

Situation of Labour Class Women in India

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ABSTRACT

Labour mainly in the context of the India's economy here means a large and pluralistic source of human capital which is driving the country's growth. According to the reports of the year 2012, India was having the total strength of working population of approximately 487 million which is in comparison with China at that time. About 45 percent of this demanded workforce was self-employed with majority of about 93.9 percent being found in the unorganised sector. This group comprises persons in small-scale and unincorporated businesses including hawking, pushcart traders, and home-based 'cut and polish' of gem and diamonds businesses. However, the organised sector employees are those who work in government departments, state-owned enterprises and in businesses as well. According to 2008 statistics, the organised workforce is 27.5 million people out of which 17.3 million are indulge in either government or public organisations. One such type of cost involves human resources and women are part of this large labour force. The total number of women employed in the year 2011 as per Census conducted by the Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India was 121.8 million in rural areas and 28.0 million in urban areas, so the total female workers were 149.8 million. Among them, 35.9 million were cultivators and other 61.5 million were agriculture labourers. Out of such employment, 43.7 million people were employed in industries falling under the urban region, while approximately 8.5 million women were in the urban employment in different capacities.

Keywords: Females, Labour, India, Ministry of Labour,

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, a decrease in a female labour force participation is generally associated with a move from agrarian to industrial economy. This has been primarily attributed to the transition of family operated businesses into the larger more formal industrial firms. Among other things, in the past a large proportion of women were uneducated and very few educational opportunities were available to them. At the same time, the available employment opportunities were so few they were quite unwilling to take up manual jobs outside agriculture in the non-agricultural activities around the locality. This changed when household earnings began to grow with women's entrée to education, allowing first their participation in more physically less demanding, especially employment services.

This is consistent with Claudia Goldin (1994) hypothesis that the economic growth and female employment show an U-shaped pattern. In a country such as India, which consists largely of rural folk, rural women are most disadvantaged faced with such an economic transformation. In the 2011 census of India, it has been estimated that only 25.51% of females participate in the workforce, down from 25.63 percent in 2001 and up from 22.27 percent in 1991 and 19.67 percent in 1981. The fact that out of activity participation is gradual over the decades demonstrates the stagnation in the out of activity in the recent years.

A deeper look into the matter indicates an urban-rural gap: women's engagement in rural areas was 30.02% while that of the urban areas was 15.44%. As of March 2011, women's participation rates in the organised sector were 20.5 per cent, as compared to 20.4 per cent the previous year. The Directorate General of Employment & Training (DGE&T) reported around 5.95 million women working on the public as well as private organised sector (formal sectors), in its March 2011 report of Employment Update. This out of the above combined, 3.198 million (31.98 lakh) were employed in community, social and personal services indicating a strong desire or attritional placement of women into non manual service occupations.

LABOUR STRUCTURE IN INDIA

Typically, the decrease in female labour participation corresponds with a transition to the industry from the agriculture. The main reason for most of this change is the replacement of family mode of production with much larger, more formally structured industrial units. The majority of women were uneducated, or else only partially educated, and, with few open avenues of employment in their domestic environment, were turned off from manual labour work other than in agriculture. But as women were able to get to school, as their incomes grew, they started to participate in the workforce, certainly not necessarily in physically demanding jobs, so especially in the services.

Certainly, in India, almost ninety four percent of its entire workforce is in unorganised sector and essentially, that is the informal economy of the country. Organised or formal sector in Indian context refers to the registered or the licenced institutions which follow governance including compliance under GST (Goods and Services Tax). Publicly listed companies, factories, corporations, shopping malls, hotels and other big business concerns form these. These establishments are well known and are mostly subjected to a regulatory regime which can offer a certain degree of employment security and employment benefits. On the contrary, the unregistered, self employed, small scale enterprises make up the unorganised sector in respect of Ministry of Labour and employment (2008). The operations in question include own account and unlicensed business such as, general stores run by owners, handloom and handicrafts, small rural traders and janitorial staff among other, considered small scale farmers. Any conventions pertaining to work regulations are out of the reach of such activities' supervision by a formal institution's control or standards. This is also done for the unorganised workforce in India which is further segregated based on the caste system so as to look at the most distressed or marginalised categorised workers who are employed in which type, and how. It is a wide class of lower occupations, including small and marginal farmers, agricultural wage labourer, sharecropper, fisherman, husbandry, construction worker, beedi roller, packing, masonry, weaving, tanning, etc. working in salt, brick, stone, saw, oil mills, etc.

