Chapter 3

WORK PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN
IN INDIA AND BIHAR

This chapter deals with the working women in India and Bihar. It also presents the scenario of working women in the developed and selected Asian countries.

The French revolution of 1949 kindled the torch of liberty, equality and fraternity. The ideas set forth and the forces let loose did not exclude womanhood. But in the true sense of the term emancipation of women started slowly from the middle of the 19th century and gained pace from the 20th century.\(^1\)

The recognition of equality as a fundamental right irrespective of sex, race etc. by UNO, has opened new vista of freedom to women all over the world.\(^2\)

The question of equality has gained prominence is a worldwide phenomenon. Working women’s role has a wide and significant implication for the society and family. There are implications of women’s work roles and statuses in new adjustment patterns. Apart from that there is way by which female employment is linked to advancement. We find that in more developed economies, there is a marked increase in the employment opportunities for women. The nations that are operating on a full employment basis, has found it necessary to draw in as much female labour as possible. More and more countries are beginning to appreciate that they need women also for the national development and increasing the standard of living. There is worldwide demand

\(^1\)Hate, Chandrakala A.: Changing Status of Women in Post Independence India. Bombay, Allied publishers, 1969 p. 3

\(^2\)Ibid. P. 179
for not only accepting women in employment but also an increasing awareness of the problems associated with their specialised roles.³

The trend of employment of women is gaining pace everywhere.

One of the writers form United States suggested at a symposium of ‘potential of women’ is for modern women to envision herself as a highly complex creature whose potential role set is unlike that almost any women in the past. Not only she participate in different social and economic roles as an active member but the choice of complicated life and the burdened role, though it calls for many adjustments and manoeuvrings, is prodding more capable than other schemes of meeting need of growing proportion of educated middle.⁴

Work participation rate

a. Participation rate in Developed countries

Now in USA women have outnumbered men in employment and even in education also. It has been found that women were 47.0% of overall labour force and 59.0% in college admission entry. Like USA in all Western countries married and unmarried women are in work force in higher number.⁵

Constitution of leading socialist country U.S.S.R. declares that women in USSR are accorded all rights on an equal footing with men in all spheres of economic, social, political, welfare and governmental activity. In context of social equality in USSR we find that there is choice of family name at the time of registration of marriage is not done by husband only but by wife also. They can chose common name or may preserve

³ Arora, Poonam: Professional Women; Role and Conflicts. New Delhi, Manak Publications, 2003 p.108
her name which was before marriage. Author is of the opinion that in Soviet Union 75% of doctors are now women.6

Sweden has attracted the world wide attention regarding the employment of women. The capital aim of the Sweden economic policy has been to secure full employment for men and women. The intimate and peaceable working condition for both is the striking feature of the Sweden economic policy.7

History shows that the banner of revolt for equality was first raised in United Kingdom by 19th century women. They have proved by their actions that given the opportunity women could do useful and effective work in every field.8

In Japan, a highly developed country in Asia, women are changing fast. They are employed in every type of job. Apart from that they are in large number in Self-employment also. It has been found that women are earning more than men and have acquired glorious economic status in family and society.9

Among other Asian countries Israel has the more advancement in the employment where women are found in the armed forces since long. They have civilian tasks of keeping law and order. The constitution introduced after the achievement of statehood applied to girls as well boys equal. Through the training given to them is not in frontline fighting but limited to the use of light weapon for defence. In all other types of employment women are in large number.10

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The movement, which has brought ever-increasing number of women of all classes into the labour force, has been accelerated during the recent years. It has been in progress all over the world and, by its extent, it amounts to be a silent revolution.

There are various causes of influx of women into employment. We find a vast number of unmarried women in gainful employment, unless they are students or taking training somewhere. Education, industrialization, urbanization and socio-economic development have influenced this trend of long standing for married and unmarried women all over the world.

Table 3:1

Economically active population by sex in developed countries 1980-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Activity Rate</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>50.7(+2.0%)</td>
<td>51.6(+1.0%)</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>45.1(+6.00%)</td>
<td>47.9(+2.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>49.8(+2.0%)</td>
<td>49.6(-0.2%)</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>42.2(+6.00%)</td>
<td>44.1(+2.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>44.5(+0.3)</td>
<td>45.3(+1.0%)</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>38.4(+6.00%)</td>
<td>40.7(+2.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>51.1(+2.0%)</td>
<td>50.2(+0.1%)</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>41.0(+5.4%)</td>
<td>42.8(+1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>53.4(+4.0%)</td>
<td>52.3(-1.1%)</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>42.8(+6.00%)</td>
<td>44.2(+2.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3:1 presents the scenario of economically active population by sex in developed selected countries of the world. We find that in United States in 1980 activity rate was 48.5% which become 50.7% in 1985 which reads growth of 2.00% and it become 51.6% in 2010 which means growth of 1.05 only. We may say that U. S. A. has growth of economically active population of only 3.00% in the span of thirty years. In U. K. in 1980 activity rate was 47.9% which became 49.8% in the year 1995 registering the growth of 2.00% .There is no growth in 2010. Thereby in U. K. there is growth of only 2.00 % in thirty years. In France there is growth of only 1.00% in thirty years. In Germany in 1980 activity rate was 47.8% which rose up to 50.1% in 1995 registering the growth of 2.00% .There is no growth between 1995 to 2010. In Japan in 1980 growth rate was 49.00% in 1980 which became 53.4% in1995 registering the growth of 4.3% while in 2010 it reduced by 1.00%. It may be said that in referred thirty years Japan has growth of activity rate of 3.00%.

