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An Overview of Female and Marginalized worker employment in Urban Organised Sector of India.

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Introduction

Participation of female and marginalized workers i.e workers from minority background (SC,ST,OBCs) in the Urban Indian job sector has been lower than predicted. There are multiple reasons behind this issue. The arguments range from Economic to Societal.

It has been hypothesized that with greater trade, there is an increase in female wages, reduction in labour market rigidities and the slow disappearance of gender discrimination (Mehta, 2010). However despite these steps, among the South Asian countries, India has one of the lowest female workforce participation rates. Similarly despite taking steps regarding Marginalized worker employment, the schemes and their implementation has seen changes over the years and their results have not always been satisfactory.

A significant change that took place in the economy post liberalization was the emergence of the tertiary sector as the most dominant sector of the economy. Due to the infrastructure needs of the tertiary sector, India saw a surge in urbanization. With the increase in the education level, the position of women in society improved. The tertiary sector raised the hopes of higher female workforce participation. However, evidence shows that women who are employed in the tertiary sector are mainly confined to low end jobs with poor pay, working conditions and little or no social security.

The aggregate evidence indicates that there has been convergence in education, occupations, income, and access to public resources across marginalized groups in the decades after independence. Some of this convergence is likely due to affirmative action, but caste-based networks could also have played an equalizing role by exploiting the opportunities that became available in a globalizing economy. However, the extent to which marginalized workers do get to enjoy these benefits are debated.

Labour Situation regarding Female and Marginalized workers in India

As far as the urban area is concerned, maximum female employment occurs in the tertiary sector. The increase in female employment in 2011 has been more than in any other sector (6.46%). There has been a decrease in employment in the secondary sector in the urban areas by 4.38 %. Thus, it is observed that the growth in female employment in the urban areas has followed the trajectory of the growth in output. The primary sector absorbs the least percentage of women in the urban areas and there has been a reduction by 2.08%.

If PLFS report 2023-24 data regarding all India workforce gets concerned we can see from 2021-22 period up to 2023-24 period the Workforce Participation Rate of women in India has seen a steady increase. This can be attributed to several factors. One might be gradual increase in the education quality and infrastructure in Urban India.

According to the data present in NES 2017 we can see that The Live Register of SC Job-seekers has increased from 64.05 lakh in 2010 to 70.48 lakh in 2015 and that of ST Job-seekers has also increased

from 23.09 lakh to 25.22 lakh during the same period. However percentage wise the numbers have remained relatively stable. On the other hand PLFS data does suggest an increase in the employment of marginalised groups in a percentage wise. The increase of marginalized laborers can be attributed to improvement in education levels.

According to the PLFS reports, the LFPR of women in the Urban sector has seen gradual increase over the years for all ages. From 15.9 percent In 2017-18 to 22.3 percent By 2023-24. The increase has been steady and consistent, even after the Covid situation. However, for marginalized workers, by 2023-24, comparing PLFS and GoI Labour Bureau Volume V data, we can see that LFPR of ages above 15 in Urban sector has not reached pre-pandemic levels.

As far as the urban area is concerned, maximum female employment occurs in the tertiary sector. Unlike the rural areas, the increase in female employment in 2011 has been more than in any other sector (6.46%). There has been a decrease in employment in the secondary sector in the urban areas by 4.38 %. Thus, it is observed that the growth in female employment in the urban areas has followed the trajectory of the growth in output.

Following the NSSO data and the PLFS data we can see that The number of literate women in the urban sector INCREASED up from 76.9% in 2014 to 84.9% in 2024. Still the lowest percentage of women are found in technical education. Among the marginalized community the rate of literacy has increased gradually in between the period of 2014 and 2024. However, this increase has not been the same for all social groups. For instance, literacy level among the male ST population barely increased by 0.2%. However the female OBC level saw an impressive increase of 5.7%.

Infrastructural Issues in the Urban Job Sector

India's urban job is plagued with the lack of adequate infrastructure, which disproportionately affects female and marginalized community workers. From inadequate public transportation to unsafe working conditions, the absence of essential infrastructure creates significant barriers for these groups, limiting their access to employment. The lack of infrastructure to support childcare and caregiving is another critical issue that disproportionately affects female workers in urban India, specially marginalized female workers.

Conclusion

The paper concludes with the statement that in urban areas the employment opportunities are gradually increasing for the female workers and the marginalized community, although the increase is sporadic and non-uniform. Important reason for the low participation of women workers is their poor education and technical skills. Though the education level of women has increased in general, a huge percentage of women continue to be either illiterates or have inadequate education, .

The lack of infrastructure in urban India is also a deciding factor in the employment of women and marginalized community. It is a systemic issue that perpetuates inequality and limits the potential of millions of workers. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to build proper infrastructure that meets the needs of all workers, regardless of gender or social background. Only then can India's urban job sector truly become a space of opportunity and empowerment for everyone.

Women in Labour Force: Urge for Economic Independence or a Distress?

