

# WOMEN'S WORK PARTICIPATION IN LABOUR MARKET IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

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**Abstract:** In recent years, women are playing an important role in economic development. They contribute significant proportion in Gross Domestic Product through actively participating in industries, services and in agricultural activities. What is worse with women workers is that they still lag behind in achieving job opportunities in comparison to men. The present paper tries to look at the extent of disparity in women work and labour force participation in urban-rural sectors and across the states of India. The study uses data from different rounds of National Sample Survey. The analysis depicts that women workforce and labour force participation has declined in recent years and the gap between female and male work participation ratio has increased in India. It has been observed in developed southern states of India, because of highly educated society and sincere freedom of women in decision making, the women work participation in regular jobs is high in comparison to the northern states of India. The study also reveals the controversy in the context of urban-rural India, where women work participation is high in urban area and low in rural area. The study also reveals the fact that the gap between men and women is high in urban India, while it has increased in rural and urban India both.

**Keywords:** Women, Disparity, Employment, Urban-rural, Labour force participation

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, it has been observed that development goals cannot be achieved without reducing regional inequalities and improving the status of women. Efforts have been made to overcome the disparity between male and female workers since the liberal economic policies, as adopted by Government of India, came into force. These efforts were meant for ensuring economic stability in country and equal opportunity for all. However, no such improvement has been felt in so far as the gender disparity in India is concerned. Now it is a widely accepted opinion that the fruits of development have not been distributed evenly between male (men) and female (women) in India.

The analysis of the female work participation on the basis of census data clearly suggests that it has declined significantly since 1921, both as a percentage of workers to total female population and as a percentage, to total labour force. The percentage of female to total labour force decreased from 34.44 in 1911 and it was 19 in 2001. It has been widely accepted that gross gender inequalities persist due to prevailing discriminatory practices, inequality in opportunities, inequality in ownership of property, and inequality in access to education and training. However there is also a large gender wages gap and only a small proportion can be explained by gender differences in education, work experience or job characteristics. There exist significant disparities among men and women work participation and similarly the ratio of women labour force has been declining<sup>1</sup>.

The recent National Sample Survey (NSS) report on employment and unemployment shows that the disturbing trend of a steep fall in the female work participation rate (FWPR) that began in 2007-08 has continued. With an increase of 22.3 million in the male workforce between 2004-05 and 2009-10 were virtually cancelled out by a fall of more than 21 million in the female workforce.

The macro overview of occupational structure of female work participation shows that a larger share of women workers is still engaged in primary sector in India. Indian women workers are heavily concentrated in this low productivity activity. Ever since India formally switched over to the new economic policies of globalization and structural adjustment (Special Assistant Programme), the academic communities as well as activists in the women's movement have been particularly concerned about its likely impact on Indian women workers. But globalization has and continues to have different impacts on men and women (Basu, 1995). And it has been argued that privatization of public sector enterprises, reduction in public sector investment and

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<sup>1</sup> One important fact has also been seen that during the period of economic reform and social transformation it has widened very significantly.

lower government expenditure on poverty eradication programs have not served the interests of women.

Different explanations are offered for the existence of gender disparity in India. But a significant explanation can be given in terms of cultural practices that vary from region to region. Though it is a broad generalization, North India tends to be more patriarchal and feudal than South India. Women in northern India have more restrictions placed on their behavior, thereby restricting their access to work. Southern India tends to be more unrestricted, women have relatively more freedom, and they have a more prominent presence in society (Rahman and Rao, 2004). Cultural restrictions still are changing, and women are free to participate in the formal economy, though the shortage of jobs throughout the country contributes to low female employment.

Although most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for in official statistics. Women plough fields and harvest crops while working on farms, they weave and make handicrafts while working in household industries, sell food and gather wood while working in the informal sector. Additionally, women are traditionally responsible for the daily household chores (e.g., cooking, fetching water, and looking after children). Since Indian culture hinders women's access to jobs in stores, factories and the public sector, the informal sector is particularly important for women. There are estimates that over 90 percent of working women are involved in the informal sector. The informal sector includes jobs such as domestic servant, small trader, artisan, or field labourers on a family farm. Most of these jobs are unskilled and low paying and do not provide benefits to the worker.