Analysis reveals that in the year 1980 Japan has the highest(49.00%) activity rate while it was lowest (44.2%) in France. In 1995 also Japan topped the list with 53.4% and lowest in France with 44.5%. We may conclude that U. S. A. and Japan has the growth of 3.00% in participation rate in the time span of thirty years leaving behind U.K., France and Germany.

As far as male activity rate is related we find all the five countries have registered minus growth from 1980- 2010.

It is a matter of encouragement that all the five countries have registered growth in female activity rate. U.S.A, U.K and Japan have registered 6% of growth from 1980 to 1995 while it is 5.4% and 4% of growth in Germany and France respectively. We find that from 1995 to 2010 all the five countries have registered female activity growth rate of 2%. It may be concluded that U.S.A. , U.K. and Japan have registered highest(8%) of growth rate while in France lowest (6%) of growth rate.

We also find there is gap between male and female activity rate. In 1980 in U.S.A this gap is of 19% while in 2010 it has narrowed to 7.6%. As regards U.K this gap 1980 is 23.7% which has come down to 11.2% in 2010. France has 19.5% of gap
while in 2010 it became 9.4%. In Germany there is gap of 23.6% which reduce to 14.9% in 2010. In 1980 in Japan it was 25.3% which has come down to 16.5% in 2010.

The analysis reveals that there is highest activity rate in all the reference years in total and in male and female in Japan among all the five developed countries. It is surprising that gap between male and female activity rate is also high in Japan comparatively. In the year 1980 among all the five countries U.S.A has minimum gap of 19.5% and again U.S.A has minimum gap of 7.6% in 2010 also.

It is marking point that gap in activity rate in 2010 is minimum(7.6%) in U.S.A. This gap narrowed by highest (12%) in U.S.A and U.K and lowest (9%) in Germany and Japan.

b. Participation rate in selected Asian countries:

Modern economic growth and the associated diversification of economic activities tend to play a vital role in bringing about increased participation of women in activities outside the household based sectors economy. Factors which ordinarily accompany economic growth, i.e. decline of fertility rates, expansion of commercialisation in the economy, the corresponding declines of the subsistence oriented household sector and also the development of education and skill acquisition activities – have positively influenced and enhanced the entry of women into the labour market. The above cited factors are by and large from the supply side of the women labour market. There are as many factors on the `demand side emerging from the diversification of economic activity leading to sustained increase in demand for labour. To the great extent these demand and supply side forces have increased in the past. We observe some clear patterns and trends with regarding to the women participation rates in various Asian countries.\textsuperscript{11} Such pattern and trend of some of the important Asian countries are as follows:-

\textsuperscript{11}Jose, A. V.: Employment and Wages of Women Workers in Asian Countries; An Assessment. New Delhi, Asian Employment Programme (ARTEP)ILO, 1967 p. 5.
Table 3:2

Economically active population by sex in Selected Asian countries 1980-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Activity Rate</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td></td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>49.5 (+2.4%)</td>
<td>55.5 (+5.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>59.8 (+5.00%)</td>
<td>60.69 (+0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td></td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>43.3 (+1.00%)</td>
<td>46.7 (+2.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td></td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>46.1 (-2.4%)</td>
<td>48.0 (+2.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td></td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>41.1 (+1.00%)</td>
<td>45.2 (+4.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>41.8 (+4.00%)</td>
<td>46.2 (+4.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td></td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>59.2 (+7.00%)</td>
<td>61.5 (+2.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>55.6 (+3.00%)</td>
<td>61.9 (+5.00%)</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>42.8 (+1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>63.7 (+3.00%)</td>
<td>64.8 (+1.00%)</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>56.6 (+8.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>57.2 (+2.00%)</td>
<td>60.6 (+2.00%)</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>28.4 (-2.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>54.4 (-3.5%)</td>
<td>56.0 (+2.00%)</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>37.7 (-1.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>51.8 (-0.04%)</td>
<td>53.3 (+2.5%)</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>30.8 (+3.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>54.2 (+2.00%)</td>
<td>57.9 (+3.00%)</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>29.6 (+9.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>63.4 (+8.00%)</td>
<td>67.0 (+4.00%)</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>55.0 (+5.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table 3.2 deals with the economically active population in developing countries by sex 198-2010. We find that Thailand has the highest activity rate among developing countries while Pakistan has the lowest. Thailand has registered maximum (9%) of growth rate while Nepal has minimum (0.0%) growth rate in the time span of thirty years.