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Abstract

Latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (2023-24) reveals that in India female labour force participation and work force participation rates are 31.7 per cent and 30.7 per cent respectively, which are the highest since the liberalisation in 1991. These rates were only 17.5 per cent and 16.5 per cent respectively in 2017-18. Many studies however it has been argued that higher labour force participation is due to rural women's participation as 'Unpaid family workers' which is not welcoming as far as quality of work is concerned. Against this backdrop this paper tries to investigate the causes of recent hike in women's participation in the labour market from two perspectives; one is related to women centric factors and the other is related to the male participation in the labour market. Since in Indian culture men are the 'family bread-winner' and women are mainly engaged either in 'status production' which is prestigious for family or are compelled to join the labour market only in distress situation of household. For our first perspective we analyse the trend of women's participation in the Indian labour market across different education-spine on the basis of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data from 2017-18 to 2023-24. On the other side we look into the men's condition of work on the basis of their activity status and average earning with different level of education based on PLFS data. It has been found that illiterate women's participation rate is high from educated women. Although in this period labour market participation of all women irrespective of their level of education has increased. At that time men's participation as 'regular salaried/wage employee' is reduced when the number of men as 'self-employed' is increasing. There is also a decreasing trend of average earnings of men. Thus the higher participation of women in labour force actually signifies the presence of 'distress work' among them.

Keywords: Labour Force Participation Rate, Work Force Participation Rate, PLFS

Global NEET Dynamics: A Comparative Study of Gender and Geographic Disparities Pre and Post COVID-19

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Objective

NEET (not in education, employment and training) a new socio-economic challenge gaining substantial attention over the last few years. The Indian Labour Organisation (ILO) collects data on this subject, and it's report shows high shares of youth NEETs, regional and gender gaps, and growing youth anxiety about work, despite encouraging global youth unemployment trends. This indeed is a big threat to the future development of any nation as it's the youth that drives the success of the nation and to have a significant proportion of youth under this category stagnates growth and development.

Our main objective behind this research is to perform a comparison based on NEET pattern prevalent across countries between pre-covid and post-covid years. The research has been performed to identify the possible reasons behind such patterns and eventually certain policy recommendations are framed to address the challenge that may reduce the prevalent % of NEET.

Research Question

The research question has been bifurcated under three major segments, Geographical Area (Rural/Urban), Gender and Development Index. First, how NEET has impacted Rural and Urban areas of the world? Second, the NEET pattern in between Male and Female, & third, how has NEET impacted the countries across the world that are sub-divided on the basis of Human Development Index (HDI). The timeline of this research has been considered for 2019 and 2022 representing pre-covid and post-covid years respectively.

Data

The data used for this research has been collected from secondary sources such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Bank. It consists of NEET data for different countries of the world which are bifurcated on the 3 factors mentioned above.

Analysis has been performed on this dataset to find the mean comparison between the different dimensions and the results are mentioned below.

Analysis

Higher NEET Rates Among Females (2019 and 2022, Rural and Urban)

Research consistently shows that NEET rates are higher for females compared to males across both rural and urban settings. This trend is driven by several interconnected factors. Gender roles and societal expectations often place women in caregiving roles, such as looking after children or elderly family members, which can prevent them from engaging in employment or training. For instance, studies from

the OECD on Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) highlight that in many countries, women face barriers due to traditional role-sharing, with limited part-time work options and inadequate childcare facilities exacerbating the issue.

Discrimination in the labour market is another significant factor, where women may encounter biases that limit job access or career advancement. Cultural norms, particularly in regions with strong patriarchal structures, can discourage female participation in the workforce, further contributing to higher NEET rates. For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the World Bank notes that two-thirds of NEETs are women, often due to early marriage and teenage pregnancies, reflecting deep-seated gender disparities.

Decrease in Overall NEET Rates from 2019 to 2022

The observed drop-in NEET rates from 2019 to 2022 can be attributed to several post-pandemic recovery factors. Economic recovery played a crucial role, with global youth unemployment rates decreasing, as reported by the ILO (Global employment trends for youth 2024). For instance, the global youth unemployment rate fell from 13.8% in 2019 to 13% in 2023, with projections to 12.8% in 2024, suggesting a rebound in job opportunities. Government policies, such as job retention schemes and financial assistance for students, likely encouraged youth to re-enter the workforce or education.

The resumption of normal educational activities, with schools and training centers reopening, reduced the number of youth not in education, particularly after the disruptions caused by COVID-19. Improved labor market conditions, including the shift to remote work, allowed more young people to engage in employment, especially in sectors like technology and services. Data from the World Bank indicates that global NEET rates decreased from 22.7% in 2019 to 21.7% in 2023, supporting the trend of recovery.

Drastic Drop-in Rural Female NEET Rates from 2019 to 2022

The significant decrease in rural female NEET rates is particularly notable and likely driven by targeted interventions. In countries like India, government programs such as the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission have focused on empowering rural women through skill development, job placement, and financial inclusion.

Increased access to education and training in rural areas, supported by improved infrastructure like better roads and internet connectivity, has also played a role. For example, a study by Nielsen showed 45% growth in active internet users in rural India since 2019 reported a 61% growth in female active internet users in rural India since 2019, facilitating access to online education and remote work opportunities. Cultural shifts, with changing attitudes towards women's workforce participation, and migration to urban areas for better job prospects, further contributed to this drastic drop.

NEET Trends in Developed vs. Developing Countries

NEET rates are increasing in developed countries from 2019 to 2022, while decreasing in developing and underdeveloped nations. However, this trend is not uniform across all developed countries. For instance, in the US, the share of youth neither in school nor working was stable at around 9% from 2019 to 2022 and in the UK, the NEET rate decreased from 11.2% in 2019 to 10.4% in 2022. Japan also maintained low NEET rates, around 3.1% in 2022.

Despite this, some developed countries may experience increases due to economic challenges, such as recessions or automation reducing job opportunities, and rising mental health issues among youth, as noted in OECD reports. For developing and underdeveloped nations, NEET rates are likely decreasing due to economic growth and government initiatives.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the above insights we therefore present certain policy recommendations which may provide feasible solutions as against the challenges that we have identified in this research.

