle educated women. The authors suggest these results are driven by increasing household incomes and cultural norms, resulting in a 'housewifisation' process for certain groups of women. Poor women face the double burden of domestic work as well as outside employment, which makes a compelling case for them to be willing to opt out of employment with increasing household income. Highly educated women (also a proxy for class), on the other hand can afford to employ domestic help and thus, are able to participate in the labour market. It can also be argued that there is interplay of economics and cultural factors; as their wages increase and social norms become less restrictive, women are more likely to engage in outside economic activity. A simple bivariate analysis for the 2009-10 NSS data by Kannan & Raveendran (2012) does not support the income effect hypothesis. Their study finds that majority of the reduction in labour force are from rural areas and are largely from poorer households. However, one cannot draw any definitive conclusions since this study does not control for the impact of other factors on women's employment. Further, it is also possible that the income effect might be operating through increased household income for poorer households even though their relative status has not changed.

The declining labour force participation rates among women with rising household economic status is also consistent with women's labour supply acting as a insurance mechanism for households. Attanasio et al. (2005) present a conceptual framework where heightened uncertainty over future earnings increases women's labour force participation, particularly when the household does not have savings or access to credit. Female labour force participation in rural areas also tends to increase during periods of distress (droughts or decline in growth rates of agricultural output, depressed wages and so on), and recede again when the economy improves (Himanshu 2011; Bhalotra and Umaña-Aponte 2012). In fact, the spurt in employment growth during 1999-00 to 2004-05 can be partially attributed to the crisis in the agricultural sector which forced the normally non-working population (women, elderly and children) to enter the labour market to supplement household income (Abraham 2009). This explanation however, cannot account for the long term decline in women's labour force participation from 1983-84 to 2009-10. A positive factor that could account for the decline is greater access to education as reflected by the increase in enrolment numbers. However, for this explanation to be valid, one should expect only younger age groups (15 to 23 years) to show lower participation rates. But the decline between 2004-05 and 2009-10 is consistent across all age groups among women, suggesting that education can explain only part of the decline (Chowdhury 2011). This study speculates that declining employment opportunities for women could perhaps explain why women are exiting the labour force. But this contention is not upheld by (Neff, Sen, and Kling 2012) who conduct a bivariate analysis for rural women over the same time period. They consider net state domestic product (NSDP) as a proxy for employment opportunities and find that while all states have witnessed rapid economic growth during 2004-05 to 2009-10, most of them have experienced decline in female labour force participation. They interpret this as a lack of evidence of decreasing employment opportunities leading to declining labour force participation for women. The use of NSDP as a proxy for employment is arguable, given India's poor employment generation inspite of strong economic growth. An important factor that could impact women's labour force participation is the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) enacted in 2005. It guarantees 100 days of employment per household annually and has provisions to ensure that men and women are paid equally along with child care facilities on work sites. Due to this it has been found to have a positive impact on women's economic activity (Azam 2012). Using difference-in-difference framework, the author finds that NREGA has a positive impact on female labour force participation rate wherein the NREGA districts experienced a smaller decline in female labour force participation between 2004-05 and 2007-08 than non NREGA districts in the country.

REASONS FOR LOW WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Low level of Education

At every low level of education and income, women have no choice but to work to help, support the family. But as men in the family start earning more income, women tend to cut back their work in the formal economy to concentrate more on household activities. It is the women in the middle those who are literate but have at most some schooling or have completed high school. Who are squeezed both by the pressure to stay at home and by a lack of plentiful jobs that match their intermediate level of skills and education? They also point out that the demand for employment in high school and university graduates has not kept pace with the large supply of women looking for such work. Frustrated at being unable to find work commensurate with their education and skills, many women choose to drop out of the workforce altogether which contributes to a low and stagnating FLFP.

Family Reason

Low workforce participation rate was due to cultural and social norms which states women are suppose to be at home, do the home chores and care for children and elderly parents. Whereas men are suppose to earn livelihood and complete the outside tasks.

Social Reason

In India, social factors play a significant role in reducing women's labour participation. Husbands and in-laws often to discourage women from working while, in many parts of the country, restrictions are imposed even on their movements outside the household. In some communities, notably upper caste Hindus and Muslims, there may be a stigma attached to women working outside the home especially if it involves work considered "menial" which increase family and societal pressures to drop out if the man in the household is earning enough to foot the bills. The strong impact of socio-economic factors, especially in the south and west in reducing participation. In the east and north other cultural factors, such as religion, dominate.

Low Productivity Jobs

Many women work in low productivity jobs often without social benefits. Women tend to work less productive jobs than men, as in other countries. More than a third are unpaid self employed helpers, compared to 11 percent of working men. Women also have higher than average labour shares in low productivity agriculture, traditional small scale manufacturing and in services such as education employed are in the formal sector with social benefits such as pensions as maternity leave that can influence participation.

Wage Differentials

Wage differentials with men influence incentives to work. As in many other BRICS, participation also be influenced by the large wage differential that women face in India, especially among unskilled workers. Literate man will earn nearly twice as much as a woman with similar skills. The difference decrease somewhat with education, especially in services.

Safety of Female

The safety of women is also a concern in India cities, as was highlighted after the 2012 Delhi Nirbhaya Case. Better governance and improved policing ought to help, but urban India's gender imbalance is a deeper cause for worry.