As per male activity rate is related we find that Thailand has the maximum(12%) of growth rate while in Pakistan and Nepal it is only 1% in thirty years. India has growth rate of 4% in this period. In Pakistan and Nepal it is minimum (1.00%) of growth of male activity rate because of repeated turmoil and upheaval the country.

In case of female activity rate Sri Lanka has the highest (14%) of growth rate while in Nepal it is only 1% in thirty years. Pakistan growth rate is also minimum because the turmoil and change of power in the country which hindered the education and industrial growth in the country.

Comparative study of male and female gap in activity rate reveals that in 1980 it is maximum (25.4%) in India while it is minimum 5.35 in Thailand. In the year 2010 in India there is maximum (28%) of gap between male and female activity rate while it is minimum (8.6%) in China.

We may conclude that in difference of male-female activity rate our country is lagging behind in reducing the gap.

c. Participation rate in India:

The place of women in the economic life of a country is undergoing far reaching changes everywhere. These changes in terms of their diversity appear to be more marked in developing economies which are generally bound to the traditional norms.

Generally the fact is being considered that western impact encouraged women to come out of domestic sphere to earn like man. While upper class women responded early and fully to the changing scene. Other women belonging to the lower socio-economic status responded very late. Due to mechanisation, improvement in education, development in science and technology, not only did new social roles for women...
emerge, but also new social norms and values developed. This helped new outlook and created new meaning for them.

Indian women have now entered in the occupations and professions dominated by men. It was due to the society was changing due to political awareness, expanding modern education, Science and technology, spreading of conditions and large scale social awakening. All this created a situation in which women felt concerned about their position in society, received their role statues in and out of family.

Twentieth century women are more awaken to their intellect and talents and wanted realise their social responsibilities. The main factors for coming into employment are their desire for higher education, ambition, economic self security, utilization of personal talent, equal status with men, self confidence, satisfaction, development of potentiality and personality.\textsuperscript{12}

In India we find that there is distinction between rural and urban attitudes to employment of women as also attitudes to organised and unorganised employers towards employment. In rural areas, by and large, women do works on farms or help member of the family in their normal chores. Notions about work or aversion to it are more of a function of the caste and community rather than sex. It is in organised industries with a rural bias like mines, plantations, road construction etc. Employers find it convenient to engage family units rather than individuals. It is only when we consider the urban complex of employment and unemployment that the attitudes of women towards work, full time or part time becomes important.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} Bhadra, Mita: Women in Medical Profession in India; A Sociological Perspective. Ocassional paper- UGC., SAP. Deptt. of Sociology, University of North Bengal, 1998 pp. 1-2

Implications of the new economic policy for female employment

The new economic policy 1991 was announced in the wake of the debt crisis that India faced and is essentially a part of the ‘structural adjustment policy package’ urged by the international lending agencies.

Since the strategy puts overwhelming importance of trade liberalization, it follows that domestic resources would have to be diverted to export industries. To increase international competitiveness firms in this sector are known to be motivated to cut down costs. Many countries following such strategies used the devices of special economic zones, export processing zones and as the latest development, high-tech science parks in their industrialization and development strategy, catering more or less exclusively for export markets. Industries preferred employing women as blue-collar workers. It was argued that women has three peculiar advantages as workers in manufacturing in the export-oriented industries, though the basic rationale was that female labour was low cost labour. Second, women were accustomed to working under such regimented conditions which were typical of hierarchical and patriarchal conventions of traditional household and hence were less likely to be averse to discipline and subordination than male workers. Thirdly, they perceive their income as supplementary to family income and, therefore, were less likely to demand higher wages. In most such countries women workers have been major contributors to the manufacturing exports and generation of foreign exchange revenues.14

India could be expected to go the way other countries did. With devaluation and trade liberalization production for exports would be more profitable than production for domestic markets. Resources could be expected to shift to export production. Industries in this sector are labour intensive and more likely to employ cheap female labour. Besides being cheaper, women are known to be docile workers who are less likely to unionize. In order to attract foreign capital as in other countries in India too, the industrial units in the export sector are likely to be exempted from labour protective legislation. Export promotion zones are likely to come up where workers lie beyond the

purview of labour and social rights. Since most of the industries that are likely to come up are sun-rise industries that demand semi-skilled labour with very little on-the-job training, women educated up to middle to secondary level having dexterity of hands which these jobs demand and patience for doing repetitive jobs fit the bill well. That is why employers preferred employing women at the SEEPZ in Bombay.\textsuperscript{15}

