

Women Employment and the Reduction of Gender Inequality in India

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Abstract

Women are multi-talented they can do anything from managing their house to working outside for livelihood. Women get same rights; they should treat equally in everywhere; also get equal opportunities like men. In changing scenario women employment is also start increasing through understanding own capabilities, skills and talent. The aim of this research is to ensure female labour force participation rate & reduce gender inequality in India. For understand this study used descriptive method with secondary data. The result was obtained, in India growth rate of female labour force participation is rapidly increasing also shows declining in the gender inequality caused reduced in gender gap also. Government of India has a major role improving gender equality through launched different schemes, policy and programs for welfare of women & encouraged women empowerment in India.

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INTRODUCTION

In India women is symbolize as a Devi it can be Laxmi (Goddess of money), Saraswati (Goddess of Knowledge), Parvati (Goddess of Shakti). When people worship of God they treated equally to Parvati (Gori) and Shiv. Also, the name of female god put before male god but in reality, husband treated his wife like a object. Society never accept that girl who are self-independent or doing work for herself, they thinking if girls educate more then they never respect our culture. Women are not supporting to women. This type of thoughts is not from starting.

In Vedic Period- According to scholars like Patanjali and Katyayana they were written, at that time women have freedom they can pursue higher education or they can choose groom by herself. If she wants to live alone, they can live and increase their spiritual knowledge and this type of women called Brahmavadinis. Some famous scholars like Maitreya and Gargi were example of women equality at that time, women treated equally like men in Vedic period.

In Medieval Period- The status of women declining in Medieval Period. Due to the Muslim influence culture, women of Muslim not allowed to go outside and they have to were long burkas (Veils) for hide their face and body. At this time society were inspired form social evils like: Purdah, Sati Pratha, Child Marriage, Jauhar, etc.

In British Period- Women condition is totally different from Vedic Period. Raja Ram Mohan Roy came forward and tried to stop Sati Pratha. At that time Jyotirao Phule strongly supported to his wife Savitri Bai Phule and she became India first Female Teacher. They open several girls' schools and Aashram for windows.

In Present Scenario- Women ratio in employment is not equal to men but women percentage in employment is increasing every year. Also, women take a part in every field. She can manage household work also she can handle outside work. Constitutional rights for women- Article 14 and 15, in this article if any discrimination happened on the basis of gender, religion, caste they can complain to that person. Article 19 to 22 provides freedom to speech, protection of life and personal liberty.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Gugan, S.S. *et al*. (2024) [4]. The Role of Women in Economic Development, the study concludes that women's participation is essential for economic development and inclusive growth. Despite significant progress, barriers such as gender discrimination, unequal access to education, and unpaid care responsibilities continue to limit women's full potential. Evidence shows that empowering women enhances productivity, innovation, and poverty reduction. Therefore, effective policies, education, and equal opportunities are necessary to strengthen women's role and achieve sustainable and equitable economic development globally.
- Naveed, A. *et al*. (2023) [5]. Economic development through women's economic rights: a panel data analysis, the study concludes that women's economic rights play a crucial role in promoting economic growth and sustainable development. Empirical findings confirm a positive and significant relationship between women's rights and GDP growth, with notable variations across income groups. Therefore, enhancing women's economic opportunities and rights should be prioritized as an effective strategy for inclusive and long-term global development.
- Lourdes, G.R.G & Jebaselvi, J. (2015) [2]. Women Empowerment, the development of society is determined to a great extent by the place which women occupy in it and the role they play in the life of the nation. It is easy to establish a striking parallelism at all stages of development, between the theoretical rights of women coupled with those the really enjoy and the process of a country.
- Dashora, K.B. (2013) [6]. Problems Faced by Working Women in India, the study concludes that working women in India face multiple challenges, including gender discrimination, unequal pay, workplace harassment, and the burden of balancing professional and domestic responsibilities. Therefore, there is a need for strong policy implementation, awareness, and a change in societal mindset to ensure equality, safety, and better opportunities for women.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To Study the Female Labour Force Participation in India
- To Study the reduction of Gender Inequality in India