It has been analysed that women have now not only found their place in work places but are also playing a role of good governance. In recent years there have been explicit move to increase women's political participation. Women have been given representation in the Panchayati Raj system as a sign of political empowerment as well as social development. There are many elected women representatives at the village council level who also represent impressive role in policy making. At the central and state levels too women are progressively making a difference. Apart from role in politics they are a significant entrepreneurial force whose contributions to local, national and global economies are far reaching. In addition, they produce and consume, manage businesses and households, earn income, hire labour, borrow and save, and provide a range of services for businesses and workers. They represent an increasing proportion of the world's waged labour force and their activity rates are rising. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, they are over one third of the officially enumerated workforce (WISTAT, 2000). Although there are variations across countries, social norms strongly influence men's and women's work and working environments. Some tasks and jobs are considered more appropriate for

men or women and overt or covert screening filters out applicants who defy these norms. These gender norms frequently underpin sex-segmented labour markets and activities. Highly sex-segmented labour markets typically confine women workers to low-wage low-productivity employment and can limit the responsiveness of labour markets to new demands for higher skilled workers. Sluggish or unresponsive labour markets can impede adjustment, distort human capital investment and inhibit a firm's ability to switch into new activities and compete in a dynamic and globalizing market.

In the context of the above discussion, present paper tries to look at the comparative changes and trend of women work participation particular in India. The second objective of this study is to identify the sectoral changes in total work participation; third objective of this present work is to examine the inter-state and inter-regional (rural-urban) differentials of female work participation in India. Finally, fourth objective is to identify reasons for the above pattern. The paper has been divided in three sections; first section gives brief introduction of the issue, section second emphasizes on inter-state and inter-regional disparity in women work participation in different sectors in India on the basis of National Sample Survey (NSS) data. The final section of the paper discusses the conclusion, explanation and policy implication.

## ***2. Brief Review of Literature***

The literature on regional disparity and women's work participation are vast and mixed. The available literature concentrated on different aspect of participation: the extent of disparity in women's labour work participation and how they are different from male workers in labour market, the factors behind the differentiation among male and female workers and their rewards. In the literature on labour-force participation, standard sources begin with the supply of labour (Ellis, 1993; Mathur, 1994). In this view, 34 percent of adult Indians participated in the labour market in 1991, and this figure comprised 16 percent among women and 51 percent of among men (Mathur, 1994). A number of studies shows a small decline in both women's and men's labour force participation from 1993-94 and 1999 (Jacob, 2001, Srivastava, 2003) using National Sample Survey data. Deshpande and Deshpande (1993) analysis shows that urban female working in service industries earn as much or more than men of the same educational level if that level is secondary school, and that the gender pay gap falls as education rises. Da Corta and Venkateswarlu (1999) argue that the feminisation of the rural agricultural labour force is not necessarily good for women but it is a strong trend. Agarwal (1997) has theorised a bargaining approach to the evolution of the gender pay gap.

A number of studies have been conducted to find out the reason behind disparity in the women works participation in India using econometric analysis. Using

employment data from quinquennial rounds of the National Sample Survey (NSS), a number of papers/reports have examined the employment situation in India in the post-reform period in comparison with that in the pre-reform period (see, for instance Chadha and Sahu, 2002; Sundaram and Tendulkar, 2002; Dev, 2002; Chadha, 2003; and Bhattacharya and Sakthivel, 2005). A major conclusion that one may draw from these studies is that there has been a marked slowdown in employment growth in India in the post-reform period compared to the pre-reform period, and that this slowdown has been relatively more marked in the case of female employment in rural areas.

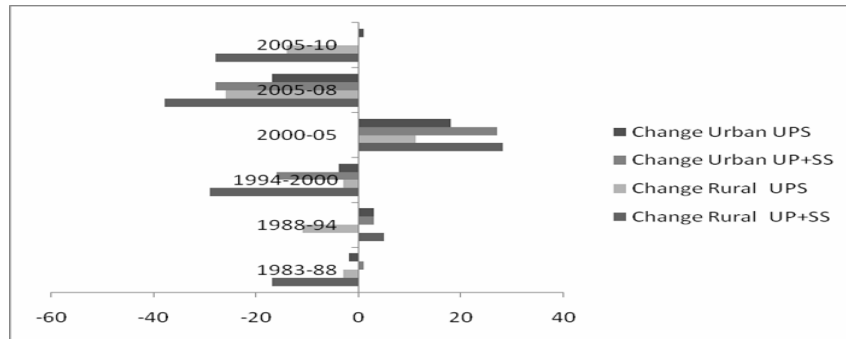
However, the literature discussed above, only explore labour participation ratio and their empirical result. What is necessary for any developing economy like India, the problem of women work participation and disparities in women work participation has not been analysed by researchers. Women have always been excluded in society and labour market in terms of employment, low wage, less participation in work force and other way. The present study tries to see the trend of women work participation in different sector and disparity between urban-rural as well as across the states of India. The paper also provides some suggestion on how to reduce the gender gap in work participation in India.

