
Research Papers



STRUCTURE OF WOMEN EMPLOYMENT IN INDIA

Smt. Medhavini S. Katti
Assistant Professor in Economics Govt. First Grade College Shahapur,
Dist. Yadgir Karnataka.

ABSTRACT:

Women, who constitute almost 50 per cent of humanity contribute significantly to the country's economy and its social life. Today they have acquired their own role in the growth and development of an economy. However they are largely employed in work which requires little or semi-skill and their wages are low. In the past women were not treated as an integral part of the labour force.

They entered the labour market after the introduction of machine. Economic conditions forced women workers to seek employment in the modern industry to supplement the earnings of their families. In time of labour shortage they were employed in large numbers. But when the demand for labour contracted they were first to be retrenched. Thus, they constitute reserve labour force. They were largely employed with a low wages.

In the Indian Society where in transition from traditionalism to modernism is taking place, working of women outside home is being gradually encouraged. We observe that the FWPR (Female work participation rate) has increased for the country as a whole but it may not be true for different states in India when studied individually.

Participation of women in economic activity is common to all countries and their role in the process of economic development has been recognized all over world. Women constitute in a number of ways, viz, as workers, labourers, producers, and traders and also as housewives. In technical parlance, we may say that women perform productive role in two ways – one as productive workers in outside market and as unpaid worker in her household.

In human resource development literature the traditional role of women is admitted in her service for child-bearing and children-rearing along with her work outside. Late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru rightly observed, "I am quite sure that our real and basic growth will come when women have a full chance to play their part in public life. Whenever they have had a chance, they have, as a whole done well, better if I may say so, than the average man., the future of India will probably depend ultimately more upon women than the men".

KEYWORDS: - growth and development, labourers, producers.

INTRODUCTION:-

Women constitute a significant part of the workforce of India but they lag behind men in terms of level of employment. Majority of women are employed in agriculture as labourers and cultivators. Amongst the women workers in the urban areas, 80 per cent are employed in unorganized sector. Women constitute 15.84 per cent of the total organized sector employment in

the country on 31' March 1996. Within the organized sector, public sector accounts for more employment of women than in the private sector.

More than 80 per cent of women are still employed in the primary sector in India. The proportions of working females have declined in secondary sector but they have increased in tertiary sector with no change in primary sector employment. However, in the case of study pertaining to rural areas, proportions of female workers have increased both in primary and tertiary sectors. Similarly in urban areas, there has been a drastic increase in female workers in tertiary sector.

Female work and employment rate in India is quite low as compared to male work participation rate. The long- term trend of FWPR is declining but in recent decades there has been a drastic increase from 14.2 per cent in 1971 to 27.6 per cent in 2001. FWPR is higher in rural areas as compared to that in urban areas.

Tabel-3.7: Per centage Distribution of Main Workers by Industrial Categories

Industrial Category	1991			1996-97		
	Urban			Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Cultivators	05.20	04.56	05.13	04.89	05.12	04.93
Agricultural laborers	04.66	16.56	06.05	05.38	115.49	06.69
Livestock Forestry, Fishing, Hunting and Allied Activities	01.81	01.77	01.81	01.76	01.55	01.73
Mining and quarrying		00.69	01.05	01.18	00.68	01.12
Manufacturing						
Household Industry	04.21	10.48	04.94	02.48	07.51	03.13
Other than Household	26.02	14.57	24.69	23.12	14.06	21.94
Construction	04.26	03.10	04.13	05.33	03.28	05.07
Trade and Commerce	21.32	08.89	19.87	23.79	09.99	21.99
Transport storage and communication	09.98	02.24	09.07	09.23	01.95	08.28
Other services	21.44	37.04	23.26	22.84	40.37	25.12
Total employment	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
(Million)	40.71	05.37	46.08	55.35	08.28	63.64

Note: Excludes Assam

Source: Manpower Profile India 1998-97, pp. 154-57

Table gives the information regarding occupational distribution of main workers for India for 1991 and 1997. According to 1991 census data, the proportion of male cultivator has dropped in 1991 in both rural and urban areas. At the same time the proportion of male agriculture labour slightly swelled both in rural and urban areas. This indicates a shift in the occupation of male main workers from cultivation to agricultural labour.

In the case of main female workers a shift from the status of agricultural labour to the status of cultivator has been observed. The proportion of female main workers as cultivators has shown an upswing while their proportion as agricultural labour has contracted in both rural and urban areas.

The other industrial category where female main workers outnumber male main workers is household industry in both rural as well as in urban areas. This industrial category is not regulated by any law and hence leaves scope for exploitation.

Dependence for work on agriculture remains high in the Indian economy. This is particularly so in case of female workers whose dependence on first two categories (agriculture labourers and cultivators) amount to 80 per cent.

Table-3.8: The distribution of main workers in different sectors in India: (in per centage)

Sectors	1981			1991			1995-96		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
Primary	69.35	66.25	81.57	67.53	63.57	81.20	65.93	61.01	80.97
Secondary	12.98	13.97	09.06	11.97	13.12	07.98	10.92	13.06	7.58
Tertiary	17.67	19.77	09.37	20.50	23.31	10.82	22.75	22.03	9.78
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	10.00	1000
Total main workers (in Millions)	222.51	177.54	44.97	285.93	221.66	64.72	292.55	235.67	69.78

Note: P : Persons

M : Males

F : Females

Source: Profile of manpower in India 1991 — 99.pp.166-69.

