SJIF Impact Factor (2025): 8.688| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 10 | Issue: 11 | November 2025 - Peer Reviewed Journal

BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT
Women are the more disadvantaged group, especially rural and backward classes and castes like SC/ST in India. In traditional male-dominated society, women historically struggled with all kinds of decision-making-equal participation in the community and traditional society. It has resulted in illiteracy, low levels of education, employment, political participation, discrimination, poor living like poverty and social exclusion. In the meantime, since independence, the government has implemented various policies as well as programmes aimed at promoting, especially for women's education, employment and equality across all sectors, consideration for women equal to men in the country. However, the current employment positions of women's participation rate are not equal as compared to men's. Nowadays, we are in the 21st century and a number of schemes and policies are implemented for women's development and empowerment. Its impact some percentages of reducing traditional employment and shifting traditional to modern employment with influence of urbanization increasing, education, skill and employment opportunities. In this backdrop, the present paper has mainly drawn attention to studying the barriers to women's participation in the workforce in the Indian context. This study was used as per the availability of secondary level information.
KEY WARDS: *Women, Workforce, Gender, Inequality, Programme, India*

INTRODUCTION

Work Force participation or labour Force Participation is an important factor in the study of development process. The participation rates may vary by region, by sex , and by time mortality, migration etc., by economic factors like growth of the economy, government employment programmes, expansion of employment opportunities in the private sector etc., and also by the expansion of education, skills development vocational training opportunities etc. Women quite often are the major bread earns for their families. Some evident women work continues to be invisible and women continue to be marginalized and discriminated against in the field of employment. The result is non- recognition of their multiple roles and devaluation of their status in the household and family. The status of the women in the society is an index of the civilization. Women as co – human beings, have as much right to full development as men have and so emancipation of women is an essential pre requisite for economic development and social process. According, to International Labour Organization (ILO). There is a tendency to under value women's work in rural areas. All of their work is taken as unpaid family labour. But it is quantified the worlds grass National Product (GNP) would increased by 20-30 percent more (ILO 1981-85). United nation statistics envisaged the women perform 67 per cent of worlds working hours and earns only 10 percent of the world's income. They possess less than one percent of the world's property. And about 77 per cent of them live in rural areas. Majority of them come from small, marginal and landless families. Their main occupation is agriculture and allied activities, involving them either as cultivator or agricultural labourers. About 60-70 percent of the labour input is provided by women in production, processing and storage of food grains and women are responsible for 68 per cent of the food production.

In India the employment effect of economic women as human resource and constituting about 50 per cent of the total population. Women's are the driving force behind 70 per cent of the small enterprises with nearly 35 per cent of the families dependent on them. According to the labour surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization, the percentages of women workers in rural areas has increased from 29.9 per cent in 1999- 200 to 32.7 per cent in 2004-05, in the case of urban women, the percentages of women employed in jobs went up by just 2.7 percent, up from 13.9 percent in 1999-200 to 16.6 percent in 2004-05. At same the time official Nagaland had the highest percentages of working women in rural areas at 50.4 percent while Mizoram had the largest percentages of women workers in urban area. In Delhi has the lowest proportion of women workers in rural areas at 4.7 percent. Overall over period of time the women labour participation has been differ from sector to sector and varies from areas. In this backdrop, the present paper has mainly drawn attention to studying the barriers to women's participation in the workforce in the Indian context.

Objectives and database of the study

In this study we have focused on sectoral wise share of employment trends. Meanwhile, female employment participation rates and sector wise women workforce participation has been mainly discussed. To study, the general discussed the barriers to women's participation in the workforce in the Indian context. To study, the government programmes and policies towards increasing the rate

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of women's participation in the workforce. In this study we used secondary level data. And the information has been collected from different journals, documents, newspapers, research theses as well as research studies and government reports, census reports and also some websites for collecting information about the study.

Sectoral Share of GDP Growth in India

India is an example of a completely traditional nation. Based on historical evidence, India is currently a global community. India's primary occupation prior to independence was the traditional agricultural system. Only the primary sector was offering more than 80% of employment opportunities; the secondary and service sectors came in second and third, respectively. However, the sectoral standings have completely changed. The following figure shows how it is completely altering as global villages and GDP share percentages have dominated various sectors.

Figure 1: Sectoral Share of GDP Growth in India.

