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Emerging Trends of Women Work Participation in India

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ABSTRACT: The work participation rate for women in rural areas is 30.02 per cent as compared to 15.44 per cent in the urban areas. In so far as the organised sector is concerned, in March, 2011 women workers constituted 20.5 percent of total employment in organised sector in the country which is higher by 0.1 percent as compared to the preceding year. As per the last Employment Review by Directorate General of Employment & Training (DGE&T), on 31st March, 2011, about 59.54 lakh women workers were employed in the organised sector (Public and Private Sector).

KEY WORDS: women, work, participation, employment and organized.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women form an integral part of the Indian workforce. According to information provided by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, as per the 2011 census, the total number of working women in India is 149.8 million and the working women in rural and urban areas are 121.8 and 28.0 million respectively. Out of a total of 149.8 million female workers, 35.9 million women work as cultivators and another 61.5 million are agricultural workers. Of the remaining working women, 8.5 million are in households and 43.7 million are classified as other workers. According to the 2011 census, the female labor force participation rate is 25.51 percent, compared to 25.63 percent in 2001. The female labor force participation rate decreased slightly in 2011, but improved from 22.27 percent in 1991 and 19.67 percent in 1981. the participation rate in rural areas is 30.02 percent compared to 15.44 percent in urban areas. In terms of the organized sector, women accounted for 20.5 percent of the total organized sector employment in the country in March 2011, an increase of 0.1 percent over the previous year. According to the latest employment survey by the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGE&T), around 59.54 million women were employed in the organized sector (public and private sector) as on 31 March 2011. Of these, nearly 32.14 million women were employed in the community, social and personal services sector.[1]

The workforce in India is predominantly male. For a country struggling to capitalize on its demographic dividend, with the world's largest working-age population — set to reach nearly 70 percent by 2030 — we simply can no longer afford low female labor force participation. India is poised to become the largest contributor to global growth. A recent report predicts that the next five years are critical for the country to achieve an 8% GDP growth rate, and to ensure growth, women must make up more than half of the new workforce that will be created by 2030. a historic priority. The female labor force participation rate (FLFPR) was recorded at 24.1 percent shortly after independence in 1955. In 1972, the FLFPR increased to 33 percent, after which it steadily declined and fell to its lowest level in 2017 at 23 percent. The gender gap in India's workforce, largely attributed to conservative social norms and driven by both demand-side (job opportunities) and supply-side (women's availability for work) factors, remains the most enduring paradox of recent decades. This is despite increased economic growth, declining birth rates and increased female enrollment in higher education over the decades. The exclusion of women from paid work results in persistent gender inequality in the economy. Women in India have traditionally been employed predominantly in labour-intensive, low-paid, informal work with no social security. However, FLFPR has improved over the past six years and new trends are emerging. The Labor Force Survey (2022–23) shows the FLFPR at 37 percent, an increase of 4.2 percentage points since the last survey (2021–22). [2]

Younger and more educated women entering the workforce: This shift is reflected in other reports, such as the State of Work in India 2023 report, which pointed to a narrowing gender gap in employment trends in India. The reduction is linked to structural transformations in the economy that are leading to the displacement of the female workforce across the country. The report shows that older women with lower levels of education are leaving the workforce. At the same

time, younger women with higher education enter it. The number of women in paid employment is increasing, while the number of women in informal paid work is decreasing. The share of women working in agriculture is decreasing. The share of women entering the service sector is increasing. As the number of women in paid employment increases, this has a positive impact on the gender earnings gap, which narrows as more women leave casual wage work. These shifts in the female workforce have a longer-term impact on women's economic participation in the country. The overall increase in female labor market participation is due to more rural women entering the workforce. PLFS data show that LFPR increased by 5 percentage points for urban women and 14 percentage points for rural women. According to several analyses, this could be partly linked to a more accurate measurement of women's work. Women in India and many developing countries are widely involved in unpaid economic work – as opposed to care or domestic work such as work on farms or family businesses – for which they are neither paid nor recognized as workers. The data being collected now is more cognizant of the historical mismeasurement of women's work and may account for the increase in the FLFPR. Unpaid female workers rose from 31.7 percent of total working women to 37 percent from 2017-18 to 2022-23.[3]

Increase in female self-employment but no difference in care burden: Another significant trend was seen in the last round of PLFS (2022-23), when the share of self-employed women rose to a peak of 70.1 percent from 60 percent. . in 2021-22. The self-employed category has two subcategories in PLFS – self-employed and employer and unpaid household helper. More than half of the women worked as "unpaid helpers" in family businesses. The share of self-employed women has always been higher in rural compared to urban areas. Agriculture and related activities account for three-quarters of the work in which rural women are involved. The increase in self-employment can also be interpreted as a sign that more women are starting businesses across the country. Under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, which expands microcredit for entrepreneurship, nearly 70 percent of beneficiaries are women, and 84 percent of loans approved under Start-Up India have also gone to beneficiaries. Both of these programs have been made possible in recent years by digital financial inclusion efforts that have been inclusive in design for both men and women.[4] However, there are some caveats to consider. A working report on the state of India links the rise in the number of self-employed rural women to a rise in economic hardship following the pandemic, which has affected more women than men. The data bears this out. Growth in the self-employed category, which prevailed for both men and women during the pandemic, has returned to pre-pandemic levels for men but remains higher for women. It is possible that both trends exist concurrently, with economic distress driving more women into paid work and easy access to credit through government programs enabling more women to start micro-enterprises. In any case, a major shift is underway in women's participation in the Indian economy. [5]

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A careful review of research, journals, books, dissertations, theses and other sources of information on the problem to be investigated is one of the important steps in planning any research study.