### ***3. Differences in Female Participation Rates*** █

The problem of disparity between the women and men in socio economic behavior of the society and participation in employment are crucial issue in a developing country like India. In addition, one of the most conspicuous phenomena of recent times has been the increasing participation of women in paid work and casual work with decreasing participation in self employment work (Mazumdar & N., 2011) and it has been driving employment trends and the gender gaps in paid work employment have been shrinking. This section gives a detail of gap between men and women on the basis of work force participation ratio and labour force participation ratio.

Chart 1 shows change in the female workforce participation in India. The chart clearly shows that except 2000-05 and 1988-94 (except there was fall in rural female workforce on principal status) female workforce participation rate (WPR) has decreased in India. It has decreased very sharply between 2005-08 and 2005-10. The chart indicates the burning fact that employment opportunities for the female has decreased in India. Rural female have been affected more than urban females in India. The gap between male and female workforce has decreased till 2004-05 but it has increased in 2005-2010 in rural and urban India. The differences between the daily status and usual status WPR were larger for females than for males. The trends in urban areas are also similar, but the gap between the male and female WPR is higher than that in rural areas. Labour Force Participation rate trend also suggest the same explanation (trend line given in appendix chart 1).

**Chart 1**  
*Change in Female work Force Participation Rate in India<sup>1</sup>*



Source: Mazumdar &N. (2011)

Table 1 gives a detail of labour force participation rate for different age-wise. Table 1 and chat 2 shows that except urban male at the age group of 55-59 labour force participation rate at all the age group in both sexes has reduced between 2004-2005 and 2009-2010. But when we see the sex wise decline in LPWR, it is very high in female comparison to male. The decline in LPWR is very high in the age group 20-45 (which is significant part of the working age). Definitely present concerns suggest that economic growth has failed to generate sufficient employment and decline in job opportunities seems to be very high for female in India. <sup>2</sup>

**Table1**  
*Age-Specific Labour Participation Rate in India according to usual status (principal and subsidiary status) (in % age 15-59)*

Age	2004-05				2009-2010			
	Rural Male	Rural Female	Urban Male	Urban Female	Rural Male	Rural Female	Urban Male	Urban Female
15-19	52.9	33.1	38.1	14.4	39.0	19.5	26.3	8.5
20-24	89.1	43.5	76.9	25.0	81.3	31.4	68.2	19.7
25-29	98.2	53.0	95.7	26.1	97.5	40.5	94.7	22.2
30-34	98.8	59.3	98.7	30.8	99.0	43.4	98.5	23.9
35-39	99.1	64.2	98.4	34.0	99.2	49.7	99.1	27.8
40-44	98.5	62.7	98.3	31.7	99.4	49.8	98.7	25.6

<sup>1</sup> Data is given in appendix table 1.

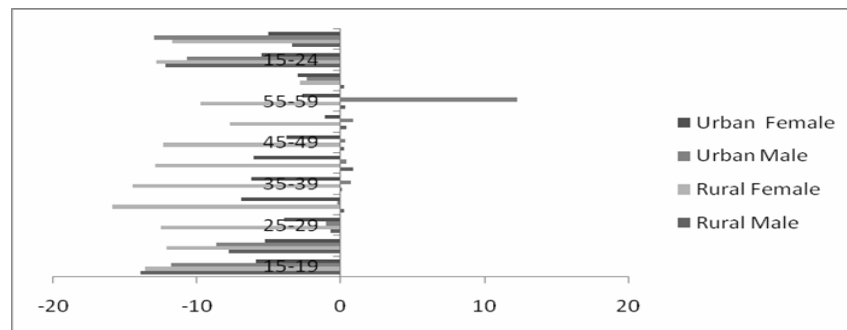
<sup>2</sup> The decline in the LFPR for women, irrespective of age, might be because of a decline in overall employment opportunities ( Chowdhury, 2011).