It was found that 90 percent of the workers at SEEPZ are on average had worked for three years though the export promotion zone was ten years old. They were about twenty years old at recruitment and nearly three of every four had completed 10 years of schooling. Nearly half were working at wage rates which were lower than the government specified minimum wage. Most employers denied having regular scales of pay but hastened to add that their workers were covered by the Employees’ State Insurance Scheme and Provident Fund Scheme but not gratuity. Some firms however were too small to come under these provisions and in many firms a large number of women workers were fresh recruits and therefore were not qualified for such benefits. Most women were poor and clung to their jobs though they were low paid. They needed this meagre income to supplement their low household income.\textsuperscript{16}

With the change in the industrial policy announced in 1991, we could expect competition in the product market to increase. A new corporate strategy has already emerged in India in the 1980s. Enterprises are devising ways and means to reduce the fixed costs of labour.\textsuperscript{17} We saw earlier that the labour market had become flexible overtime. Employers prefer non-permanent casual, contract and female labour. Most employers adopting these techniques are likely to employ more women in future than they did in the past. Being cheaper and more docile fewer women than men could be

\textsuperscript{15}Sharma, R. N. and Sengupta, Chandan: Women Employment at SEEPZ. (monograph) Bombay, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, 1984 pp. 199-200.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid. P. 209-11

\textsuperscript{17}Deshpande, Sudha and Deshpande, L. K.: Segmentation and Structural Adjustment. (Paper presented at the seminar on ‘Manpower and Employment Implications of Restructuring’ at the Institute of Applied Manpower Research, New Delhi, Dec. 3-4, 1992
expected to lose their jobs when the employer finds the demand for his product shrinking. When his market expands he would again have preference for cheap female than dear male labour. If both exports grow and domestic demand increases, total employment would increase but the incremental work force, would consist of flexible categories. A pertinent question is whether this general increase in demand for flexible labour would increase demand for female labour necessarily. Experience abroad and at home shows that employers use contract labour and female labour as substitutes for each other.  

Deregulation is likely to lead to decentralization of industrial production. Large firms are likely to train core processes by employing elite technicians and may resort to ancillarization. Small ancillary units are likely to grow and get work done through female workers. Large and small firms may put out work to women as happens even today in food processing garment industry and other manufacturing. A large share of women so employed would be employed intermittently and are likely to report themselves as available for more work. In their more flexible labour market of the 1990s demand for female labour is definitely likely to increase but these women as workers would face insecurity of income and employment, most probably both.

We saw earlier that women in India were a discriminated group. They were victims of discriminations based on wage, occupation and employment in the labour market. Worst still, they experienced human capital discrimination after they entered into labour market. Deregulation and decentralization are likely to make the emerging labour market more segmented than in the past. With greater casualization, feminization and use of contract labour wage differentials between regular and other type of workers would increase. But some forms of discrimination based on gender would diminish. Pre-entry human capital discrimination too is likely to move in the same direction. So far women’s industrial and occupational options were limited. With the new policy women could be expected to enter many production process jobs that were performed

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18 Standing, Guy: Global Feminization through Flexible Labour. World Development, 17(7) 1989 pp. 1077 1080
earlier by men. This feminization of manufacturing jobs could be expected to diversify their occupational structure resulting in reduction in sex labelling of occupations.

The New Economic Policy is not a panacea for all ills that currently confront our economy. To the extent that it is likely to increase the demand for labour in general and that for female labour faster than in the past, offer wider choice of occupation to women entering the labour market in the near future and reduce the extent of poverty among the families of these working women, the change to NEP should be regarded as a positive change. We must remember for the present that to be exploited in the labour market is bad but not to be exploited is worse.\textsuperscript{19}

But, socio-economic changes have appended with urban concentrated production in general and women in particulars, Urbanisation, education and employment, which are contributions of social evolution with new avenues to express and assert themselves. The changed social virtue and impact of westernisation and modernisation has assumed roles and relationships. Urban Indian women have come out of four walls of their homes in search of economic gain.

By coming out of their homes in gainful employment, women have broken traditional notion that working outside is derogatory to them or that only under gross economic necessity they can work outside homes. Today, by and large, even unmarried women are admissible to take up gainful employment. Now they are in bread earner role also.\textsuperscript{20}

Needless to say women is biologically different from men but modern trend rightly emphasise the similarities rather than dissimilarities due to scientific and technological advancement there is less physical and more mental labour which is

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid. P.1081

favourable aspect to establish women’s equality. Educational improvement of women has made them at par with male in all leading sectors.21

In the 1960s, economists commonly believed that women were most likely to be marginalized from the labour market as a consequence of growth of modern sector in the Third World countries.22 Last two decades, especially the 1980s, saw a phenomenal change in the labour market situation in both developed and developing countries. The 1980s should truly be regarded as the decade of deregulation in which the existing formal employer-employee relationships were fast disappearing making way for informal ones. This ‘in formalization’ probably is the root cause of economic activity both in developed and developing economies.23

