

# Women and Work: The Global Dimension

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper deals with the status of women and work at global dimension to empower them. Also, the study states that what are the obstacles faced by women while doing their work or job to get equal wages including Social Security, to assure women's economic security over the life course. It compares the difference between the Female Labour force participation and gender disparities in labour force participation rates at global level.*

## Keywords

*Women, work, Female labour force, gender disparities, gender equity*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Women in the work force earning wages or salary are paid of a modern phenomenon, one that developed at the same time as the growth of paid employment for men, but women have been challenged by inequality in the workforce. Until modern times, legal and cultural practices, combined with the inertia of longstanding religious and educational conventions, restricted women's entry and participation in the workforce. Work ought to be adequately and fairly compensated, regardless of where it is performed, at home or in workplace, or the workers gender, Woman or Men. For over forty years, wider opportunities for women has led multiple efforts to assure women have quality jobs that pay dignified wages and provide benefits. By training women for non-traditional jobs and careers, such as skilled trades in construction and home repair, we can improve their standard of living through increased wages until equal pay is a reality. We are still in an age where women do equal work but do not receive equal pay. Whether being paid to for a skilled trade or caring for an aging parent, work needs to be compensated, through adequate wages, benefits and credited in retirement systems including Social Security, to assure women's economic security over the life course.

This study contains Review of literature on women issues and empowerment, Objectives, Research gap, Methodology, Limitation, Scope, Conclusion and Reference.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of related literature is an important step in undertaking research. It helps in clarifying and defining the problem, stating objectives, formulating hypotheses, selecting appropriate design and methodology of research as well as interpreting the results in the light of the research work already undertaken.

**H. Subrahmanyam (2011)** compares women education in India at present and past. Author highlighted that there has a good progress in overall enrollment of students in schools. The term empower means to give lawful power or authority to girls act. It is the process of acquiring some activities of women.

**M. Bhavani Sankara Rao (2011)** has highlighted that health of women members of SHGs have certainly taken her turn to better. It clearly shows that health of women members discuss among themselves about health related problems of other members and their children and make them aware of various government provisions specially meant for them.

**Doepke M. Tertilt M. (2011)** Does female Empowerment promote economic development? This study is an empirical analysis suggesting that money in the hands of mothers benefits children. This study developed a series non-cooperative family bargaining models to understand what kind of frictions can give rise to the observed empirical relationship.

**Duflo E. (2011)** Women's empowerment and economic development national bureau of economic research Cambridge. The study argues that the inter relationships of the empowerment and development are probably too weak to be self-sustain and that continuous policy commitment to equally for its own sake may be needed to bring about equality between men and women.

**Sethuraman K. (2008)** The role of women's empowerment and domestic violence in child growth and under nutrition in a tribal and rural community South India. This Research paper explores the relationship between women's empowerment and domestic violence, maternal nutritional status and the nutritional status and

growth over six month in children aged six to 24months in rural and tribal community. This longitudinal observational study undertaken in rural Karnataka, India included tribal and rural subjects.

**Venkata Ravi and Venkatraman (2005)** focused on the effects of SHGs on women participation and Exercising control over decision making both in family matters and in group activities.

**The New York Times** has analysed the data to link it with age old gender norms in India; in a male dominated society, women are rarely encouraged to seek jobs outside their homes. There are also biases against certain jobs which lead to poor participation of women in the labour force.

**Brixiova, Bulir, and Comeneta (2001)** analyze the gender gap in Eritrea during the 1990s, which appears to be linked to lower female teacher participation and limited employment opportunities. The widening gender gap is associated with a long-term negative impact on both economic growth and poverty reduction.

**Evangelista de Carvalho Filho (2008)** shows that girls' labor participation rates were reduced by access to increase benefits resulting from a social security reform, but only when benefits were received by a female elderly. Effects on boys' school enrollment rates and labor participation were in general smaller and statistically insignificant.

**Freeman Garcia-Escribano (2004)** investigates the role of spousal labor in buffering transitory shocks to husbands' earnings, finding that the smoothing resulting from the wives' labor response (both labor force participation and hours of work) is larger for households with limited access to credit.

**Laframboise and Trumbic (2003)** assess the influence of government expenditure and taxation policies on the economic and social welfare of women in the Middle East and North Africa, finding that the relatively weak social outcomes are not explained by the level of government social spending, but rather by the efficiency and reach of present spending.