Age	2004-05				2009-2010			
	Rural Male	Rural Female	Urban Male	Urban Female	Rural Male	Rural Female	Urban Male	Urban Female
45-49	98.2	61.6	97.6	26.9	98.4	49.2	97.9	23.1
50-54	96.3	56.2	93.9	25.9	96.7	48.5	94.8	24.8
55-59	93.1	50.9	83.2	21.8	93.4	41.1	95.5	19.1
60-above	64.5	25.4	36.6	10.0	64.7	22.6	34.2	7.0
15-24	68.9	38.2	57.0	19.7	56.7	25.4	46.3	14.2
15-above	85.9	49.5	79.2	24.4	82.5	37.8	66.2	19.4

Source: NSSO Report No 515 on Employment and Unemployment Situation in India, 2004-05 and Key Indicators of Employment and Unemployment in India, 2009-10.

In fact, the Labour Force Participation Rate is the lowest for women since 1993-94 both in the rural and urban areas. The reasons for such a huge decline in Labour Force Participation Rate for women need to be explored. There are two possible explanations that can be given at the outset. Women have simply withdrawn from the labour market in India due to social conservatism. This does not seem to be a plausible explanation because the Labour Force Participation Rate in 2009-10 is the lowest since 1993-94. If, indeed, social conservatism is responsible then there must be some explanation for such a change in the impact of social factors during this period, given that the Labour Force Participation Rate for women in both urban and rural areas was the highest (after 1993-94) in 2004-05. It is not plausible that the conservatism has increased dramatically in the course of only five years. The second explanation reveals the significant fact that employment opportunities for female has reduced significantly in these years.

Chart 2  
Decline in Age-Wise labour Force Participation Rate in India



Source: same as table 1.

**Table 2**  
*Percentage of Population in the Labour-Force (in percentage for age 15-59)*

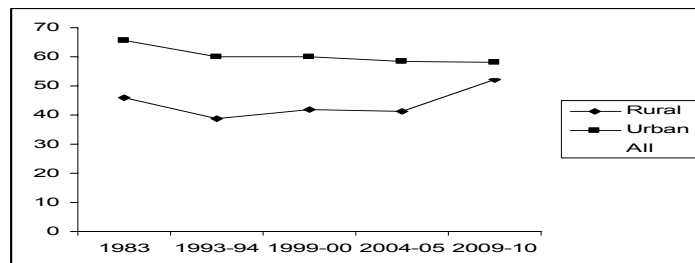
Year	Rural India		Urban India		All India	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1983	91.1	45.1	88.6	23	90.5	40
1993-94	92	53.1	82.4	22.5	90.2	46.5
1999-00	87	45.2	82.4	22.5	85.6	38.9
2004-05	86	44.7	82.7	24.3	85.5	38.6
2009-10*	77.8	25.6	76	17.8	77.3	23.4

Source: Bhalla & Kaur, \* Data have been taken from NSS 66<sup>th</sup> round report

Note: 1) Labour force refers to the 15-59 age group that reports that they are working, or looking for work according to the 'weekly status' definition of employment.

Table 2 shows percentage of population (age 15-59) engaged in labour force in all India as well as urban and rural area from 1983 to 2009-2010. The chart 3 reveals little different fact the gender gap in labour force participation has decreased in urban female since 1983 but the gap has increased in rural and at all India level in India since 1993-94. This depicts that men contribute more work in comparison to women and the Chart 4 shows that the percentage of women population in labour force tend to decline in rural area in all the period except between 1983-94. This is interesting, that during the period of liberalization and regularization of economy it has been assumed that the women will come more freely and in huge number to labour market. On the other hand, in urban area, the percentage of female labour force has declined in all period except 2000-05. This picture clear that in urban area where female are more literate, skilled/trained the share of female labour force in total population is high while it has reduced significantly in 2005-10. The analysis clearly indicate that definitely urban female are more educated and well trained, so their position in job market has improved but on the other it has not resulted in terms of huge employment for the female in India.