Although concepts and measurement of labour activity pose intractable problems, more so in developing countries than developed countries, comparable data compiled by the international sources indicate that 9 out of every 19 industrialized, while 7 out of every 10 industrializing economies reported increase in female activity rates in the 1980s. In third of the industrializing countries while two thirds of the industrialized economies the male participation rate declined during the same period.24 This phenomenon of global feminization has increased female participation rates in the face of either decline or constancy in the male participation rates. This has not only increased their share in the total labour force but has resulted in feminization of certain jobs that were traditionally done by men (Standing, 1989). The process in all countries

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has weakened the bargaining capacity of the workers while threatening their employment security.25

Feminization as a process should however be understood in the wider context of the labour market processes of the 1980s. The decade saw a shift away from regulatory to liberal regimes. In the former the state intervened and tried to regulate the labour market by recognizing certain labour and social rights. Global economic situation in the 1970s forced many countries to accept the supply-side strategy of ‘structural adjustment and stabilization’ which was the strategy for liberalization. Shift to liberal regimes entails opening up economies with trade liberalization since expert-led growth is regarded as the only viable development strategy. Under this regime then labour market regulations are viewed as ‘rigidities’ which raise costs and prevent growth of future employment. Since cost-effectiveness is of utmost importance for the success of export promotion strategy it in turn ushered in an era of deregulation. Most countries accepting liberalization experienced erosion of formal regulations that governed working for their labour markets. In some, though such regulations continued to exist they were ineffective either because their implementation was poor or because they were cleverly bypassed by employers who were expected to observe them.

The era of liberalization and deregulation has changed the structure of labour markets, making them increasingly more flexible than in the past. Firms preferred employing flexible labour that could be disposed off if necessary after a specific job, for which it was employed, was done. This has increased the use of casual, temporary, contract and female labour at firm level. Employment of this kind of cheap labour reduces not only the wage costs but also non-wage costs for the firm since this labour is non-permanent. The economic rationality of flexible labour practices fits in well in the strategy that preaches liberalization and cost-effective production. Most countries that accepted the strategy have reported increase in employment. But this employment

25Standing, Guy: Global Feminization through Flexible Labour. World Development, 17(7) 1989 p.29
growth has been mostly of low cost flexible labour. Feminization is one of the facets of this increase in the employment of low cost labour.\textsuperscript{26}

The place of women in the economic life of country is undergoing far reaching radical changes. These changes in terms of their diversity appear to be more marked in developing economies which generally happen to be tradition bound.

In developed countries unmarried women’s participation in economic activity seems to be has been established whereas controversy revolves regarding the married women with family responsibilities. On the other hand, in the newly developing countries clear disposition is yet to be emerged in certain section of population.\textsuperscript{27}

In recent years the question of women’s employment has come into prominence as a result changes of that have taken place in the character and scope of the economic life of family and society. When there is change towards more occupational structure opportunities which women have for work for traditional sector like agriculture, animal husbandry, village industry etc. decline. New avenues of employment for them are being not commensurate with this decline, problems which have wider window social implications come to the surface. In more developed economies there have a marked increase in employment opportunities for women and diverse possibilities of utilising women at all levels of skills and responsibilities. Countries which are operating on full employment basis have found it necessary to draw in as much of female labour as possible but we find complaints from unmarried women who feel that married women who do not have to work, but do so only to augment family income effects, promotion opportunities and chances of employment for single women though the place of such women should be in the home with household chores and children. Married women, on the other hand, argue that their participation in the economic activity is more out of necessity than the need for acquiring frills.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{26}Ibid. Pp. 31-35
\textsuperscript{28}Ranade, B. N. and Ramachandran, P. ed.: Women and Development. Bombay, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, 1971 p. 1
\end{flushright}
The argument between unmarried and married women in developed countries has similar tone in developing countries except the fact that in the latter case it assumes a different form. This form is unemployed men arguing with women in employment\textsuperscript{29}.

A proper understanding of the participation of women in the work force is of crucial importance of their vital contribution in the development. The economic role of women in the third world countries in general and India in particular acquires greater significance for the reason that these countries with a colonial inheritance are faced with the problem of under development and are passing through a period of transition. Working women in the third world countries are perhaps the most talent participants in economic activity\textsuperscript{30}.

Table 3:3

\textbf{Work participation rate in India 1981-2011}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>37.55</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>37.68</td>
<td>51.56</td>
<td>22.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>39.26</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>39.79</td>
<td>53.26</td>
<td>25.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:


(4) Census of India 2011 Provisional population Totals. New Delhi, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2012 p. 79

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid. P. 2

\textsuperscript{30}Standing, Guy: Global Feminization through Flexible Labour Opp.cit. p. 1082
Table 3:3 presents the position of work participation rate in India right from 1981 to 2011, a span of about thirty years. In case of total person participation rate in the census year of 1981 it was 37.55% in 1981, in 1991 37.68%, in 2001 39.26% and it was 39.76% in 2011.