Addressing Higher NEET Rates Among Females

Ensure Fairness in School and Work: Rules have to be implemented that mandates fair and equal participation of women in schools and the workplace.

Make Pay and Chances Equal: Lack of growth opportunities and disparity in pay compels women to resign out of jobs, leading to a higher NEET. Fair work policy and equal opportunity is desired to address this issue.

Sustaining the Decrease in Overall NEET Rates

Boost Jobs and the Economy: Although the NEET rates are decreasing, new job creation activities have to be designed constantly to keep up with the ever-increasing demand for jobs. More Training Options: Constant upskilling & training will help individuals remain effective in the dynamic job market.

Bringing Rural Female NEET Rates Even Lower

Rural women saw a huge drop in NEET rates from 2019 to 2022, and measures have to be implemented to further bring it down. In India, for example, programs like the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana have been pushing skill-building and jobs for rural women.

Special programs have to be implemented designed especially for rural women, engaging them in performing chores that they can pursue from their home, while generating revenue out of it.

Similarly, there should be different policies for different countries. Specifically, countries with different development levels should be treated differently while creating policies to try to reduce NEET.

In Quest of Decent Work: Employment Quality in India

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Abstract

The labour market in India is undergoing a transition over the last three decades. While structural adjustment since the 1990s expanded the labour market, especially during the first few years of the new century, most of the new jobs were casual in nature. Thereafter, the story has been mostly that of a jobless growth, even job-loss growth in the 2011-2021 decade. Though the labour market is showing trepid signs of recovery in the more recent times, whether that lasts is doubtful. Along with quantitative pressure on the employment situation, India has been plagued by low quality of employment too. As a signatory to ILO conventions, India had ushered in several enabling regulations during the past century. In spite of that, India's record in terms of quality of jobs has remained circumspect. Over time, it has evolved and has been called by many names, from classic Disguised Unemployment (a la Joan Robinson) to Non-employment (Mathur, 1999) to (In)Decent Jobs. The problem essentially has remained the same – a plethora of jobs at the lowest rungs of the occupation spectrum – jobs that are irregular, low paying, requires little or no skill, without any social security or old-age benefits, and often in poor and hazardous working conditions. At the start of this century, ILO had declared that "the primary goal of ILO is not only the creation of jobs, but creation of jobs of acceptable quality. The quantity of employment cannot be divorced from its quality" (ILO, 1999) and had set 'Decent Work for All' as its goal. In this paper, we have explored the situation in India in terms of employment quality and decent work deficit using NSS and PLFS data over the last two decades. While the foundation is ILO's decent work framework (Anker et al, 2002), we have expanded and modified that to some extent to suit the available database in Indian context. Apart from aggregate situation, we have examined the pattern and trend across region, gender, social group and education.

We have considered mainly five factors which have influence on employment quality –

Nature of employment, Regularity of employment, Sector of work, Occupation type, and Wage level. Using these components we have created an Employment Quality Index (EQI) and used that to assess the qualitative aspect of employment situation in India. Our understanding is that employment quality improves if the job type changes from irregular to regular employment, primary to tertiary sector, unpaid labour to regular salaried worker, blue collar to white collar occupations, and low wages to high wages. Based on the final EQI score, we have divided the workforce in to four groups. From best to worst, these are – Decent Employment; Moderately good employment; Vulnerable Employment; and, Precarious Employment. Proportion of workers in the last two groups would be an indicator of *Decent Work Deficit* in the country.

If we look at the most recent data (2023-24), we observe that highest share of workers (nearly half of the workforce) are in the Vulnerable employment category. The second highest proportion, about one-fourth, belongs to Precarious Employment category. Thus about three fourth of the workers in the country are suffering from *Decent Work Deficit*, indicating that their employment, occupation and sector type are at the lower end and they also receive less than the median wage (which comes out to be about Rs. 350 per day at 2023-24 prices). Less than one-fifth of the workers are in Moderately Good employment and less than one-tenth are in the Decent employment category. Nearly 90 per cent of

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females are in Precarious or Vulnerable employment and only about 5 per cent in Decent employment. For the males these proportions are nearly 70 per cent and less than 10 per cent respectively. The social disparity is also quite evident. While more than 13 per cent of General caste workers are in Decent quality jobs, the figure for STs is only 4 per cent. On other extreme, more than 88 per cent of STs are in Precarious or Vulnerable employment while the figure for general caste is about 62 per cent. The disparity is most stark across Rural-Urban location. While close to one-fifth of urban workers have decent quality jobs, just about 3-4 per cent of rural workers have so. Similarly, more than 85 per cent of rural workers are in precarious or vulnerable jobs while 47 per cent of urban workers have so. This rural-urban dualistic nature of the labour market is the most significant and worrisome factor in India at current time. If we look at the regional situation in terms of employment quality, certain interesting facts emerge. We find that the average EQI score is relatively higher in the predominantly urban UTs like Chandigarh, Delhi, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, and also in Goa, Pondicherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Mizoram, and Kerala. Among the large states, EQI is high in the southern states of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In the north, while Punjab, Haryana and Uttarakhand are in relatively better situation, conditions in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are less than satisfactory. On other hand, EQI score is below national average in central/eastern states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal. It is to be noted that some of the largest and most populated states of the country show poor employment quality, which, as a result, is bringing down the national average. In fact, more than 80 per cent of all employments in these states are either precarious or vulnerable in nature, compared to states like Haryana, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra where the figures are less than 70 per cent. This shows that the situation in the country is far from satisfactory in terms of Decent Work. The only silver lining around this dark cloud is that the situation shows mild signs of improvement during the 2011-23 period after a slump during 1999-2011 period. EQI is increasing and the proportion of workers in the two bottom-most groups have come down. The task for future research would be to explore the factors that bring down *Decent Work Deficit* in the country and how these can be boosted.