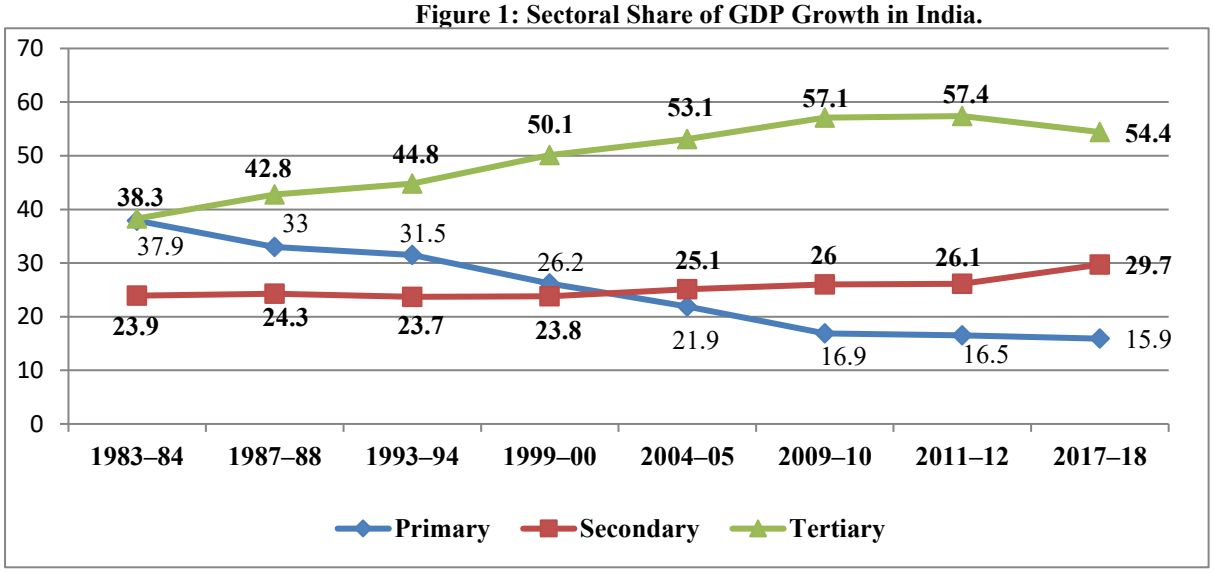


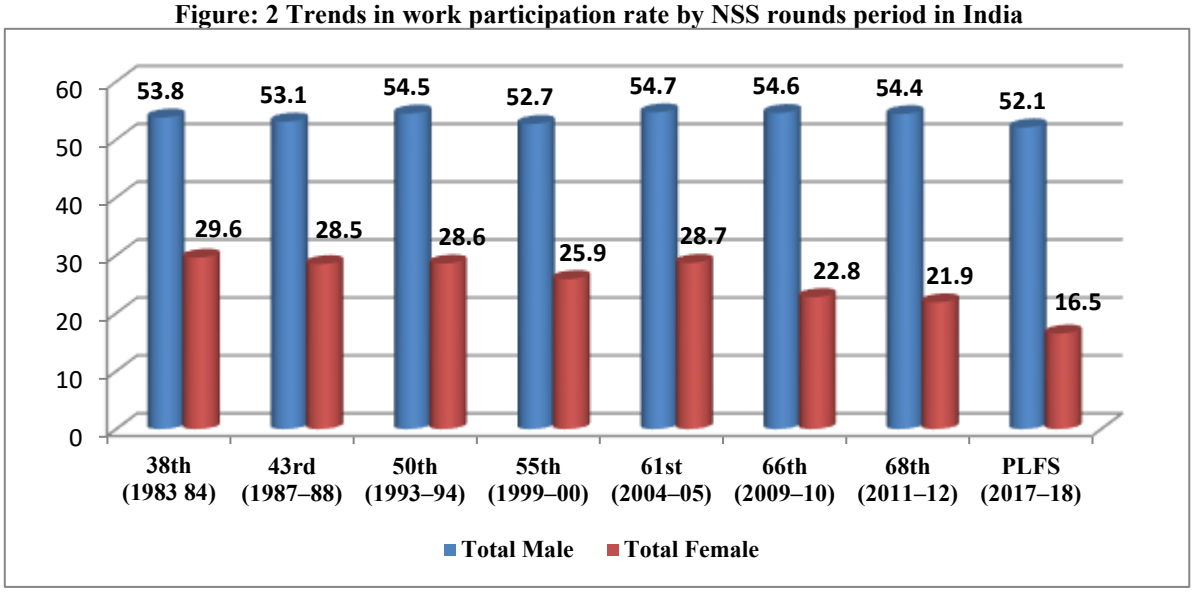
Figure 1 makes it abundantly clear that, between 1983 and 2018, the primary sector's sectoral proportion of India's GDP growth rate fell sharply, from 37.9 to 15.9 percent, respectively. However, during the same time period, secondary sector growth increased little, rising from 23.9 percent to 29.7 percent. Simultaneously, the third tertiary sector had significant growth, rising from 38.3 percent to 57.4 percent between 1983 and 2012, with a minor decrease in 2018. This represents a 3 percent decrease from the prior year, or 54.4 percent. It demonstrates unequivocally that throughout time, the tertiary growth rate ranks first and second as the secondary sector is secure and extremely

Female works Participation rate in developed and under developed countries:

One of the most striking phenomena of recent times has been the extent to which women have increased their share of the labour force; the increasing participation of women in paid work has been driving employment trends and the gender gaps in labour force participation rates have been shrinking. Especially in the 1980s and early 1990s, labour force growth was substantially higher for women than for men for every region of the world except Africa. In the developed industrialized countries, increasing female labour force participation has been linked to the completion of the fertility transition. In many developing countries, however, fertility decline has been slow or stalled.