We may say that from 1981 to 2011 there is highest (39.79%) work participation rate in the year 2011 and lowest (37.55%) in 1981. It is a positive fact that since 1981 work participation rate is in rising trend.

As regards male participation rate it was 53.2% in 1981, 51.56% in 1991, 51.9% in 2001 and 53.26% in 2011. In case of female participation rate it was 20.8% in 1981, 22.73% in 1991, 25.7% in 2001 and 25.51% in 2011.

We may say that in case of male participation rate it was highest (53.26%) in the year 2011 and was lowest (51.56%) in the year 1991. In case of female work participation rate it was highest (25.7%) in the year 2001 and it was lowest (20.8%) in the year 1981.

We also find that there is big gap between the work participation rate of male and female in our country. This gap in census year of 1981 was 32.4% in 1981, 26.83% in the year 1991, 26.2% in the year 2001 and it was 27.75 in 2011.

It may be concluded that there is fluctuation in the work participation rate of India. Most striking point is that there is huge gap between the work participation rate between male and female. It is highest (32.4%) in the year 1981 and this gap is lowest (26.2%) in the year 2001. In the year there is marginal rise in work participation rate in India in total and in male but in case of female it is decrease.
Table 3:4

Work participation rate in India- rural-urban 1981-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th></th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>53.77</td>
<td>23.06</td>
<td>38.79</td>
<td>49.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.50</td>
<td>27.20</td>
<td>40.24</td>
<td>48.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>52.36</td>
<td>30.98</td>
<td>41.97</td>
<td>50.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>53.00</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>53.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources-

(1) Verma, A.P; etal: women labour in India. Noida, V.V.Giri National labour institute, 1990 p.33

(2) Census of India 1981: Occasional paper no.8 of 1988; analysis of work force in India. New Delhi, Ministry of Home affairs, 1989 p.33

(3) Census of India 1991 series I India; paper 3 of 1991; provisional population total; workers and their distribution. New Delhi, Ministry of Home Affairs, 1991 p.11


Table 3:4 describes the work participation rate in India from 1981-2011 by sex and rural-urban differentiation. We find that in total in rural sector it was 38.79% in 1981, 40.24% in 1991, 41.97% in 2001and 41.08% in 2011. In this sector we find a growth of 3.01% in thirty years. In total in urban sector it was 28.99% in 1981, 30.44% in 1991, 32.23% in 2001 and 35.31% in 2011. It was growth of 6.32% in the span of thirty years in urban sector. We may conclude that growth rate is higher in urban sector. It is more than double than rural sector which has growth rate of 3.01% only.
Gap between rural and urban growth rate also exist there. It is 10.00% in 1981 and 1991, 9.74% in 2001 and 6.49% in 2011. We find that rural-urban gap is reducing gradually. It is about reduction of 5.00% from 1981 to 2011.

In urban areas in case of male there is growth of only 4.7% in the span of thirty years while in case of female it is 7.09% which is about 2.39% more growth than male.

Comparison between male and female participation rate gap reveals that in rural areas in 1981 it was 30.7%, in 1991 25.3%, in 2001 21.38% and 2011 23.00%. We find that there is reduction about 7.00% in gap.

In urban areas this gap was 40.75% in 1981, 39.21% in 1991, 39.3% in 2001 and 38.36% in 2011. We find that in urban areas there is marginal (2.39%) reduction in male-female gap from 1981 to 2011. It shows that rural female has more growth in participation rate than male and hence there is more reduction in gap between the two.

We may also compare the gap between female to female in rural urban sector. We find that this gap in 1981 is 14.75%, in 1991 17.46%, in 2001 19.43% and in 2011 14.6%. It shows that there is much gap between the two sectors in female participation rate. Though it is an encouraging fact that gap between the two has become less in 2011. It shows that women are going for more and more job urban areas also.

Labour force participation has not only given women an opportunity to earn income but also exposes them to outside the world and to networks and authority structures other than kin based ones. In a developing country like India, however, where women’s work force participation is offer motivated by poverty, these benefits are likely to be mediated by the social context of women’s work and their total work burden. In addition, the empowerment effects of employment for women are likely to depend on their occupation. It is expected that women who work at a regular job, who earn cash, and who perceive that their contribution is a substantial part of the total family earnings are more likely to be empowered than other employed and unemployed women.  

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d. Participation rate in Bihar

In Bihar 72.6% of ever married women age 15-49 were either currently employed 1988-89 or had been employed during the twelve months. 28% of rural women and 13% of urban women worked at any time during proceeding twelve months. The majority of women in both urban (70%) and rural areas (61%) who worked at anytime during the twelve month period worked throughout the year the majority who worked earned cash for their works, but the proportion earning cash was higher in urban areas (87%) than in rural areas (69.0%) nearly out in the (19%) working women in rural areas are in the (10%) in urban areas were unpaid workers.