**Loko and Diouf (2009)** study the main determinants of total factor productivity (TFP) growth, finding that reforms in the Maghreb countries that would result in TFP gains include encouraging women to enter the work force.

**Sarraf (2003)** examines the concept of gender-responsive government budgeting, and the extent of its

implementation by national governments in both advanced and developing countries. While government budget management systems can help promote gender equality, to be fully effective, the systems must address the lack of appropriate budget classifications and the widespread lack of gender analysis expertise and gender-disaggregated data.

**Steinberg and Nakane (2012)** explore the extent to which raising female labor force participation can help slow the steady fall of Japan's potential growth rate. While raising female participation could provide an important boost to growth, women would face multiple hurdles in engaging in paid work. To increase women's labor force participation, Japan should consider policies to reduce the gender gap in career positions and provide better support for working mothers.

**Stotsky (2006)** argues that experience to date with "gender budgeting" has been mixed. To become more useful, gender budgeting should be integrated into budget processes in a way that generates tangible improvements in policy outcomes. The IMF should encourage fiscal authorities to take into account the external benefits of reducing gender inequality and remove from fiscal legislation any arbitrary discrimination against women

### III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the need of working women on Economic Development
2. To assess the Indian economy and female participation in work force
3. To analyze the Female Labour force participation and gender disparities in labour force participation rates at global level (in selected Asia and Pacific countries 2012)
4. To Study the trends in Female Labour Force Participation rates among South Asian Selected Countries (Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka).
5. To offer useful Suggestions in the light of Findings through Policies to Enhance Female Labor Force Participation and Gender Equity.

### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. In this paper an attempt has been taken to analyze the women and work and their labour force participation at

global level. The data used in it is purely from secondary sources according to the need of this study.

### V. NEEDS OF WORKING WOMEN ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

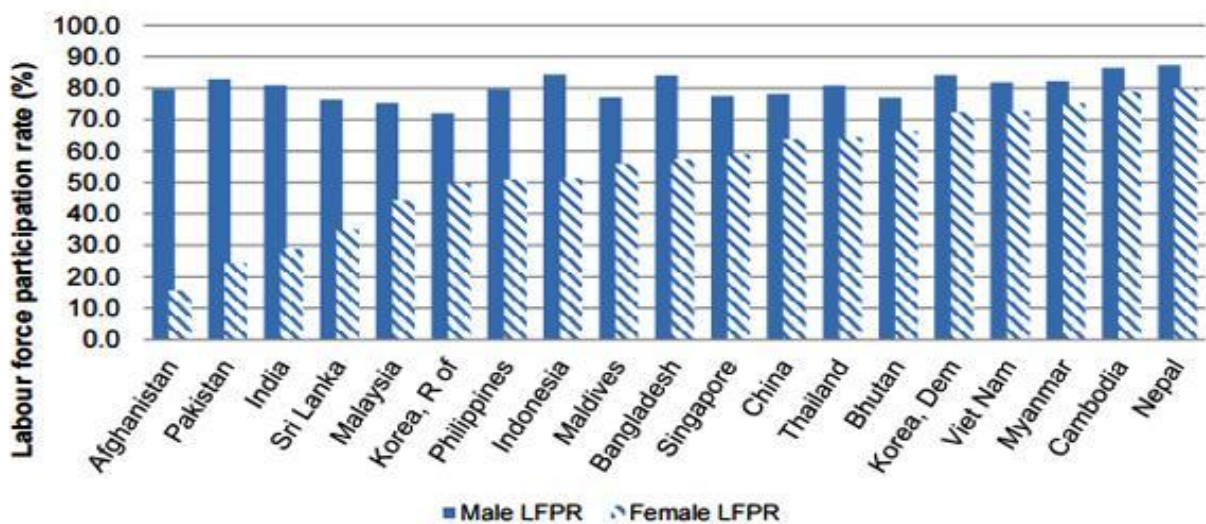
By in large, women are still highly concentrated in low-wage industries and continue to shoulder a disproportionate share of the uncompensated caregiving to family members. One important change that needs to occur is the framing of work that women often find themselves in. we should focus on both women and men as workers with familial responsibilities. The work both in and outside of the home contribute greatly to the overall societal good and, therefore, should be acknowledged and compensated fairly.