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Revisiting the U-Shaped Hypothesis: Structural Analysis of Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) across India's Diverse Urban Landscapes

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the U-shaped hypothesis in female labor force participation (FLFP) in urban India, using nationally representative survey data. The U-shaped hypothesis, proposed by Goldin (1995), links levels of development with FLFP, suggesting that higher FLFP is observed in both agrarian, underdeveloped societies and post-industrialized, specialized job markets. In contrast, FLFP is lower in the middle of the development spectrum, influenced by income and cultural factors. This pattern is evident in the urban labor market in India, where high FLFP is seen at both the lower and higher ends of the educational spectrum, but it is notably lower among women with school-level education. This indicates that women in this group lack sufficient incentives to overcome the cultural and income barriers to joining the labour force. Such incentives could be provided through better-paid, formal, and quality jobs for women across all education levels.

Larger cities, with their specialized economies and role as 'job engines', can offer specialized jobs in labor-intensive manufacturing and tradable services, potentially reshaping the U-shaped curve in a more favorable direction due to cultural and gender-related factors. This study seeks to investigate whether the size of a city affects the U-shaped distribution of FLFP in urban India. It delves deeper into this question by examining the relationship between education and employment for women across various city size categories using the 2022-23 PLFS data.

Using the novel sample design of the PLFS, we have mapped FLFP by education across different city sizes. Two key trends emerge from this analysis: First, large and small cities show no significant differences in the U-shaped curve of FLFP. However, women with higher education in larger cities tend to secure better-paid and higher-quality jobs, reflecting stronger demand-side opportunities in these cities. Smaller cities (with populations ranging from 0.3 to 1.5 million) also show promising opportunities for highly educated women, similar to the largest cities. A deeper analysis of the sectoral distribution of the highly educated female workforce (graduates and above) reveals that these women are more concentrated in modern, tradable services in larger cities compared to smaller ones, highlighting significant intra-urban differentiation in the labor market. On the other hand, lower-educated women, regardless of city size, are often confined to informal sectors or self-employment, underscoring ongoing challenges in the labor market that persist across urban development levels.

Preliminary findings suggest two key points: (1) The income and cultural effects remain strong in larger urban areas, even with the availability of specialized economies and (2) smaller cities require better policies to create specialized jobs for women. The higher participation of women with higher education in smaller cities indicates a greater willingness to join the labor force, which could be supported by policies promoting sustainable and better livelihoods.

This study aims to extend the analysis to offer a more nuanced understanding of the female labor market across the urban spectrum, focusing on issues related to formality, wages, and the quality of work for women across different educational levels in urban India.

Context

Claudia Goldin (1995) introduced the U-shaped curve to explain the evolution of female labor force participation (FLFP) across different stages of modernization. Initially, women's participation is high,

especially in agriculture. However, as modernization advances, women's participation tends to decline due to traditional gender roles and income effects. Eventually, as further modernization occurs, new opportunities arise in education and formal employment, leading to a resurgence in women's workforce participation, thus forming the U-shaped curve.

Building on Goldin's work, Stephan Klasen (1999) examined the impact of gender inequality on economic growth and development using cross-country data. While not the primary focus, Klasen's study also addressed the U-shaped hypothesis in relation to FLFP. Following Klasen, Bhattacharya and Kar's 2009 study found that in developing countries, female workforce participation tends to follow a U-shaped pattern. Initially, as economies grow, women's participation declines; however, as conditions improve, women's participation gradually increases again.

Contrastingly, Desai et al. (2010) concluded that the U-shaped trend in FLFP is not clearly observable in India. Unlike in some other countries, economic growth in India has not consistently led to an increase in female labor force participation after an initial decline. Nandi and Kumar (2018) also found partial support for the U-shaped pattern in India. Their study showed that while the U-shaped curve, where women's labor force participation first drops and then rises with economic growth is somewhat evident, it varies based on regional conditions, education, and social norms.

The case of urban India

Urban India has a significantly lower female labour force participation than the rural (25.4% for 15+ females, as compared to 41.5% in the rural areas). The strong income and cultural effects restricts female labour force participation in India's cities, particularly among females who have school-level or mid-level education. However, there are strong intra-urban variations, and increasing attainment of females in higher education is expected to increase demand for quality jobs. Therefore, it is pertinent to look how the cities of various sizes respond to the U-shaped pattern and the differentiated demand of the urban female labour markets.

The main question that this paper ask is to enquire how does the U-shaped hypothesis of female labour force participation manifest across different city size classes in urban India, and to what extent do factors such as work specialization in larger cities, diversification across city sizes, and regional cultural influences alter the traditional form of this curve.

Database

The present study exploits the recently concluded Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23 data to look at the structural dynamics of urban female labour market across various size-classes of cities. The urban stratum of the PLFS 2022-23 allows to look across the labour market of urban areas of varous size-classes. This paper looks at the top ten cities (combined estimates of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Surat and Jaipur—all above 3 million as per Census 2011), other cities which have a population of 1.5 million or more, 0.3 million-1.5 million cities, towns with 50k-0.3 million, and urban areas below 50,000 population.