Nearly, three quarters (71%) of rural women who work are farm workers. In urban areas, there is greater occupational diversity 21.00% of urban women who work are farm workers, 19% are production workers, 19% are in sales and services and 18% are professionals.

A significant feature of women’s work participation in Bihar is their substantial contribution to family earnings. 33% or rural women and 16% of urban women who earn cash in twelve months preceding 1998-99 that their family is entirely dependent on their earnings. Another 32% in urban areas and 26% in rural areas report that they contribute about half or total earnings. Only 10% of women in urban areas and 8% of women in rural areas report that they contribute almost nothing to family earnings.32

Table 3:5 presents the picture of work participation rate in Bihar by sex from 1981 to 2011. We find that in total in 1981 participation rate was 32.35%, in 1991 32.56%, in 2001 33.88% and 2011 33.36%. There is growth of only 1.00% in the span of thirty years.

In male participation rate it is 50.18% in 1981, in 1991 47.95%, in 2001 47.72% and 46.47% in 2011. We find a decreasing trend of male participation rate in Bihar. This decrease is about 3.71% in the span of thirty years. In female participation rate it is 14.65% in 1981, in 15.69% in 1991, 18.83% in 2001 and 19.07% in 2011. It brings into notice

Table 3:5: Work participation rate in Bihar 1981-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>32.35</td>
<td>50.18</td>
<td>14.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>32.56</td>
<td>47.95</td>
<td>15.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>33.88</td>
<td>47.72</td>
<td>18.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>33.36</td>
<td>46.47</td>
<td>19.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources-

(1) India, Ministry of Home affairs: Census of India 1981 occasional paper no. 8 of 1988; Analysis of work force in India. New Delhi, Ministry of Home Affairs, 1988 p. 30

(2) India, Ministry of Home affairs: Census of India 1991, series-1 India, paper of 1991; Provisional population totals; worker and their distribution. New Delhi, ministry of home affairs, 1991 p. 324

(3) India, Ministry of Home affairs: Census of India 2001 workers and non-workers; an analysis based on 2001 census. New Delhi, Ministry of Home affairs, 2008 pp. 21-22

that there is increasing trend in female participation rate. This increment is of 4.42% which is encouraging fact for Bihar.

There is also gap between male and female participation rate. This gap is 35.53% in 1981, 32.26% in 1991, 28.09% in 2001 and 27.4% in 2011. It shows that gap between male and female participation rate is reducing. It is a encouraging fact that female participation rate is increasing and hence reduction is narrowing. It is a significant trend for Bihar.

Table 3:6
Work participation rate in Bihar – rural-urban 1981-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rural Male</th>
<th>Rural Female</th>
<th>Rural Total</th>
<th>Urban Male</th>
<th>Urban Female</th>
<th>Urban Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>51.08</td>
<td>14.65</td>
<td>33.20</td>
<td>44.31</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>26.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>48.86</td>
<td>17.10</td>
<td>33.62</td>
<td>42.21</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>25.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>48.05</td>
<td>20.18</td>
<td>34.65</td>
<td>41.69</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>25.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>28.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources-


(2) India- ministry of statistics and programme implementation: women and men in India 2004. New Delhi, ministry of statistics and plan implementation, 2005 p.45


(4) India. Ministry of Home Affairs: Census of India 2011; Primary census abstract-data highlights; Bihar series 11. New Delhi, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2012 p. 106
Table 3:6 deals with the work participation rate in Bihar by sex and rural-urban basis from 1981 to 2011. It was found that in rural areas male participation rate has decrease in span of thirty years. It is about 4.38%. In case of female there is trend of increment. This increment is of 5.55%. It is matter of hope for backward state like Bihar.

In urban areas also there is decline in male participation rate in 1991 and 2001. This decline is of 2.00% while in year 2001; it has increase by 3.00% which has become at par with 1981.

In case of female participation rate there is raising trend. This trend provides increment of 5.62% in the span of thirty years.

We may conclude that in rural and urban areas female participation rate is comparatively low compare to male participation rate. But it is a significant fact that in both rural and urban areas female participation rate has found growth while male participation rate has gone down.