This table presents data on sectoral distribution of workers for 1981 to 1995-96. In 1981, 69.35 per cent of the main workers in the country, were working in the primary sector, their proportion has dropped to 67.55 per cent in 1991 and 65.93 per cent in 1995-96 indicating a dear shift away from the primary sector. Similarly the proportion of workers in the secondary sector has slightly reduced from 12.98 per cent to 11.97 per cent and 10.92 in (1995-96). Significant increase has been observed in the tertiary sector where the proportion of main workers has climbed up from 17.67 per cent to 22.75 per cent.

In case of males the proportion of workers in the primary sector has contracted from 66.26 per cent in 1981 to 61.01 per cent in 1995-96, there is not much change in the secondary sector, it has increased in the tertiary sector from 19.77 per cent to 22.03 per cent. Female main workers in the secondary sector has reduced from 9.6 per cent to 7.58 per cent, and increased in tertiary sector from 9.37 per cent to 10.82 per cent with almost no change in primary sector.

Table - 3.9: Areas- wise and Sex- wise Distribution of Main workers in different sectors (in per centage)

Sectors	1981			1991			1995-96		
	P	S	T	P	S	T	P	S	T
Male main workers									
Rural	82.18	7.86	9.96	80.33	7.20	12.47	79.52	7.15	14.82
Urban	12.77	34.49	52.74	13.21	30.93	55.86	13.58	28.05	57.32
Female main workers									
Rural	89.41	648	4.41	89.84	5.47	4.69	90.13	24.82	4.89
Urban	23.68	28.15	48.17	22.84	24.85	52.31	21.05	23.52	53.05

Note: 1. Excludes Assam

2. P - Primary

S- Secondary.

T- Tertiary

Source: Manpower profile India. 1998-99

This table displays area - wise sectoral distribution of workers (both male and female) during 1981 to 1995-96. In case of male main workers, their proportion in rural areas have reduced both in primary and secondary sectors whereas their proportion has zoomed up significantly in tertiary sector. In case of female main workers their proportion has declined in secondary sector whereas their proportions in primary and tertiary sectors have shown an upswing in 1995-96 as compared to 1981.

An interesting fact is that in rural India 80 per cent of the workers (male & female) have been engaged in primary activities. In urban areas, the proportion of female main workers in the primary sector has contracted from 23.68 per cent in 1981 to 21.05 per cent in 1995-96. Similarly among the female main workers in urban areas, the proportion of workers in the secondary sector has dropped from 28.15 per cent in 1981 to 23.52 per cent in 1995-96. In urban areas, the proportion of female main workers in the tertiary sector has increased drastically from 48.17 per cent in 1981 to 53.05 per cent in 1995-96. To sum up, a shift away from the primary sector to tertiary sector is taking place. The increase is not taking place in the secondary sector.

Table-3.10: Occupational Distribution of Female Main-Workers

Sectors	1981			1991			2001		
	T	R	U	T	R	U	T	R	U
Cultivators	33.20	37.074	4.66	34.57	38.93	5.12	39.00	36.25	6.83
Agricultural labourers	46.18	50.19	16.56	44.24	48.49	15.49	46.83	41.73	13.93
Household industry	8.19	05.91	25.05	7.32	5.21	21.57	04.93	06.85	174.35
Other workers	12.43	06.83	53.73	13.87	7.37	57.82	09.15	16.17	61.89
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

T-Total, R-Rural, U-Urban

Source: Socio-economic profile of India 2004-05

Above table gives information regarding area- wise occupational distribution of female workers. Both in rural as well as in urban areas, there has been an increase in the proportion of agricultural labour in 2001. In case of household industry there is a reduction in the proportion of female main workers. In the case of other workers the proportion of female main workers went up in 2001 in both rural and urban areas.

Thus, there has been a slight shift in the occupations of female workers from agricultural labourers and household industry to the categories of cultivators and other workers.

CAUSES OF CONCENTRATION OF WOMEN IN PRIMARY SECTOR

Agriculture forms the backbone of the Indian Economy and despite concerted industrialization in the last five decades, agriculture occupies a place of pride in the primary sector i.e. agriculture provides employment to around 65 per cent of the total work force in the country. In India about, 65-70 per cent of population are found in rural areas, and their main occupation is agricultural and allied activities.

Women's employment in primary sector is around 80 per cent. In rural areas as well as in urban area also, women are depending upon agriculture and allied activities. Because of their illiteracy and non-skiliness, ignorance about other job opportunities, more number of women are concentrated in agricultural sector, than the secondary and tertiary sectors in the economy.

CONCLUSION:-

Women's employment or work is neither socially valuable nor economically rewarded and this, despite the obvious fact that in almost all societies women are permanently working with a range of skills which are crucial for the economic and social well-being of most countries. In fact, the Parades appears to be that the most socially significant occupations of food security, health care education, programmes and other social services that support any economic system are the responsibility of women. Low status, low pay and low skills are the three pillars on which the work performance of women have resulted for a long time and this could be described as 'non- status of women's work.

Women Contribute greatly to the economy. Employment of women is an index of their economic status in society, especially with response to equality.

REFERENCE:-

1. Guy Standing, (1974), A Trichotornous model of Urban Labour Markets", Paper presented at the Research Conference on Urban Labour Markets, Geneva, September.. (Geneva, International Institute for Labour Studies, Doc. ULM/DP 12, 1974).
2. Hart, Keth (1973), informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana", Journal of Modern Affican Studies, London, March, pp. 61.89.
3. Hirwary, Indira (1991), 'Labour Absorption in the Indian Economy; Someaa Issues', Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Vol. 34, No. 4.
4. House, William J., (1984), Nairobi's Informal Sector: Dynamic Entrepreneurs or Surplus Labour ? Economic Development and Cultural Change, January.
5. International LabourOrganisation, (1972), 'Employment, Income and Equility Strategy for Increasing Productive Employment in Kenya', Geneva.