Preliminary Findings

The primary analysis suggests no large differences in U-shaped curves across the cities of various size-classes (Fig 1) rendering very similar income and cultural effects across various stages of urban development. However, the top ten cities have shown higher labour force participation at both ends of the education spectrum, closely followed by the medium sized cities (0.3-1.5 mn). This is significant from the perspective of job demands of the educated women in these two different kinds of urban areas. A further dive into the sectoral distribution of female work in these different kind of urban areas show a high share of modern services, including IT and professional services in the top ten cities, and a higher

share of traditional and social services (transport, communication, education and health etc) within the educated women of the medium to smaller cities. Sectoral distribution of the women on the other echelon of the education (not literate) does not show any significant differences across city size-class. The paper plans to dive more on this spatially segmented picture of the urban female labour market, because incentives on specialized jobs in smaller cities would be necessary to galvanize the demand for female work across the urban spectrum and it'll help to raise the FLFP at the higher end of the educational distribution of all the city size-classes. The incentives for such growth would depend upon the economic geographies across the urban areas. Additionally, it is also important to consider that there may be additional barriers influencing these employment patterns and women's access to work. These barriers will be explored further in subsequent analyses to understand their impact on female labour force participation.

Fig1: FLFP by city size-class (15-59 years)
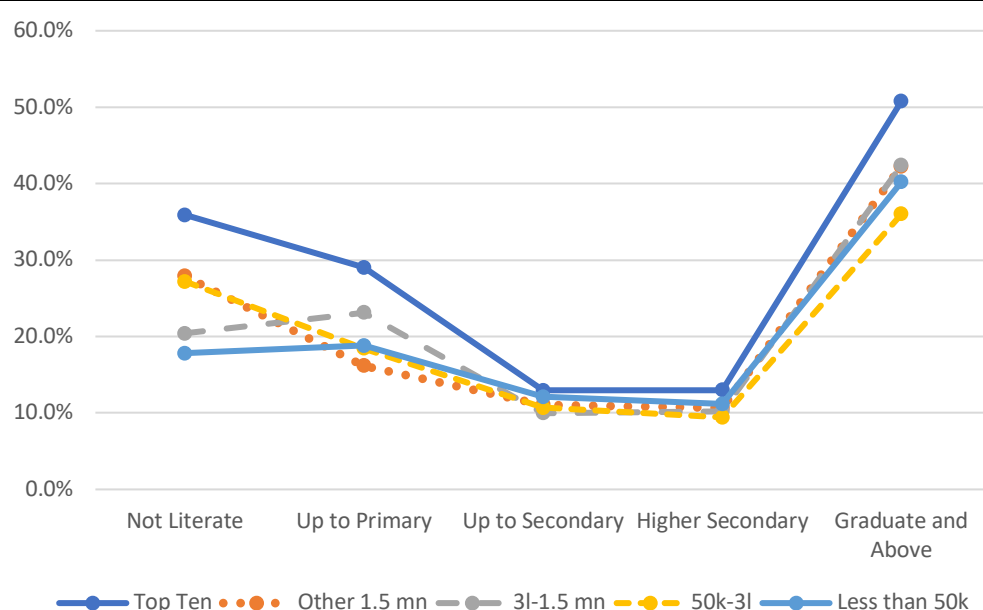
Source: Author's computation from PLFS 2022-23

Table 1. Sectoral distribution of work within highly educated women: Graduate and above (15-59 years)

Sectors	Top Ten	Other 1.5 mn	0.3-1.5 mn	50k-0.3 mn	Less than 50k
Labour intensive manufacturing	2.7%	3.8%	3.6%	5.4%	7.3%
Other manufacturing	5.4%	2.6%	4.3%	2.4%	2.1%
Public Services	2.4%	5.9%	5.5%	6.9%	6.0%
Traditional Services	9.5%	11.4%	11.6%	8.6%	12.2%
Modern Services	48.0%	35.7%	25.1%	13.9%	14.3%

Sectors	Top Ten	Other 1.5 mn	3l-1.5 mn	50k-3l	Less than 50k
Social Services	27.2%	35.6%	44.7%	56.8%	49.6%

Table 2. Sectoral distribution of work within not literate women (15-59 years)					
Sectors	Top Ten	Other 1.5 mn	3l-1.5 mn	50k-3l	Less than 50k
Labour Intensive manufacturing	17.0%	15.5%	18.0%	21.0%	15.7%
Other manufacturing	10.2%	7.6%	5.8%	2.8%	4.7%
Construction	8.7%	9.5%	10.5%	5.4%	7.8%
Public Services	3.1%	3.5%	3.2%	1.7%	0.5%
Traditional Services	11.2%	15.3%	17.5%	14.0%	13.3%
Modern Services	2.9%	1.1%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%
Social Services	0.7%	3.5%	2.4%	2.4%	1.0%

Source: Author's computation from PLFS 2022-23

Labour Intensive ManufacturingNIC 10-18

Other Manufacturing   NIC 19-33

Construction   NIC 41-43

Public Services (Electricity, Gas and Water Supply, Public Admn & Defence, Railways, National Postal Activities)   NIC 35-39, NIC 491, NIC 531, NIC 84

Traditional Services (Trade, Transport, Storage and Communication except above, Accomodation and Food services)   NIC 45-47, NIC 492-493, NIC 50-52, NIC 532, NIC 55-56

Modern Services (Finance, Real Estate, Business, ICT, Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities, Administrative and support services) NIC 58-82

Social Services (Education and Health) NIC 85-88

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Poverty and Inequality in Rural India: A Decomposition Analysis of Household Labour-Income Compositions