The Indian economy, besides being organised, is also based on the unorganised sector having a very diverse, vast population of (i) agricultural helpers; (ii) bonded workers; (iii) seasonal and migrant labourers; (iv) casual and contract workers. A majority of these groups are nationally the nation's economically weakest groups as they perform lowly paid and difficult work. Formally, they are excluded from the legal and welfare services, and thus are considered one of the most vulnerable groups in the world. The latter, which constitutes another second subgroup within the liberalised sector consists of workers in distressed occupations like toddy tappers, manual scavengers, headload porters and animal drawn vehicle drivers, remain so fundamental in character that they are further socio economically marginalised.

They include people in such low efficiency service provider occupations as midwives, domestic workers, barbers, small scale retailers of fruits and vegetables, newspaper vendors, street vendors, and people in carts. Earlier it is mentioned that, in terms of ILO taxonomy of 2006, these activities and the services provided by workers in former category comprises the “informal economy”, the “unorganised sector”, which make up over 94 per cent of the Indian workforce. As per reports of Bhalla in 2006, one of India's biggest contribution to the GDP came from the emerging unorganised class which amounted to 57 per cent of the country's economy. In ILO sense this also represents a stark productivity gap. Secondly, based on GVA productivity, disparity between rural and urban unorganised, as well as between unorganised and organised sector workers is particularly acute, especially for the most advantageous occupations (Figures continued at 3.1d).

To rural India, the census usually defines unorganised as the lowly paying and economic work involving agriculture, dairy and horticulture. These industries comprise about an approximate 52 per cent of India's workforce, of which almost about 30 million migrant workers, which DO NOT have a stable employment. According to the 67th Round of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) Study 2010 about 10% of Indian workforce was engaged in the Undercut Manufacturing Trade/Retail Services. Additionally, the informal sector also includes non institutional non agricultural enterprises that grossed 58 million units indicating the huge extent and split of the unorganised economy.

In the 2008, India's organised Private Limited Companies who have more than 10 employees generated approximately 5 million in manufacturing sector and 2.2 million working in social services, 1.1 million in Finance/Banking sectors and 1 million in Agricultural sectors. There were more people working in central and state government sectors than in private organisations employees; the central and state government employees to private organisations employees ratio was 1.8:1. Sexual segregation was especially evident – 95 % of civil servants were male and 76 % of private employees. For the number of the organised workers, 27 point 5 million people ninety-five percent of them were men and 5 million people were women. Every year, 13 million people join the labour force and only 8 million get employment mostly in the low paying insecure informal sector.



Carried out by the World Bank's report Reassessing Patterns of Female Labour Force Participation in India (March 2017), it explicitly highlights that high income, economically stable women have lower propensity to work. Close to 19.6 million women outstripped the country's labour force during this study period, that is roughly equal to the population of Romania. The importance of this statistic is to corroborate the need of why there has to be shift in the impetus from women's equal participation in the economy of India. One of India's lowest rates of female workforce participation relative to the other BRICS countries is 27%. India is placed second to the last on the list, only marring faring marginally better than second to the last Saudi Arabia, during the G20 countries that introduced more women's employment opportunities.

RURAL FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA

The concepts of defeminization and feminization of workers have been discussed in the context of the pursuit of neoliberal economic course in the economic literature. Nevertheless, the RFLFPR is almost half the RMLFPR, the FLFPR of the urban areas is still below half of the MFMFPR (Table 1). In rural areas the FLFPR has been declining, except in the year 2004–05 whereas FLFPR in the urban areas was experienced reviving moderately in 2011–12.