Sex Discrimination

Gender discrimination occurs even before a woman enters into the labour force. It happens at birth when sex-determination technology and female feticide, is employed to ensure fewer female births. The discrimination then continues into the education space girls obtain fewer years of schooling than boys and also gain lower quality education.

Sexual Harassment at Workplace

Among other contributing factors for low women participation in the workforce are "harassment" and "gossiping". Many women said that "men often made sexual gestures towards women employers and that women did not know how to protect themselves against sexual harassment". Rumors were also considered a concern even for educated women.

Some other factors also contributed low level women participation

- Low level of socio-economic indicators
- Restriction of personal liberty and autonomy
- Insignificant public sector employment
- Gender specific roles
- Social laws, customs and practices that are anti women

Factors behind increasing participation over the years, female participation in workforce has increased due to several reasons. Some of them are as follows

World War 2nd labor shortages

Men heading off to fight in the war caused a labour shortage. The U.S government created a campaign using the fictional character of Rosie the Riveter to lure women into working. From 1940-1945, the female employment in defense industries grew by sixty 2 percent and female labour force grew by fifty percent. This also shifted cultural attitudes making it okay for middle class women to work.

Rise of the Feminist Movement: The movement pushed for equal rights and liberation for women.

Economic Necessity: With the increasing cost of living, for many women, working is an economic necessity in order to support their family.

Passage of Government Equal Rights Acts

Example include the equal pay act of 1963, the civil rights act of 1964, the presidential executive order in 1967, and the equal rights amendment proposed in 1972 (although it did not pass).

Rise of the Service Sector and Decline of the Manufacturing Sector

This caused a growing demand for female workers. As the economist article states about jobs, when brute strength mattered more than brains, men had an inherent advantage. Now that brain power has triumphed the two sexes are more evenly matched.

Expansion and Increased access to Higher Education

This has allowed more women to go to college, thus increasing their ability to obtain jobs. In the 1949-1950 school year women earned 120,797 college degrees, or roughly 24 percent of all degrees earned 1849,200 college degrees, or roughly sixty percent of the total degrees.

Benefits to Improving Women Workforce Participation on Different Sectors:

Economic Benefits

Economic sector also improve through increasing female work force participation. Raising female labour force participation could boost economic growth up to 2.4 percent with a package of pro growth and pro women policies. Growth in agricultural, employment and manufacturing values share has a positive effect on women's economic activity.

Gross Domestic Product

Researcher advocate GDP of any country can be improved by five percent through increasing women participation in workforce. More participation contributes to more production of goods and services and too more consumption due to increased purchasing power.

Increase in Per Capita Income

Raising women workforce participation helps in increasing per capita income. Because increasing women workforce participation increases national income and GDP.

Increase Purchasing Power of Women

"With female consumers controlling 84 percent of all purchase decisions, responsible for 14 trillion in spending, and 78 percent of women considering purchase more carefully, a women's wallet is more influential than ever before".

Business Result Improvement

According to research and advisory company, catalyst, companies with the highest representation of women board members attain significantly, companies with the highest representation of women board members attain significantly higher financial performance than those with the lowest representation 43 percent higher return on equity, 42 percent higher return on sales and 77 percent return on invested capital.

Increase number of women owned businesses

In the U.S, nearly 10.4 million firms are owned by women fifty or more employing more than 12.9 million people.

Social Benefits

Education

It's an old say "when a man educates one person get educated, when a women educates the whole family get educated".

Working women are more concerned for children education and also contribute financially to support the same. They know the importance and concerned on the same.

Standard of Living

Living standard also enhance through increasing women workforce because income of the family also increase and their income for living standard.

Environment

Working women are more environmentally conscious. They contribute positively in environment protection. Use green products, proper disposal of organic and inorganic waste, maximum utilization of resources and minimization in wastage few measures adopted more by working women than non working females.

Population Control

Worldwide experience shows clearly that supporting a stronger role of women contribute to economic growth, it improves child survival and overall family health and it reduces fertility, thus helping to show population growth rates.

Current Trend

The Statistics are Shocking, while male participation is high female labour force participation (FLFP) has been dropping at an alarming rate. According to data from National Sample Survey Organisations (NSSO), FLFP fell from a higher point above 40 percent in the early to mid 1990s to 29.4 percent 2004-05, 23.3 percent in 2009-10 and 22.8 percent

in 2011-12. There are so many reasons for decreasing women workforce now a day, less time for mothers to spend with children due to their work schedules, increased stress level and changing roles, difficulty accessing quality child care.

At last researcher to say that female education level should increase and especially skill development through professional and vocational training and job oriented courses. Cultural and social changes in Indian society will provide nurturing environment to females. Equal opportunity to work and equal wages for equal work will boost morale of females and motivate them to be a part of working population. Female labour market participation in India is lower than in other emerging markets. This column discusses the dynamics and causes of this issue. Many women have dropped out of the labour market in the recent years, or work in low-paying jobs without social benefits and with large wage differentials. Raising female labour force participation could boost economic growth up to 2.4% with a package of pro-growth and pro-women policies. India is in many ways at a crossroads in mid-2014. It will have a new government, it will need ignition to restart the growth engine and make it more inclusive. But if this is to happen, then Indian women will have to be given the chance and the incentives to participate more in the labour market. Indian women already show signs of starting gradually to assert themselves more. Currently, female labour force participation is among the lowest in the emerging markets and declining. OECD calculations show that growth could be boosted up to 2.4% points with a package of pro-growth and pro-women policies. Understanding the nature and causes of female labour force participation in India is important to identify these policies.

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