Dr. Soham Bhattacharya (Post-Doctoral Researcher, KREA University)

Abstract

A recent and renewed interest in the estimation and policy interest has emerged in the academic (and policy circles) associated with the Indian economy. This interest appears after a decade long wait, as the National Sample Survey office (NSSO) has reinitiated the Household Consumption Expenditure Surveys (2022-23 and 2023-24). Since the publication of this report and factsheet, plethora of studies are now emerging almost in a camp-group manner, where estimated poverty levels are debated to either have increased or decreased. A few extremely polarised estimates in order to set the primary motivational context of this article are as follows: the Niti Aayog (cited in Dhoot 2024) claimed that poverty levels have declined below 5% and meanwhile refuting that claim Sethu et.al. (2025) have used the revised Rangarajan poverty line to observe that a little more than 26% of the overall population remain poor.

Given this renewed empirical interest in poverty, a gap remains, to identify the sources of income/livelihood into the poverty decline (or increase) in the recent periods. I have utilised two theoretical frameworks to look into the incidence of income poverty and the impact of 'Growth effect' and 'Distribution effect' [Ravallion and Datt, 1992, Dev and Ravi 2007]. Primarily using the Periodic Labour Force Survey Data (2017-2024) and $2.15 PPP adjusted poverty lines, the aforementioned exercise reveals that inequalities in rural India has actually adversely affected the poverty levels in all the years and across all regions (barring the southern India).

The second set of theoretical intervention emanates from a Gini-Decompostion of household incomes (Lerman and Yitzhaki, 1985) into income sources, which notably observes that incomes earned from salaried and regular jobs and incomes from self-employment in the rural non-farm sector remains the most important factors to explain the increase in the overall income inequality.

A robustness of these results is then tested using the Household consumption surveys (2022 and 2023), using sources of major income earned as the household category. The findings remain similar, where inequality adds up to poverty. With these findings, this empirical note raises two questions: Firstly, if the salaried and non-farm components are increasing the inequalities, how does one revisit and reimagine the broader questions of structural transformation in rural India?

Secondly, with a growing employment share of self-employment in the agriculture and its relatively low importance in the overall income of the rural economy, how does one revisit the yet unresolved agrarian question in India.

Keywords (JEL Codes): Inequality (D31), Income and Wages (J300), Poverty (I38), India.

Labor Market Penalty for Single Mothers

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Shubham Ojha (Global Development Institute, University of Manchester)

Abstract

It is well established that there is a motherhood penalty in the labor market for child-bearing women. Theoretical models, as well as empirical estimates, suggest that unmarried or never married women without children have a relative advantage in terms of labor market opportunities. However, little is known about *single mothers* and their labor market outcomes. Aside from the fact that this is an expanding demographic worldwide, single mothers constitute an interesting case from a purely conceptual point of view. On the one hand, they might not have the typical social constraints of married women in traditional patriarchal societies, but on the other hand, they face the same constraints with respect to childcare and childbearing as other married mothers. While aggregate data suggests that single mothers' labor market participation rates are usually higher than those of unmarried women, we argue that in contrast to married women without children and married mothers, this realized labor market equilibrium masks potential demand-side discrimination and likely reflects strong supply-side incentives. With the aim of uncovering potential demand-side discrimination effects, we conduct a correspondence study experiment that involves applying to real jobs using fictitious resumes. We show that equally qualified single mothers are much less likely to receive interview callbacks than unmarried women without children, married without children, and married mothers. For every interview callback a single mother has to apply to about 30 jobs, whereas an unmarried woman receives more than two callbacks for as many job applications. As a potential mechanism behind our findings, we find suggestive evidence of inaccurate statistical discrimination by employers.

Keywords- single mothers; labor market discrimination; motherhood penalty

JEL Classification- J71; J23; O12

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Introduction

Single-parent households have steadily increased in numbers since the 1990s, with an overwhelming number of such households being led by a 'single mother'. For instance, while single parents now constitute about 15% of the households with dependent children in the EU, in the United States, there were about 15.76 million children living with a single mother in 2019. This number is on the rise even in developing countries. According to a UN report, an estimated 4.5% of all Indian households are headed by single mothers, which translates to approximately 13 million lone-mother households in India

[3]. Additionally, around 32 million single mothers are estimated to be living in extended households. Children in single-parent households, primarily led by mothers, face a dual challenge. Firstly, they often experience resource constraints, as these households tend to have higher poverty rates. For instance, in India, the poverty rate among lone-mother households is as high as 38%, compared to 22.6% in dual-parent households [4]. Secondly, the alteration in family structure itself can significantly impact a child's emotional and intellectual growth (Fergusson et al., 2007).

While the notion of a motherhood penalty in the labor market is fairly well established empirically (Yang et al., 2024; Correll et al., 2007; Glauber, 2018; Anderson et al., 2002), it is not known whether the penalty extends to single mothers, and if yes, to what degree. This is partly due to the fact that it is not obvious that the penalty would naturally extend to single mothers in the labor market equilibrium. Unlike mothers in civil unions, the supply-side factors affecting single mothers' labor market outcomes are likely to be very different. For instance, while a mother in a union may rely on other sources of household income and, therefore, prefer childcare and adjust her labor market participation hours downwards, a single mother may not have this choice. Financial responsibility for children, limited government support, poor socio-economic background, etc., may compel single mothers to disproportionately participate more in the labor market, i.e., to increase their labor supply (Meyer and Rosenbaum, 2001; Sherman, 2020; Gonzalez, 2004; Pronzato, 2009). Consequently, observing labor market equilibrium matches for single mothers and statistics on their employment status may largely reflect this supply-side mechanism and mask any demand-side inequalities and/or discrimination.