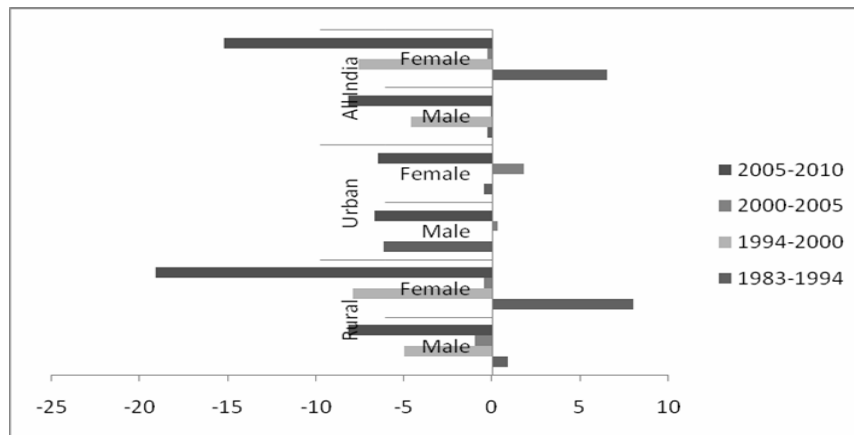
**Chart 3**  
*Gap between Men and Women Labour Force Participation in India (in percentage for age 15-59)*



Source: calculated from table 2.



**Chart 4**  
*Change in Percentage of Population in the Labour-Force (in % age 15-59) between 1983 and 2010*



Source: same as table 2

Over the years, the share of women workers in agriculture has come down in both rural and urban India, though the rate of decline varies between regions. For instance, the decline is rather marginal in rural India from 83.4 percent in 1993-94 to 85.3 percent in 1999-00 and further down to 80.9 percent in 2004-05 and 80.2 percent in 2007-08. In urban India, though the proportion has declined substantially - from 17.5 percent in 1993-94 to 14.6 percent in 1999-00, it has increased marginally to 15.2 percent in 2004-05 but again declined to 11.5 percent.

**Table 3**  
*Percentage of Labour Force Participation<sup>1</sup> in Different Sectors*

Year	Rural Females			Urban Females		
	A	M	CS	A	M	CS
1983	85.5	7.6	6.9	21.2	29.6	49.2
1993-94	83.4	8.5	8.2	17.5	24.2	58.3
1999-00	85.3	9.0	5.7	14.6	28.0	57.4
2004-05	80.9	11.5	7.6	15.2	31.6	53.4
2007-08	80.2	10.9	8.9	11.5	30.3	58.2

Source: same as Table 2 Note: A- Agriculture, M- Manufacture, CS- Construction/services<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1) Labour-Force refers to the 15-59 age group that reports that they are working, or looking for work, according to the 'weekly status' definition of employment.

If we see the data of percentage of labour force participation in different sectors given in Table 3, it clearly shows that, more than 80 percent of women workers in rural India are found to be in agriculture and related activities, either as cultivators or as labourers since 1983. But the percentage of women workers in the same period in urban India is 21.2. Thus, a substantially large proportion of the rural women workers are engaged in agricultural activities, which, understandably, is contrary to the urban phenomenon.

Over the years, the share of women workers in manufacturing and services/ construction has increased in both rural and urban India. The Table 3 shows that women labour force participation in rural area is very large in agriculture and it is low in manufacturing and services sectors. On the other hand, in urban area, women participate more in construction/services and manufacturing but less in agricultural sector. The analysis reveals the fact that women literacy and their skilled personality, full knowledge about market and other a lot of factors responsible for this economic and sectoral transformation.<sup>1</sup>

The table 4 shows that the labour force participation ratio is low in others caste comparative to other caste while literacy is high among the others caste household. It may be due to high incidence of poverty in schedule tribe (ST), so female actively participate in labour market. Male female gap is very high in labour force participation ratio and work participation ratio is very high in others castes. This shows that poverty is high so female belongs to lower caste category (Schedule Tribes, Schedule Caste, Other Backward Caste) are more employed. On the other hand social restrictions are very unbreakable for the others castes and employment availability in formal or well paid job is very low in India, so participation of other category female worker as a worker is very low in comparison to other female belongs to Schedule Tribes, Schedule Caste, Other Backward Caste.