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Figure: 2 Trends in work participation rate by NSS rounds period in India



***Source**: NSSO 68th Round, Report No.554, Employment and Unemployment Situation in India, 2011-2012 & Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2017-2018, Ministry of Statistics and programme Implementation, National Statistical Office, Government of India.*

The figure stated that trends in work participation rates by NSS rounds both male and female in the country. According to the 38th round up, the Periodic labour force survey from 1983 to 2018, it is clear in figure 2 that the male and female work participation rates have decreased over a period of time for both genders in the country. But the male work participation rate has come down from 53.8 percent to 52.1 percent except the 50th and 61st, 66th and 68th NSS rounds, less than one percent and slightly down in the Periodic labour force survey of 2017. But on the other hand, the female work participation rate has significantly come down from the 38th round to up to PLFC (2017). It is 29.6 percent to 16.5 percent, around more than13 percent decrease in the work participation rate of females in the country. It shows that over a period of time, primary sector employment has drastically come down in the country and has adversely impacted on female work participation.

Table 1: Sectoral Share of Female Employment in India.

Years	Rural			Urban		
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
1983 1984	87.8	7.1	5.1	31.6	30	38.4
1987-1988	85.1	9.6	5.3	30.2	30.9	38.9
1993-1994	86.6	7.9	5.5	25.3	28.5	46.2
1999-2000	85.7	8.7	5.6	18.1	29	52.9
2004-2005	83.6	9.9	6.5	18.3	32.2	49.5
2009-2010	79.7	12.7	7.6	14.2	33	52.8
2011-2012	75.2	16.5	8.3	11.2	33.7	55.1
2017-2018	73.4	13.4	13.2	9.3	29.9	60.8
1983-2018 Change	− 14.4	6.3	8.1	− 22.3	− 0.1	22.4

On the basis of the above table, it reveals that the sectoral share of female employment differs from sector to sector and differs from period to period and also from rural to urban areas in the given period of 35 years after the 38th NSS round period in India. As per the above statistics, the employment opportunity and women's share in the primary sector have declined from 87.8 percent to 73.4 percent over a period of time; it has around 14.5 less in changes. But in urban areas, the primary sector employment share has declined more, from 31.6 percent to 9.3 percent. It is almost 22.3 percent less, and compared to rural areas, it is more in urban areas; the female share of participation in the primary sector has declined. Looking at the secondary sector in a rural area, it increased significantly, from 7.1 percent to 13.4 percent (from the change of 6.3 percent), but it has fluctuated in urban areas as it changed 0.1 percent less compared to overtime. On the other hand, the tertiary sector has drastically increased women's participation share and highly increased both areas. 5.1 percent to 13.2 percent rural and 38.4 percent to 60.8 percent in urban areas, the change rate is less

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in rural and more in urban, as 8.1 percent to 22.4 percent. Overall, we come across the fact that primary sector women's employment share has drastically declined compared to the other two sectors, and the service sector share has increased tremendously compared to the primary and secondary sectors in the country.

Overall observation of the study shows the passiveness of women's employment status in India. Comparatively, all three sectors show women empowerment has improved in the second quarter, as well as the growing service sector in the country. Access to educational facilities influenced women to enter into the service sector and empowered them economically, as compared to the earlier primary sector. Its results have been more employment, lower earnings, and lower. It is totally changing as per the implementation of education facilities for women, and the right to the compulsory education act has played a vital role for women entering into school. This is a very important role, as well as government policies along with programs that have made the literacy rate too high in the women's population, and also their thinking capacity boosted more women entering into different sectors. On the other hand, we know today's modern technology is reducing its power in the agriculture sector. Therefore, the surplus labour will be shifted to different sectors, like industry and self-employment, government, and the private sector for employment. It is also one of the main attractions to women entering into the service sector and also, in the side-by-side growth of urbanization, also made more opportunity to sift from the primary sector to the service sector, in that context female participation rate in the primary sector came down. Over a period of time, women's employment percentage rate went down overall, and women's percentage status of employment in India.