Table 1: Labour Force Participation Rate per 1000 of Age 15-plus Years as per Usual Status

NSSO Rounds	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1993–1994	876	491	801	238
1999–2000	845	364	782	180
2004–2005	864	497	796	246
2009–2010	825	378	762	194
2011–2012	813	358	764	205

Source: NSSO EUS rounds: 1993–1994, 1999–2000, 2004–2005, 2009–2010 and 2011–2012.

Hence, this paper begins with the fact Not less than 60% of Indian women in the workforce live in rural areas (NSSO 2011–2012, 68th round). Table 2 presents the NSSO rounds' age over the rural female labour force. The trend of reduction in LFPR is also noticed for the groups 5-9 and 10-14 years during the time period 1993-94 to 2011-12 which is a positive sign for more enrollment in education. Notably, between the ages of 15-19 and 20-24, the LFPR also declined between 2009–2010 and 2011–2012 implying that young people were furthering their education or entering the labour market at a later stage.

Table 2: Age-wise Distribution of Rural Female Labour Force Participation Rate per 1000 as per Usual Status

Age Group	1993– 1994	1999– 2000	2004– 2005	2009– 2010	2011– 2012
5–9	14	7	3	4	1
10–14	142	96	75	36	30
15–19	371	314	331	195	164
20–24	470	425	435	314	297
25–29	528	498	530	404	369
30–34	587	557	593	434	431
35–39	610	579	642	497	481
40–44	607	586	627	498	482
45–49	594	566	616	492	484
50–54	543	515	562	485	444
55–59	468	450	509	411	394
60 and above	241	218	254	226	213
All (0+)	331	302	333	265	253

Source: NSSO EUS rounds: 1993–1994, 1999–2000, 2004–2005, 2009–2010 and 2011–2012.

LFPR attains its highest in the age group 30–49 years, however the FLFPR has declined even in this group, except in the period 2004–05 when the labour force participation as prospered. Activity status of rural females outside of labour force was also examined into, to explain why earlier labours force women were leaving (table 3).

Table 3: Number of Females Aged 15 and Above Involved in NSSO Activity Codes 92 and 93 per 100 Individuals

NSSO	1993–	1999–	2004–	2009–	2011–
Rounds	1994	2000	2005	2010	2012
Rural	56	54	52	57	60
Urban	65	65	63	64	64

Source: Authors' calculations using NSSO unit level data:1993–1994, 1999–2000, 2004–2005, 2009–2010 and 2011–2012.

Table 3 reveals that the proportion of rural girls declaring the major service done by them is in terms of domestic activities and activities for household consumption being 56 per cent in 1993–1994 and 60 per cent in 2011–2012 and for urban girls, this figure is about 64 per cent for both the periods. They were all determined as women who did household duties at this time, for all age group. The proportion of rural females aged 15–29 years who spent their time in domestic duties increased from 54.8 per cent in 2004–2005 to 57.5 per cent in 2011–2012, while the proportion for the 30–44 year age group increased from 52.5 to 65.8 per cent during this period.⁶ In other words, in the economically active age group (15–64 years), 151.9 million and 81.8 million females were outside the labour force in the rural and urban areas, respectively, in 2011–2012.⁷ It appears that rural women who move out of the labour force get into full-time domestic duties and/or do activities for their own consumption. The reasons people had to move out of the labour force appear in Table 4 as the most likely.