**Table 4**  
*Women's Labour Force Participation (in 1000), by Caste Group in India, 2004-05<sup>2</sup>*

Social Category	Male			Female		
	LFPR <sup>1</sup>	WPR <sup>2</sup>	PU <sup>3</sup>	LFPR	WPR	PU
Schedule Tribe (ST)	566	559	7	446	444	3
Scheduled Caste (SC)	557	543	14	314	308	6
Other Backward Caste (OBC)	551	541	11	307	299	8

<sup>1</sup> It has been assumed that urban female are comparatively higher literate and skilled and have full knowledge about market in India.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Labour force participation rate, 2 Worker population ratio (WPR), 3 proportion unemployed (PU) according to usual status (ps+ss) for each state.u.t.

Social Category	Male			Female		
	LFPR <sup>1</sup>	WPR <sup>2</sup>	PU <sup>3</sup>	LFPR	WPR	PU
Others	569	554	15	223	214	10
All	559	547	12	294	287	8

Source: National Sample Survey 61<sup>th</sup> Round, 2004-05.

Table 5 represents gender wise employment status in rural-urban sectors from 1972-73 to 2009-10. Table shows that casualisation has increased for male and female in both rural and urban areas of India and gender gap has reduced in this category. In self employment category gender gap has reduced in both rural and urban India but the gap has been reduced very sharply in urban India. In regular employment category employment opportunities has decreased for male while due to the increase in regular employment opportunities for female the gap between male and female has reduced very sharply in rural and urban India but the gap is still high in rural area in comparison to male. The table also shows that males have greater access to regular employment comparative to female in India.

**Table 5**  
*Percentage Distribution of Employment (Self-employed/Regular Employed/Casual Labour) by Sex and Sector in India*

Employment Status and Year	Self-Employed				Regular-Employed				Casual Labour			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1972-73	65.9	64.5	39.2	48.4	12.1	4.1	50.7	27.9	22.0	31.4	10.1	23.7
1977-78	62.8	62.1	40.4	49.5	10.6	2.8	46.4	24.9	26.6	35.1	13.2	25.6
1983-84	60.5	61.9	40.9	45.8	10.3	2.8	43.7	25.8	29.2	35.3	15.4	28.4
1987-88	58.6	60.8	41.7	47.1	10.0	3.7	43.7	27.5	31.4	35.5	14.6	26.4
1993-94	57.9	58.5	41.7	45.4	8.3	2.8	42.1	28.6	33.8	38.7	16.2	26.2
1999-00	55.0	57.3	41.5	45.3	8.8	3.1	41.7	33.3	36.2	39.6	16.8	21.4
2004-05	58.1	63.7	44.8	47.7	9.0	3.7	40.6	35.6	32.9	32.6	14.6	16.7
2009-10	53.5	55.7	41.1	41.1	8.5	4.4	41.9	39.3	38	39.9	17	19.6

Source: NSS Employment and Unemployment Survey, Various Issues, 66<sup>th</sup> Round Report

Table 6 clearly shows that in rural areas of developed states like Maharashtra, Delhi, Goa, Kerala, Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh women employment in regular wage/salaried sector is high. While only in rural Delhi due to high demand in casual sector of women labour in rural market the participation of women in casual sector is high. Women's involvement as self-employed workers is expected to be high in agriculture-based states or underdeveloped states. But the table shows that states like Bihar, Orissa have an agriculture-based economies, the work participation as self-employed

is low while their participation is high in casual sector. This shows that incidence of rural poverty is very high in these states and opportunities in agriculture sector are also not sufficient and literacy level is very low, so women are employed as a casual labour in these states. Women participation as regular wage/ salaried worker is low and participation is high as casual labour or self-employed in developed states like Gujarat, Maharashtra. This suggests that in these state economic growth has not provided sufficient benefit to their rural women population.

The table 7 clearly shows that in developed states the participation of women in urban area as regular wage/salaried worker is high. While casualisation of urban women workforce is high in underdeveloped states except developed state like Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala the casualisation of urban female workers is high. This shows that in these states not only regular job is high among the urban women but also the extent of casual employment is also high. The involvement of urban women in self employed sector is high in less developed states.