Afridi et al. (2019)[6] Distinguish the opposing forces that come into play as women's education increases. On the one hand, there is an increase in market productivity, which is reflected in an increase in the wage ratio between women and men. This motivates women to seek gainful employment and become part of the workforce. On the other hand, an increase in education is accompanied by an increase in the domestic productivity of women, which increases the demand for their involvement in the production of household goods. By modeling a married couple's time-scheduling decisions, the authors found that household production and the gendered division of labor act as binding constraints on women's higher levels of education. Many studies empirically confirm the income effect.

Lahoti R, and Swaminathan, H (2014)[7] The relationship between economic development, the composition of economic growth and female employment. It is observed that economic growth in India has not been employment intensive. Agriculture and manufacturing sectors are usually labor intensive but have not led to overall economic growth in India. The service sector has been a key driver of growth, but requires high skills that most women do not have. Their study clearly points to the fact that growth alone is not enough to increase women's participation in economic activities.

Das, S, Jain-Chandra, S, Kochhar, K and Kumar N(2015)[8] Finds that women in households with higher per capita expenditure are less likely to be in the labor force. Expected wages have a significant and positive effect on the

probability of entering the labor market for urban women. More flexible labor markets also support higher participation of women in the labor force.

Methodology: The method used in this paper is a descriptive-evaluative method. The study is mainly based on overviews. It is purely supported by secondary source of data i.e. books, journals, articles and articles and internet.

Protective provisions for female employees: Some of the important safeguards to protect the interests of working women are: Safety/Health Measures: Section 22(2) of the Factories Act 1948 provides that no woman shall clean, lubricate or adjust any part of a driving machine or any gearing machine while the driving machine or gearing machine is in motion, nor shall she clean, lubricate or adjust any part of any machine if the cleaning, lubrication or adjustment would expose a woman to the risk of injury from a moving part of the machine or any adjacent machine.

Prohibition of night work: 66 paragraph 1 letter (b) of the Factories Act 1948 states that no woman shall work in any factory except between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Section 25 of the Beedi and Cigar Employment Act, 1966 provides that no woman shall or shall work in any industrial establishment except between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Provisions for separate toilets and urinals: Provisions for separate toilets and urinals for female employees exist in the following cases: Rule 53 of the Contract Labor (Regulation and Repeal) Act, 1970. Section 19 of the Factories Act, 1948.

Kindergarten provision: Crèche provisions exist in the following cases: Section 48 of the Factories Act 1948. 35 of the Act on building and other constructions (work and service regulations) from 1996.

"VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN" under the Directorate-General for Employment and Training: The Women Vocational Training Program focuses on the planning and implementation of long-term policies related to the vocational training of women in the country. An institutional framework comprising 11 institutes in the central sector offers training courses for women to develop professional skills required to find suitable employment/self-employment and qualified faculty positions in ITIs etc.^[9] The institutes established to provide training exclusively to women under the Women's Vocational Education Program are as follows: National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) for Women, NOIDA. Regional Vocational Training Institutes (RVTIs) for Women at Mumbai, Bangalore, Thiruvananthapuram, Panipat, Kolkata, Tura, Allahabad, Indore, Vadodara and Jaipur. More than EFC approved setting up of new RVTIs in the states of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, Goa, Uttarakhand, Bihar, J&K and Tamil Nadu. These RVTIs should be operational by August 2015. National/Regional Vocational Training Institutes for Women provide (i) Crafts Training Scheme (CTS) & (ii) Crafts Instructors Training Scheme (CITS) under modular training programs and short term training courses who have passed 10th or 12th standard and fulfill the specified eligibility criteria for various courses. CITS courses are specially designed for ITI instructors. In the state sector, training facilities exclusively for women at the artisan level are provided through a network of women's industrial training institutes/ITCs^[10]

III.CONCLUSION

The overall increase in women's labor force participation, the burden of care work and housework on women has not decreased. As more women in a country enter paid work, the quality of employment will increase. decent work defined by fair income, social protection and safe working conditions as a fundamental goal. At the same time, women's entry into the workforce must be supported by greater investments in care infrastructure and services, along with the reduction and redistribution of care work .at home.

A comprehensive approach is needed to improve women's participation in the labor market:

- Women should have access to better education and training programs.
- Child care and other support facilities should be provided in the workplace to ease the burden of domestic duties.
- There is a need to improve women's safety and create employment opportunities for women in the private sector.
- Reducing the gap in wages and working conditions between men and women can increase women's participation in the labor market.

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