The activities a woman carries out is one that no other person does and so most women spend for more than 80 per cent of their time in domestic duties since they cannot find way to delegate. From 1993/94 to 2011/12, the share of rural women used to engaged in domestic duties and are to remain within the household dropped from 70 per cent to 66 per cent. Simply put, the proportion of women who consented to work rose from 30 per cent to 34 per cent and the majority of the women were ready to work in regular part time for the purpose of caring for their social and domestic duties. That is to say a shift in rural women's engagement for economically productive work atences (work that can be done from the house or periphery of the house cf self employed) relative to Table 5 rural females opted in for women centric work. For example, although a lot of rural female entrepreneurs made the requests for venture capital, there was a trend of that curve going down and a trend of curve up in the rounds of requesting and training respectively. It is also regarding preferences for women centric jobs and that rural women would want those jobs that would not easily interfere with domestic duties and hence women are preferred. Investigation was made into the distribution of the rural females' workforce next.

RURAL FEMALE WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION

NSSO rounds reveal that more than 70 per cent of female workers in rural sector are engaged in getting agricultural securities while more than 75 per cent of the total agricultural labour or as principal or subsidiary capacity. The phase derived by this finding was very alarming for the year 1999–2000 as the proportion of the rural female employed in principle or subsidiary in agriculture was lower than that of the year 2004–2005. The data, however, shows that in the year 2004–2005, the share of females increased in the non farm area. The employment of rural males and the rural females employing in agriculture both at the principal and secondary levels has been declining from about 2009–2010, proportion of rural females employed in manufacturing as a principal (princ.) activity declined from 12.7 per cent in 1993–1994 to 7.1 per cent in 2009–2010 to slightly up to 10.2 per cent in 2011–2012 and proportion of rural males employed in manufacturing as at secondary (sld.) activity fell from 4.9 per cent in 2010–2011 to 5.6 This implies that the women, particularly those located in the manufacturing line, were made jobless. Most women lost their employment because most of the products from the traditional indus-tries were no longer demanded. For example, the condition of rural female's share with respect to the non-manufacturing Gross Domestic Product based on construction

sector excluding public utilities is seen to be along the line of getting worse from 1993–1994 where it begins to improve from 2009–2010.

Employment of rural females in principal status has gradually increased in service sector from 1993-1994 to 2011-2012 but as a subsidiary activity there is fluctuation. Thus in the last two rounds of the curb, the agriculture index of employment of rural women has declined while on the other hand, the services sector and the industries sector index both improved and the latter only in the last two rounds. However, if the level of losses in agriculture sector employment resulted in new employment creation in the non-farm sector then the situation of job losing can be stopped.

Table 4: Sector-wise and Employment Status Distribution of Rural Women Workers Aged 15 and Above

NSSO Rounds	Agriculture		Manufacturing		Non-manufacturing		Services	
	Principal	Subsidiary	Principal	Subsidiary	Principal	Subsidiary	Principal	Subsidiary
1993–1994	76.6	60.9	12.7	32.0	6.4	3.1	4.3	4
1999–2000	84.5	91.8	7.2	5.6	1.6	0.2	6.7	2.4
2004–2005	81.4	89	8.6	7.2	2.1	0.7	7.9	3.1
2009–2010	78.9	80.7	7.5	7.1	4.6	9.0	9.0	3.2
2011–2012	74.5	76.1	9.4	10.2	5.6	10.5	10.5	3.2

Source: Calculated by the authors using unit-level data from NSSO survey rounds: 1993–94, 1999–2000, 2004–05, 2009–10, and 2011–12.

Conclusion

Women between 15 and 24 years old will be educated into basic and vocational training, while at the same time removing social obstructions that prevent employment within society. Some of the ‘perpetuating factors’ impeding involved women from being fully productive in economically productive activities are inadequate infrastructure and limited access to nearby workplaces. More women will work, and therefore female labour force participation will increase, as enhanced transport facilities and road infrastructure are made available for the transport of people by road and easier access into towns and smaller cities like satellite towns. ****India is using that demographic dividend as the female population, almost half of the total, is not at all exploited**.** When fertility rates and child dependency ratios decrease, women are increasingly less burdened with caring for children and are able to seek employment. The main thing that is needed is a refashioning of the rural economy from an active one that can absorb this marginalisation of population and not one that will remain economically useless to the engaged part of it.

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