In this paper, we study whether single mothers face a labor market penalty. We construct a unique experimental design using a correspondence study approach (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004; Thorat and Attewell, 2007; Neumark et al., 2019; Chen, 2024) to estimate if real-life employers discriminate against single mothers compared to equally qualified single women for actual jobs advertised on a large job market portal in India [5]. In general, the labor market outcomes for any individual or group depend on both the demand and supply side (Bhalotra and Ferna´ndez, 2023). Simply based on supply-side factors, the theory predicts that single mothers should work more in comparison to unmarried women because of their relative deprivation of outside options on various dimensions, as we have discussed above. We provide suggestive evidence for this theoretical prediction using India's Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data, also known as the Indian National Family Health Survey 4 (NFHS 4) from 2015-16.

On the other hand, labor demand for single mothers is a function of a host of factors, including the taste and preferences of the employer. Ex-ante, it is not obvious that employers would discriminate against single mothers in the same way that discrimination manifests toward mothers in general. Mothers,generally, tend to be discriminated against largely on account of employers' perceptions of time use patterns, availability of resources, and resultant estimates of the candidates' productivity (Phelps, 1972; Jessen et al., 2019; Aigner and Cain, 1977). This provides an implicit advantage for single women without children in the labor market.

The case of single mothers could, however, be very different, and if a penalty were to exist, it is not clear whether it is more substantial or weaker than the labor market penalty for married mothers. Becker (1985) defines a marriage penalty for women as the cost married women bear due to traditional household specialization, wherein married women invest and specialize in home production, and

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[3] See this article by Time of India

[4] See this report by UN Women,2019-2020

[5] Other experimental methods used to identify labor market discrimination are vignette studies (Ku¨bler et al., 2018; Baert and De Pauw, 2014; Van Borm et al., 2021) and list experiments (Aksoy et al., 2024; Osman et al., 2023).

married men specialize in labor market activities. As the marriage penalty does not, by definition, concern single mothers, they should, in principle, be better off than married mothers in the labor market.

On the other hand, if the penalty manifests itself through either employer discrimination or actual lack of productivity issues, exemplified, for instance, by the lack of time available for the job, the penalty should be accentuated for single parents because of the potential absence of spousal support for child care. Moreover, the existence of negative societal attitude (Haire and McGeorge, 2012; Eby et al., 2004) towards single parents might potentially translate into discrimination against them in the labor market(Bertrand et al., 2005). Therefore, studying single mothers in the labor market helps revisit many unanswered questions within the motherhood penalty literature in labor economics.

Against this backdrop, our correspondence study design has two major advantages. First, it allows us to capture a pure motherhood penalty which is not contaminated by an associated marriage penalty for women. Second, by eliminating experimentally the supply-side heterogeneity, we are able to isolate a pure demand-side effect and, therefore, make predictions about the counterfactual labor market equilibrium in the absence of distortions due to potential demand-side discrimination. Additionally, to answer our question on the relative magnitudes of this penalty vis-a-vis the standard motherhood penalty, we also compare callback rates for equally qualified married women without children and married women with children to unmarried women without children. Additionally, the use of experimental methods have gained significance in understanding the advances in organization behavior and have increasingly become popular due to their high internal and construct validity and also helps uncover theoretical mechanisms (Levine et al., 2023).

We create fictitious resumes/CVs of ned signific applicants that are identical in all relevant aspects but differ only in their respective parenthood and marital status. In our experiment, we have four treatment arms (unmarried women without children "Unmarried"[6], married women without children "Married", married women with children "Married Mothers", and women who are single mothers "Single Mothers"[7]), and we apply to each job with all 4 CVs. We only applied for openings in private sector firms and avoided job openings for highly specialized positions that required many years of on-the-job experience. Our aim was to select jobs that a university graduate might be eligible for entry-level jobs [8]. The companies whose job posts we responded to included Banking and financial services, education, IT services, business process management, retail, manufacturing, marketing, and mass media.

Our estimates suggest that there seems to be a clear rank order of the potential discrimination, as evidenced by differences in callback rates. Compared to equally qualified unmarried women without children, all other categories are less likely to receive a callback. However, the effects are smaller for married women without children, followed by married women with children, and the highest for single women with children, suggesting that single mothers are least likely to receive callbacks. This suggests that in the absence of such discrimination, in the counterfactual, the labor demand for single mothers

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[6] In our classification under "Unmarried," we exclusively account for unmarried women without children. Despite acknowledging the existence of unmarried women with children, we refrain from including them in the "Unmarried" category, given that the prevalence of unmarried women with children is not a common occurrence in India.

[7] In our experimental design, we have not categorized single mothers based on whether single motherhood is an endogenous choice (resulting from divorce or adoption without marriage) or an exogenous event (such as widowhood).

[8] We recognize that single mothers often come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, yet we use entry-level positions because, particularly in India, these jobs typically fall within the lower-middle class spectrum (equating to approximately $100120 per month). Furthermore, we prioritize entry-level roles as they typically do not necessitate specialized skills, making them less susceptible to discrimination, and their availability is not restricted.

would have been higher, and therefore, in equilibrium, we would have even more single mothers participating in the labor force.