### VI. INDIAN ECONOMY AND FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN WORK FORCE

Usually, economic growth goes hand in hand with emancipation of women. But data available with the International Labour Organization (ILO) shows otherwise for India. Between 2004 to 2011, when the Indian economy grew at a healthy average of about 7%, there was a decline in female participation in the country's labour force from over 35% to 25%. It's a puzzling picture; over the past few decades' access to education for Indian women has increased but still they have increasingly stayed away from employment.

But in certain sector like financial services, Indian women lead the charge. While only one in 10 Indian companies are led by women, more than half of them are in the financial sector. Today, women head both the top public and private banks in India.

Gender disparities in labour force participation rates in selected Asia and Pacific countries, 2012



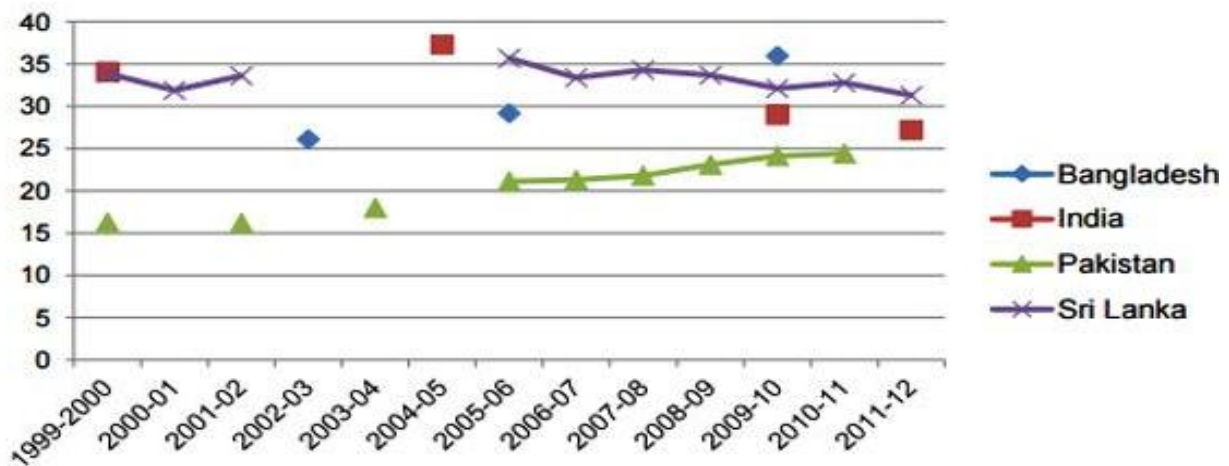
Note: LFPR = labour force participation rate.  
 Source: ILO, 2014.

Another example is India's aviation sector, 11.7 percent of India's 5,100 pilots are women, versus 3 percent worldwide. But these successes only represent a small section of women in the country.

India does poorly in comparison to its neighbours despite a more robust economic growth. In comparison to India, women in Bangladesh have increased their participation in

the labour market, which is due to the growth of the ready-made garment sector and a push to rural female employment. In 2015, women comprised of 43% of the labour force in Bangladesh. The rate has also increased in Pakistan, albeit from a very low starting point, while participation has remained relatively stable in Sri Lanka. Myanmar with 79% and Malaysia with 49% are also way ahead of India.

Trends in female labour force participation rates South Asia (%)



Note: Sri Lanka: 10+, excluding Northern and Eastern provinces.  
Source: Based on data from national statistical offices.

Research done by ILO shows that there has been some increase of women employment in urban areas, rural India shows the exact opposite trend since 2004. ILO attributes this to three factors: increasing educational enrolment, improvement in earnings of male workers that discourages women's economic participation, and the lack of employment opportunities at certain levels of skills and qualifications discouraging women to seek work.

But no study on Indian women is complete without considering their contribution to household work which goes without any national accounting.

In some parts of South Asia, women's participation in the labour market is dropping further and is increasingly being seen as one of the main causes behind the slow growth in employment. One such place is India. According to the ILO's Global Employment Trends 2013 report, India's labour force participation rate for women fell from just over 37 per cent in 2004-05 to 29 per cent in 2009-10. Out of 131 countries with available data, India ranks 11th from the bottom in female labour force participation.