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Purpose of the study:** At present time women start earned their own it may be self-employed, regular wage/salaried, casual labour. The changing scenario in which women are employed this can decline the gender inequality or not from India.
- **Problem of the study:** In India, Sex ratio of total population is 1020 females per 1000 males, as per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS- 5) in the year 2019-21. This data shows that female population is equal or more than men but as per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) of 2025, this report shows that Female labour force participation rate is 40.0% and males' participation is 79.1%. Worker Population Rate of female is 38.8% and male is 76.6%. Female labour force participation rate is increasing every year but the employment gap between men and women is more this shows gender inequality.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

- **Reduce Poverty and Standard of Living:** When men and women both doing jobs, it reduced poverty and increased living standards of the people.
- **Contribution of National Income (GDP):** Women employment increased their income is calculated in the national income.
- **Gender Equality:** Both gender doing jobs, handle financial situations and contributing in the economy, it shows gender equality.

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RESEARCH DESIGN

Nature of the Study: Descriptive Research - Descriptive research is a type of research that describes a population, situation, or phenomenon that is being studied. It focuses on answering the how, what, when, and where questions If a research problem, rather than the why. Sources of Dat - This study is based secondary data. Secondary Data - Obtained from Government Reports, Journals. Area of the Study- India.

DISCUSSION

The Women Participation in the economy has increased in every field. The discussion of the Periodic Labour Force Participation Rate from beginning of this report 2017 to 2025.

Table 1: Percentage of Male and Female Labour Force Participation Rate from 2017 to 2025.

Year	Male (LFPR) %	Female (LFPR) %
2017-18	75.8	23.3
2018-19	75.5	24.5
2019-20	76.8	30.0
2020-21	77.0	32.5
2021-22	77.2	32.8
2022-23	78.5	37.0
2023-24	78.8	41.7
2024-25	79.1	40.0

***Source*:** PLFS Annual Report from 2017 to 2025, MoSPI

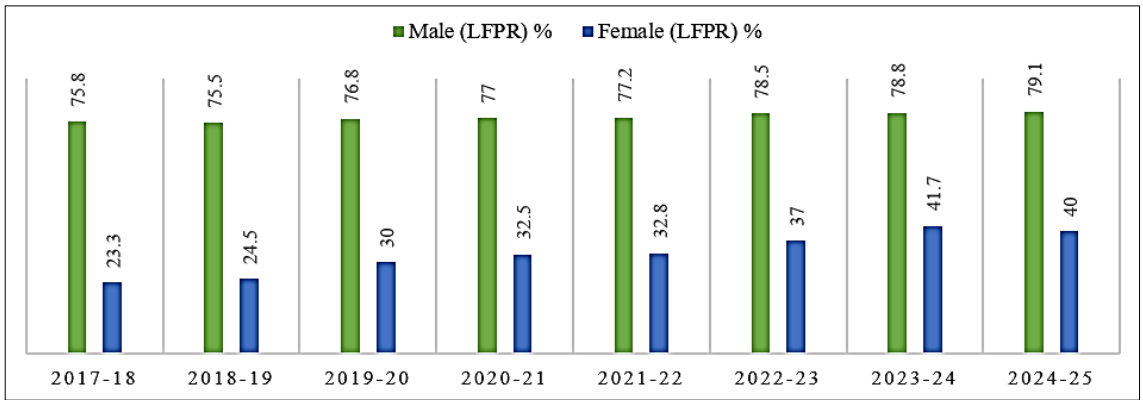


Chart 1: Percentage of Male and Female workforce from Table 1.

Above table shows percentage of male and female participation in labour force from 2017 to 2025 as per the report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). This Survey conducted by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). From 2017-18 define clearly male participation was 75.8% & female percentage was 23.3% and it was a huge gender gap that shows gender inequality in Labour Force Participation. When we see next another year till 2025, men labour force participation growth rate is 4.35% from 2017-18 to 2024-25 and female labour force participation growth rate is 71.67% from 2017-18 to 2024-25. So, Female Labour Force Participation Rate shows a much stronger overall increase than Male Labour Force Participation Rate. But in the year 2024-25 percentage of female labour force slightly declined. Some reasons published in the report of 2024-25 PLFS- "Why women not willing to do work as a Labour" that is- 44.4% female is doing childcare or personal commitment, it not a single reason may be some another problem also there related to female labour force.

Table 2: Percentage of Male and Female workforce with salary of the year 2025.