**Table 3:7**

**Work participation rate by sex in Indian states and UTs 1981-2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A. P.</td>
<td>57.12</td>
<td>27.02</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>56.98</td>
<td>36.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>49.06</td>
<td>35.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>49.19</td>
<td>9.06</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>46.47</td>
<td>19.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>56.76</td>
<td>21.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>52.19</td>
<td>11.03</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>57.16</td>
<td>23.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>48.94</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>50.44</td>
<td>17.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>58.69</td>
<td>44.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>53.19</td>
<td>18.95</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>31.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>41.04</td>
<td>12.77</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>52.73</td>
<td>18.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>M. P.</td>
<td>53.52</td>
<td>22.35</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>53.51</td>
<td>32.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>52.51</td>
<td>23.98</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>31.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>51.58</td>
<td>38.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andaman Nicobar</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>17.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>56.51</td>
<td>16.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dadra &amp; Nagar Haveli</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>61.57</td>
<td>25.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Daman &amp; Diu</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>71.48</td>
<td>14.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lakshadweep</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>46.25</td>
<td>10.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pondicherry</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>54.36</td>
<td>17.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:


This table presents a comparative picture of work participation rate in India and Union Territories by sex in the census year of 1981 and 2011. It has been found that Andhra Pradesh has the highest (57.12%) work participation rate in 1981 while it is lowest (41.04%) in Kerala in case of male in the same year. In case of female in the year 1981 Andhra Pradesh has topped the list with 27.02% work participation rate while Punjab has the lowest rate with 2.27% only. It is highest in Andhra Pradesh in both male and female because this state has been the IT hub from the very beginning. But, it is strange to note the lowest participation rate of male in Kerala in spite of the high literacy rate of the state. In case of female Punjab is at the lowest level because there female did not want to work rather they want to remain engage in household chores.

It has been found that Tamil Nadu has the highest work participation rate in this year 1991 in case of male at 56.6% while lowest male participation in lowest (45.3%) in the state of Manipur in the same year. In case of female in the year 1991 Mizoram has topped the list with 43.5% of participation rate while Punjab has the lowest participation rate with meagre 4.4%.

In the year 2001 again Tamil Nadu is at top with 57.6% of participation in case of male and lowest is in Uttaranchal with 46.1% only. In case of female Mizoram has topped the list with 47.5% and lowest in Kerala with 15.4% only.

It is strange to note was that in the year 1991 female participation rate in Punjab is lowest (4.4%) while it is among the developed states on Indian map. It may be because women in Punjab do not want to work rather they want to remain busy in household chores. But one more point is eye catching in case of Punjab that in the year 2001 approx 15.0% is enhancement in the work participation in Punjab. It shows that they have developed trend to come into job. Modern educated girl tend to go into employment considerably more than before. This is why about 4 times enhancement seems to be there.

In the same way we find a peculiar point in case of female work participation rate in Kerala which is regarded as the highly literate states in India which has decreased nominally from 1991 to 2001. It has gone down by .4%. though this decrease is also in some other states also like Arunachal Pradesh by 1.0% , Maharashtra by about
3.0%, Assam by 1.0% and Uttarakhand by 3.0%. In case of rundown of female work participation from 1991 to 2001 Uttarakhand and Maharashtra are at peak and at low is Kerala.

In case of increment in the work participation rate from 1991 to 2001 there is also a marking point. Though in several states increment may be seen but Haryana and Punjab have eye catching increment. While in Haryana it is about 16.7% increment and in Punjab it is about 15.0%. It may be due to modern educated unmarried girl are preferring to go in job rather than business and other engagement.

As far as Bihar female participation is related there is increment of 7.0% from 1991 to 2001. Yet Bihar is relatively poor in case of female work participation on Indian map. As per ranking of female work participation rate Bihar is on 27th rank in 1991 and in 2001 it could get only 26th rank.

As per the comparison of 2001 census with 2011 census there is declining trend in female in half of the Indian states. It is highest (11.34) in Mizoram and lowest (0.03) in Chhattisgarh. As per as raising trend is related it is in half of the Indian states. Jharkhand and Orissa have topped the list with 3.00% rise and minimum (0.03) is in Tamil Nadu. It has been found that developed states have more declining trends than developing and backward states. Even Bihar has rising trend of 1% in 2011 in comparison with 2001.

In Union Territories Dadra and Nagar Haveli has highest decline in 2011 as compared to 2001. It is 13.00% and lowest in Daman & Diu with 4.00%. In comparison of rising trend in 2011 Lakshadweep has top the list with 4.00% and lowest in Pondicherry with 0.43%.

**Recent trends**

In India as per the constitutional provision there is no sex bar in any field of employment. Many top posts are filled in by women. Even women have been president, prime minister, Lok Sabha speakers etc. They are in top bureaucracy, police services and armed force services.
Now a day’s women are on high demand in private Indian companies and MNC’s. They are attracting and grooming women managers in leadership roles. In most of the IT companies 30-40% employees are women. Gender diversity is scoring high for head honchos. Companies are putting gender diversity as a key result area for the CEO and for other business trades. The word gender diversity was not in the vocabulary of companies fifteen to twenty years ago but today it is on the agenda of management and boards.

In many companies it is proven that women employment has positive impact on business. There is large bucket of gender diversity in companies which are attracting women’s retaining and engaging women and growing the high potential.  

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