**Table 6**  
*Distribution (per 1000) of Rural Female Workers According to Usual Status (ps+ss) Approach by Broad Employment Status for Each States of India.<sup>1</sup>*

Sector	Category	State
<b>Self-employed</b>	High	Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Haryana
	Medium	Rajasthan, Manipur, Meghalaya, Assam, Sikkim, Gujarat, Orissa, West Bengal, Maharashtra
	Low	Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Goa, Delhi
<b>Regular wage /salaried employed</b>	High	Goa, Kerala, Sikkim, Delhi, Assam, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Punjab, Haryana,
	Medium	Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Orissa, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh
	Low	Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Mizoram, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh
<b>Casual Labour</b>	High	Delhi, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa
	Medium	West Bengal, Gujarat, Kerala, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Manipur, Assam, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh,
	Low	Haryana, Goa, Sikkim, Punjab, Mizoram, Uttarakhand, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh Jammu & Kashmir

Sources: Computed by Author, by NSS 66<sup>th</sup> Round Report on Employment, Unemployment Situation in India for the year 2009-10.

<sup>1</sup> Data is given in appendix table 2.

**Table 7**  
*Distribution (per 1000) of Urban Female Workers According to Usual Status (ps+ss) Approach by Broad Employment Status for Each States of India.<sup>1</sup>*

Sector	Category	State
<b>Self employed</b>	High	Nagaland , Manipur, Mizoram, Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir, Assam
	Medium	Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Uttrakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Andra Pradesh, Haryana, Tamil Nadu
	Low	Maharastra, Sikkim, Gujarat, Karnatka, Kerala, Meghalaya, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Delhi, Tripura, Goa
<b>Regular wage /salaried employed</b>	High	Goa, Delhi, Tripura, Sikkim, Maghalaya, Haryana, Kerla, Punjab, Jammu& Kashmir
	Medium	Uttrakhand, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh
	Low	Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland
<b>Casual Labour</b>	High	Chattisgarh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala
	Medium	Himachal Pradesh, Uttrakhand, Meghyalaya, Assam, Tripura, Maharastra, Haryana, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh
	Low	Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Goa, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Delhi, Sikkim

Source: same as table 6.

Overall in both rural and urban area the share of women in self employment is high in Mizoram, Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and it is low in Karnatka, Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Andra Pradesh (developed states). The share of women worker in Wage/salaried employment is high in Goa, Delhi Tripura, Haryana, Punjab (developed states) and the share of women worker as Casual labour is high in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh (underdeveloped states) Karnataka, Tamil Nadu (developed states).

#### **4. Conclusion and Policy Implication**

Thus the present study finds some interesting facts and suggests that women participation in labour force has decreased after 1994 and disparity between male and female has been widened after an improvement in 2004-05. The number of actual women workers is high in rural India, in comparison to urban India. The reason behind the above contradictory findings is low evolvment of rural women in attending

<sup>1</sup> Data is given in appendix table 2.

schooling<sup>1</sup>, high demand of female labour in agriculture sector. The study suggests that high woman participation has been seen in low caste category especially in Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe. The women belonging to advanced family and associated with upper classes involve themselves in domestic work and un-paid work. On the other hand, it has been observed that upper class women engaged in high professional works, business and other services sector. One of the interesting facts is that the women from rural India, mostly work in informal sector, dominated by male workers and they also get fewer wages in comparison to male labour. Available statistics do not capture the entire problem that female workers face in rural area.

In addition, one can see the extent of disparity in women work participation in various states of India. Studies support that there exist wide regional variations across the states in provisions of wage of labourers, workers security, and female work participation, employment rate, working time-period and other economic and social problems so a state wise variation is there in women labour participation ratio. A significant variation in women work participation has been seen in northern and southern India. A comparative study reveals that in northern India and underdeveloped states women are casually employed. It has been observed that regular employment is high in developed states (basically southern region of India) and it has been noticed that the women of southern region of India are more educated and skilled rather than those in northern regions of India. This shows that skill is an important determinant of regular employment in India.

The study on women needs an improvement in the data base for women workers, through more detailed questions which would help to identify and quantify women's work in terms of productive and domestic work. There is a requirement of replacing the traditional value system, which is based on an inequality of sexes where the females play a subordinate role, with a more egalitarian system. Even if there is no absolute equality between the sexes, there is a need to bring about betterment in the quality of life of women. The second point that requires consideration is based on the finding that female participation rates are highly correlated with poverty and landlessness in rural India. Given that man is the primary bread earner, women go out to work when their household incomes do not suffice for their basic needs; more often than not, the poorest households are also the landless.

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<sup>1</sup> As far as women work force participation (rural and urban) is concerned, it has been seen that education and training are significant determinants of low labor force participation of Kerala women in the labor market (Mitra & Singh, 2006).