"Despite very rapid economic growth in India in recent years, we're observing declining female labour force participation rates across all age groups, across all education levels, and in both urban and rural areas," said ILO economist Steven Kapsos.

## VII. FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION (FLFP) AT GLOBAL LEVEL

In rapidly aging economies, higher Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) can boost growth by mitigating the impact of a shrinking workforce. For example, in Japan, the annual potential growth rate could rise by about ¼ percentage point if the female labor participation rate were to reach the average for the G7 countries, resulting in a permanent rise in per capita GDP of 4 percent, compared to the baseline scenario (IMF, 2012). Higher female work force participation would also result in a more skilled labor force, in view of women's higher education levels (Steinberg and Nakane, 2012).

**Better opportunities for women to earn and control income could contribute to broader economic development in developing economies;** for instance through higher levels of school enrollment for girls. Women are more likely than men to invest a large proportion of their household income in the education of their children. According to the ILO, women's work, both paid and unpaid, may be the single most important poverty-reducing factor in developing economies (Heintz, 2006).

Accordingly, higher FLFP and greater earnings by women could result in higher expenditure on school enrollment for children, including girls, potentially triggering a virtuous cycle, when educated women become female role models (Aguirre and others 2012; Miller 2008). Stotsky (2006b) posits that women's relative lack of opportunities in developing countries inhibits economic growth, while at the same time, economic growth leads to improvements in their disadvantaged conditions.

**Equal access to inputs would raise the productivity of female-owned companies (Do, Levchenko, and Raddatz, 2011).** Productivity differentials among companies owned by men and by women have been found to be mainly the result of differences in access to productive inputs (Blackden and Hallward-Driemeier 2013). A reduction of this productivity gap through equal access to productive resources could yield considerable output gains (World Bank, 2011).

**The employment of women on an equal basis would allow companies to make better use of the available talent pool, with potential growth implications (Barsh and Yee, 2012; CAHRS 2011).** While not uncontroversial, there is evidence of a positive impact of women's presence on boards and in senior management on companies' performance.<sup>1</sup> Companies employing female managers could be better positioned to serve consumer markets dominated by women (CED 2012; CAHRS 2011) and more gender-diverse boards could enhance corporate governance by offering a wider range of perspectives (OECD, 2012; Lord Davies, 2013). Moreover, a larger share of women in decision-taking positions could reduce the share of high-risk financial transactions that are normally conducted by male traders (Coates and Herbert, 2008).

Average FLFP remains low at around 50 percent, with levels and trends varying across regions. While women now represent 40 percent of the global labor force (World Bank, 2011), FLFP have hovered around 50 percent over the past two decades. The average rate masks significant cross-regional differences in levels and trends: FLFPs vary from a low of 21 percent in the Middle East and North Africa to over 63 percent in East Asia and the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa.

While Latin America and the Caribbean experienced strong increases in FLFP of some 13 percentage points over the past two decades, rates have been declining in South Asia. The rate in Europe and Central Asia has stayed broadly constant. Differences between male and female participation rates have narrowed, but remain high in most regions. The average gender participation gap—which is the difference between male and female labor force participation rates—has been declining since 1990, largely due to a worldwide fall in male labor force participation rates, but remains significant.

**The gender gap varies strongly by region,** with the highest gap observed in the Middle East and North Africa (51 percentage points), followed by South Asia and Central America (above 35 percentage points), and the

lowest levels seen in Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) countries and Eastern and Middle Africa (around 12 percentage points).

**Variations in the gender gap are significant even among OECD countries.** For instance, the gender gap in the Japanese labor market stands at 25 percentage points, compared to just over 10 percentage points on average in the major advanced economies and only 6 percentage points in Sweden. Across the OECD membership, female employment is concentrated in the services sector, which accounts for 80 percent of employed women, compared to 60 percent for men. Within this sector, women fill a disproportionately high share of occupations in health and community services, followed by education (OECD, 2012). An analysis by the ILO (2010) finds that women are overrepresented in sectors that are characterized by low status and pay.