Barriers to women's participation in the workforce

The type of work done by women in India can be classified into different areas, along with rural to urban areas and caste as well as traditional culture. Women engage in the workforce as the following categories: wage and salaried employment, Self - employment outside the household for profit, Self–employed in cultivation and household industry for profit, Self-employment in cultivation for own consumption, Other subsistence activities in all allied sectors like dairying other livestock rearing such as poultry, goats, pigs, etc. Activities related to domestic work such as fetching fuel, fodder, water, forest produce, repairing of dwellings, making cow – dung cakes, food preservation etc. Domestic work such as cooking, clearing, care of children, the aged and the sick in the world as well as in India. But, today, women are lagging behind men in all aspects due of some systemic barriers holding women back. The systemic barriers contributing to this enduring pay gap are multifaceted. For instance, women are perceived to be less ambitious than men. However, for women in the workplace, some reports state that women are more ambitious in their careers. Many women face micro aggressions in the workplace that not only demean them but demotivate them and can contribute to feeling unsafe in their workplaces. Women with disabilities are far more likely to feel pressure to perform perfectly, more so than women overall, especially women of colour or those with disabilities. Societal expectations still exist that women are the default spouse or parent who will bear the majority of the household burden in traditional family structures. This expectation, in addition to an economy that demands most families have both partners bring in financial income, creates an additional uneven burden on women. Unpaid labour, such as childcare, housework, and taking care of elderly or sick family members, limits the opportunities these women are able to pursue in the workplace. That time could be spent on career growth and promotions, yet the lack of affordable childcare and the inability of corporations to implement flexible schedules for mothers trying to balance work and family make the advancement of women nearly impossible. At the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw a major setback in women's careers. Schools and day-cares closed, and many mothers had to leave work or cut hours to care for their kids. The impact reverberated. The rate of women in the labour force dropped to 56.1 percent according to the Bureau of Labour Statistics—the lowest since 1988. Sexual harassment also remains alarmingly prevalent, undermining women's authority, safety, and career trajectories. A 2022 survey by the Centre of American Progress found that 1 in 3 women had been harassed by a co-worker in the past year, leading women to feel unsafe in the workplace.

Women workers face specific problems in each occupation depending upon nature and area of work, level of their education and the prevailing social set up as follows. Invisibility and undervaluation of women's to economic contribution. Double work day for women as workers and the housewives. Wrong gender expectations that women to be inferior and submissive are in their workplace. Women are lagging behind in entry to gainful employment in the public and private sector. Suffering from displacement of the women, due to the introducing of different type of modern technology. Discrimination in wages between men and women is reluctance on the part of employers to employ women. Sexual harassment, Exclusion for social security benefits. Shortages of sufficient accommodations, like working women's hostels, crèches, day care centres and transport facilities. And also less access to developmental resources and lack of economic independence. In the other hand on of the major problem of health problems, etc. These are the main problems barriers to women's participation in the workforce in the country.

The Constitutional Provisions, Policies and Programmes

The process of national development has made the planners give special attention to the problems of women workers. Several attempts are being made to give women a better deal in the sphere of work and to recognize the contribution of women workers to the socio- economic development of the country. The constitution of India contains a number of provisions regarding equal treatment

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to men and women in the field of economic activity. It not only provides equal rights and privileges for women and men, but also makes special provisions for women as following.

1. Right to Equality
2. Prohibition of Discrimination on the Grounds of Sex etc.
3. Equality of Opportunity in Matters of Public Employment.
4. Right to Freedom
5. Right Against Exploitation

The Directive Principle of the State Policy provides certain directions for the policies which the State should pursue. Article 39 states, the State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing. That citizens, men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood; That there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women; That the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizen are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations united to their age strength. Article 42 further directs the States to make provision for securing just human conditions of work and provides maternity relief.

CONCLUSION

The problems of working women in India differ from area to area and differ considerably in the formal and informal sector. Still women workforce less as compare to men in all sectors. It is due to nature of work, lack of education, skill as well as discrimination between men and women, traditional system, excision in social ladder, poverty, disability and men dominating society. Tackling these systemic barriers requires comprehensive efforts on multiple fronts. At the organizational level, making pay transparent and conducting regular audits can show and fix gender-based pay gaps. Dedicated leadership pipelines supporting women's career advancement into senior roles are crucial, as are robust mentorship programs and sponsorship initiatives. Policies like paid parental leave, flexible work hours, and affordable childcare can help women re-enter the workforce and stay in it. Training to combat biases in hiring, promotions, and performance reviews is also key. On a broader scale, giving more people access to education can open up higher-paying jobs. Efforts to encourage young women to enter these male-dominated areas could pay off for generations to come. They could also help women become more confident and help eliminate both conscious and unconscious biases. Fundamentally, a cultural shift is needed in how workplaces and wider society view and value women's labour — paid and unpaid. Creating fair, inclusive environments empowers women to thrive, and help organizations to grow. The government should also be implementing strictly constitutional rights as well as above said suggestions to improve the work participation of females in the future of the country.

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