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## Appendix

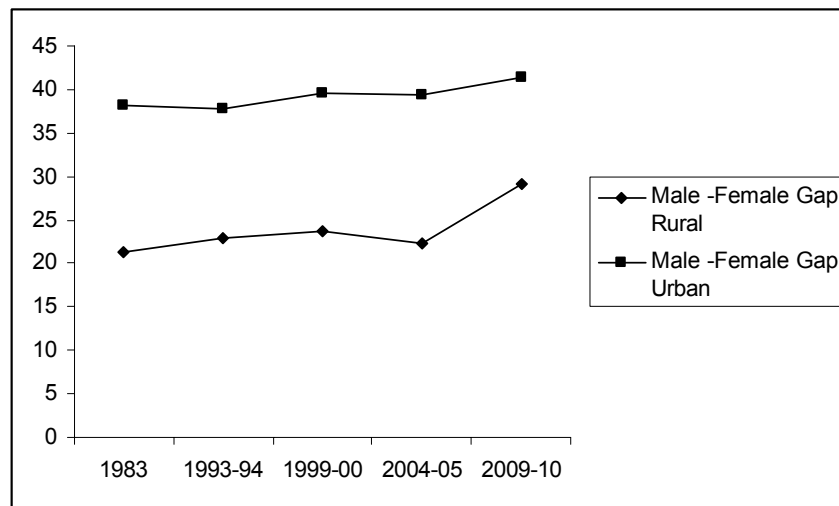
**Table 1**  
Trends in Female Work Participation Rates (UPS and UPSS)

Year	Actual				Time Period	Change			
	Rural UP+SS	Rural UPS	Urban UP+SS	Urban UPS		Rural UP+SS	Rural UPS	Urban UP+SS	Urban UPS
1983	340	248	151	120					
1987-88	323	245	152	118	1983-88	-17	-3	1	-2
1993-94	328	234	155	121	1988-94	5	-11	3	3
1999-2000	299	231	139	117	1994-2000	-29	-3	-16	-4
2004-05	327	242	166	135	2000-05	28	11	27	18
2007-08	289	216	138	118	2005-08	-38	-26	-28	-17
2009-10	261	202	138	119	2005-10	-28	-14	0	1

Source: Mazumdar &N. (2011), Note: Changes has been calculated using data.

Note: UP+SS- Usual principal and subsidiary status, UPS- Usual Principal Status

**Chart 1**  
Gap In Workforce Participation Ratio in Male and Female on principal status + subsidiary status basis In India



Source: Himansu (2011)

**Table 2**

*Distribution (per 1000) of Female Workers According to Usual Status [principal and subsidiary (ps+ss)] Approach by Broad Employment Status for Each States of India.*

States	Rural			Urban		
	SE	RW	CL	SE	RW	CL
Andhra Pradesh	395	37	569	422	345	233
Arunachal Pradesh	891	82	28	587	367	40
Assam	653	108	239	488	367	146
Bihar	479	26	495	474	237	289
Chhattisgarh	402	11	587	289	341	371
Delhi	0	131	879	212	788	0
Goa	18	839	144	48	894	58
Gujrat	598	25	377	346	393	261
Haryana	754	71	175	395	484	121
Himachal Pradesh	894	61	44	428	395	180
Jammu & Kashmir	947	43	11	494	447	59
Jharkhand	775	33	192	289	428	283
Karnataka	428	56	516	341	399	260
Kerala	421	238	342	329	482	190
Madhya Pradesh	496	17	487	447	348	205
Maharashtra	499	18	483	357	514	128
Manipur	707	38	255	776	210	13
Maghalaya	674	55	271	316	536	148
Mizoram	880	25	96	765	198	37
Nagaland	888	55	56	789	193	12
Orissa	554	43	404	439	223	338
Punjab	811	77	112	439	463	98
Rajasthan	713	19	268	567	318	115
Sikkim	647	223	129	357	643	0
Tamil Nadu	333	66	601	372	326	302
Tripura	220	81	700	112	757	131
Uttarakhand	898	21	81	433	411	156
Uttar Pradesh	782	26	192	613	266	121
West Bengal	509	89	403	516	362	121

Sources: Computed by Author, by NSS 66<sup>th</sup> Round Report on Employment, Unemployment Situation in India for the year 2010-11. Notes: SE- Self-Employed, RW- Regular Wage / Salaried Employed, CL- Casual Labour