Women make up a little over half the world's population, but their contribution to measured economic activity, growth, and well-being is far below its potential, with serious macroeconomic consequences. Despite significant progress in recent decades, labor markets across the world remain divided along gender lines, and progress toward gender equality seems to have stalled. Female labor force participation (FLFP) has remained lower than male participation, women account for most unpaid work, and when women are employed in paid work, they are overrepresented in the informal sector and among the poor. They also face significant wage differentials vis-à-vis their male colleagues. In many countries, distortions and discrimination in the labor market restrict women's options for paid work, and female representation in senior positions and entrepreneurship remains low. The challenges of growth, job creation, and inclusion are closely intertwined. While growth and stability are necessary to give women the opportunities they need, women's participation in the labor market is also a part of the growth and stability equation. In particular, in rapidly aging economies, higher female labor force participation can boost growth by mitigating the impact of a shrinking workforce. Better opportunities for women can also contribute to broader economic development in developing economies, for instance through higher levels of school enrollment for girls.

## VIII. WOMEN AND WORK BRINGS EMPOWERMENT

- (a) Women's employment is empowering or "status enhancing", so that they have control over income

and resources and a greater say in family decision-making, including in fertility decisions;

- (b) The conflict between women's productive and reproductive roles significantly raises the opportunity cost of having children;
- (c) Childcare arrangements are not easily available and the time intensity and quality of childcare desired seriously constrain women's economic activities;
- (d) The interruption effects (of a period of labour force withdrawal to bear and raise young children) involve heavy costs;
- (e) The returns and satisfactions women derive from participation in economic activities are substantially higher than the returns and satisfactions of having additional children;
- (f) Women's employment and income-earning capacity enhances their economic or financial independence and reduces the need to have children as a form of security for old age or against adverse economic conditions;
- (g) Women's economic role and contribution to family welfare lead to reduced sex preference for children and changing attitudes toward the value of daughters;
- (h) Women's increasing participation in the labour force is linked to increasing investments in girls' education, and age at first marriage and age at first pregnancy go up; and
- (i) Women work and build up careers before marriage, and age at first marriage and age at first pregnancy go up.

## IX. POLICIES TO ENHANCE FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND GENDER EQUITY

Development issues in developing economies, the IMF cooperates closely with other organizations that support women through their projects and research. In its 2012 World Development Report, the World Bank made note of specific constraints faced by women who aim to join the formal labor market or become entrepreneurs, as well as to successful strategies to overcome these constraints, in particular in low-income countries (LICs). Specifically, the report pointed to:

- Gender-responsive budgeting. The incorporation of gender issues in Bangladesh's national budget began in 2005 as part of the government's efforts to promote a more inclusive society; 20 ministries now compile gender budgeting reports (World Bank 2012b).
- Access to health services, primary and secondary school education, and vocational training is critical to help women transition from casual and informal sector work to more permanent work in the formal sector. In Bangladesh, female labor participation has benefited from the government's Health and Community Services, and the participation rate of young women almost doubled in the late 1990s. Adequate health care is also key to relieving women from time-consuming informal health care obligations.
- Enhancing property and inheritance rights and increasing women's access to credit and other productive resources can reduce the gender productivity gap. With support from the International Finance Corporation, commercial banks in Nigeria and Uganda increased their lending to female entrepreneurs, also adapting securities requirements to female customers.
- Investments in infrastructure and transportation services reduce the costs related to work outside the home. In rural Bangladesh, the upgrading and expansion of the road network increased labor supply and incomes.
- Access to electricity and water sources closer to home frees up women's work time and allows them to integrate into the formal economy. In rural South Africa, electrification was found to have increased women's labor market participation by 9 percent.
- Better access to information and communication technologies can facilitate access to markets and market work. Mobile banking, such as M-PESA in Kenya, facilitates financial and banking transactions and lowers transaction costs in market access.

## X. CONCLUSION

Women in the workforce earning wages or a salary are part of a modern phenomenon, one that developed at the same time as the growth of paid employment for men, but women have been challenged by inequality in the

workforce. Until modern times, legal and cultural practices, combined with the inertia of longstanding religious and educational conventions, restricted women's entry and participation in the workforce. Economic dependency upon men, and consequently the poor socio-economic status of women, have had the same impact, particularly as occupations have become professionalized over the 19th and 20th centuries.

Women's lack of access to higher education had effectively excluded them from the practice of well-paid and high status occupations.

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