Indicator	Male Worker	Earning	Female Worker	Earning
Regular/Salaried worker	26.5%	Rs.24,217	18.2%	Rs.18,353
Self-employed worker	52.0%	Rs.17,914	64.2%	Rs.6,374

***Source*:** PLFS Annual Report 2025, MoSPI

Above table data is taken from 2025 report of Periodic Labour Force Survey. It shows percentage of male and female workforce engaged in Regular/Salaried worker and Self-employed worker also mentioned their salaries in PLFS report. In Regular/Salaried male workforce percentage is more in comparison of female workforce, also salaries of female labour workforce is low. Only in Self-employed female worker 64.2% is more in comparison of male workforce 52.0% but male salaries is more. In the year 2025 male and female estimated worker is 41.6 Crore & 20.0 Crore, total workforce 61.6 Crore working in India as a Labour Force Participation.

Gender Inequality Index

Gender Inequality Index it is a composite measure developed by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the year 2010 for measure gender-based inequalities in human development. This index ranges from 0 to 1 in which 0 means very low gender inequality and 1 is very high gender inequality, lower is better. It has three major dimensions, is Reproductive health, Empowerment and Labour- market participation.

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Table 3: Value and Rank of Gender Inequality Index from 2010 to 2023.

S. No.	Year	GII Value	GII Rank
1	2010	0.566	122
2	2011	0.561	122
3	2012	0.557	122
4	2013	0.550	122
5	2014	0.528	116
6	2015	0.496	110
7	2016	0.484	113
8	2017	0.488	116
9	2018	0.487	116
10	2019	0.464	116
11	2020	0.441	110
12	2021	0.438	110
13	2022	0.427	107
14	2023	0.403	102

***Source*:** UNDP, Human Development Reports Data Center, GII.

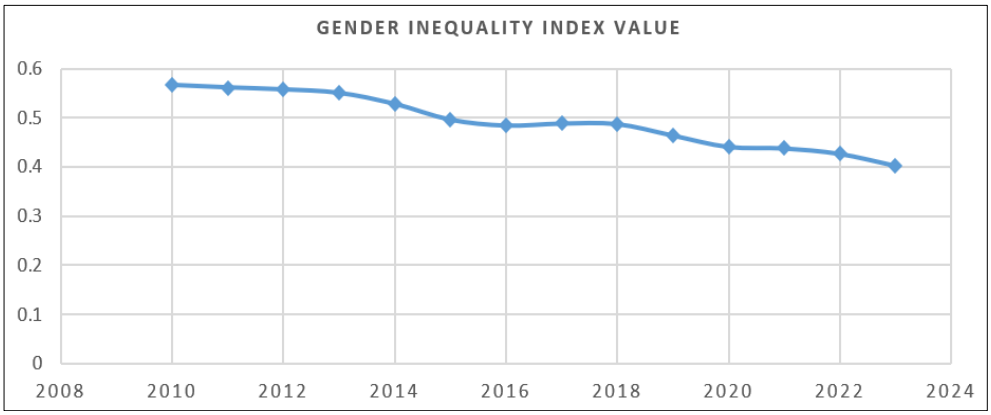


Chart 2: Value of Gender Inequality Index as per Table 3.

According to the above table shows gender inequality value from 0 to 1 and gender inequality rank of India from 2010 to 2023. The gender inequality index value and rank are declining because lower is better and it shows declining in the gender inequality in India. In 2010 GII value was 0.566 & rank was 122 and 2023 GII value 0.403 & rank is 102, India takes many initiatives to decline gender inequality.

FINDINGS

The above study represent that female labour force participation increased from 23.3% in 2017-18 to 40.0% in 2024-25. women participation or Female Labour Force Participation growth rate is more in comparison of male.The Gender Inequality Index define reduced in the gender inequality from India, also Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data shows that women participation is increasing rapidly.

CONCLUSION

The Government of India introducing different schemes, programs for promoting women participation, reduced poverty, providing employment and majorly focused on reduced gender inequality. The report of Gender Inequality Index shows improvement in the gender equality and reduced the gap between male and female participation in the India.

LIMITATIONS

The above study used Secondary data of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) and Gender Inequality Index (GII) of India for showing declined in the gender inequality in India.

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