Finally, we examine some likely mechanisms driving our results using two complementary approaches. First, we conduct a heterogeneity analysis by looking at differences in results based on the potential relocation costs of the applicants. We find that the differential in callback rates is more pronounced for job locations that are farther away from the applicants' inferred home locations. On the other hand, we do not find a statistically significant difference in callbacks across groups for jobs located in the candidates' home location. This provides evidence in support of statistical discrimination where employers may accurately or inaccurately assume that single mothers may have higher opportunity costs of relocation (Csaszar et al., 2023). It is critical to disentangle whether this statistical discrimination is accurate or inaccurate, as it is a valuable distinction for both policy design and welfare analysis (Bohren et al., 2023). Therefore, to address this concern, we perform a vignette experiment on potential future employers and recruiters. The vignettes were conducted in a classroom of business school students in a leading (top 70 in global FT rankings) business school in India. Through this survey, we attempt to elicit general beliefs about the potential sources of labor market discrimination against single mothers. We employ a method similar to (Haaland and Roth, 2023; Chen, 2024), and we find that the modal belief among our respondents is that the callback differential is due to implicit discrimination: 44% of our respondents believe employers subconsciously rely on negative stereotypes about single mothers, and 41% state that the main reason driving this result relates to inaccurate statistical discrimination (employers incorrectly believing that single women are less productive on average).

Unheard Voices & Unseen Work- Debugging Gendered Labour Expropriation in the Discourse of Craft Making

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Abstract

The narratives of craftswomen and their representation in the primal discourse of academia and policy literature remained significantly undemoted in India. The narratives of skilled craftmanship have been historically masculinized. Statistically ratified as workers/artisans/craftsmen, it is the male workers whose marginality, and positionality holds value in the mainstream (read malestream) craft economy. However, reality holds a different narrative. The huge labour pool of craft industry is equally accorded by the unseen, unheard and shadow labour force of women artisans. According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, the Handicraft Industry of India is dominated by female artisans with over 56% of the total Artisan. Our Country has over 744 handicraft clusters employing nearly 212,000 artisans and offering 35,000 products. The contribution, involvement, and challenges meted by the huge spectrum of female workers in various capacities remained unaccounted. Mostly perceived as housewives, and obliterated as shadow workers, not only are the female workers debarred from their rightful economic agency, but also from their basic labour rights. Being dismissed as a political category of labour force, working in the atomic space of household, and lacking bargaining power, and a collective identity, women artisans and workers of craft industry form the subaltern pool of workers.

The proposed paper is an effort to relook and rebuild these politics of representation, recognition, and redistribution of women artisans. The intersecting power relations operating through the multiple grids of gender, class, religion, kinship, and market forces are hereby epistemically viewed through the lens of Feminist Methodology. Using Feminist Theoretical position attempt is made to polemically decode the choices, concerns and constraints of women artisans in the spatiality of their home.

Drawing from the vast body of previous literature and from the empirical realities of a number of hand-made zari embroidery women artisans of Panchla area of Bengal, the given paper shows a gendered hegemony inherent in the age-old industry. While craftsperson in their entirety are leading a fractured, precarious and marginalised existence, it is the women artisans and workers who are getting further sedimented in the hierarchy of skill, recognition and remuneration, lacking visibility and viability in our patrimonial economy. Historically marginalised, in the gamut of unpaid family labour, aptly theorised as housewifeisation of labour (Mies, 1982), the paper shows how the complex interplay of capitalist patriarchy becomes viably palpable in today's time. Being tied with the traditional altruist role of femininity, how the housewifely duty of women artisans comes in the way of their labour and livelihood choices and agency forms a pertinent aspect of the paper. While men workers can opt out to other alternative livelihood, migrate outside, it is the women artisans who are left behind. Dealing with the competition from zari machines, lacking any independent financial entitlement, depending on middlemen, balancing multiple domestic responsibilities, it is the women labour pool who are teething a tough battle.

Based on these ontologies of marginality and subversion, the paper highlights an urgent need to revamp the economy of craftswomen with a rightful gender lens. One of the notable gendered interventions in the livelihood narratives of craft women lies in not taking their economic roles in a sporadic manner. As their economic selves are embedded with their social and familial being, their identity being fused in their domesticity. The paper attempts to show that the gamut of craft work for most of women in rural and peri urban India need not be replaced with an alienated work. What needs to be done is to revive the debilitating craft ecosystem, which is hugely based on middlemen. Giving digital and overall literacy, upskilling, better marketing policies along with effective child care and household interventions will help to even out the roadblocks of empowerment. Only when women artisans will get the right kind of inputs, insights, and infrastructure, they will convert the nation's cultural patrimony of so-called Sunset Industry into a Sunshine economy.

Resolving Challenges Faced by Gig Workers through Modifications in Competition Law

Niti Bhutani (Associate Professor, Hindu College) and Vansh Gupta (MSc Economics, University College, London)

Abstract

This paper examines interlinkages between two strands of literature -gig economy and antitrust law. It explores the possibility of finding solutions to some challenges faced by gig workers through the route of competition law. The discussion can also be turned around to view alternative ways of examining antitrust issues by incorporating information from labor markets.

Key words: gig workers; competition/ antitrust law, decent work deficit

Economies today are characterized by increasing contractualization of work and a disruption of the conventional employer-employee relationship. If ongoing employment trends are anything to go by, the future of work is likely to revolve around the gig economy characterized by flexible, on-demand, task-based jobs among other things.

Gig workers are typically those who earn a living outside of the traditional employer employee relationship.[9] They can be classified as platform workers or non-platform based gig workers. Platform workers are those whose activity is facilitated through a web-based app or a digital platform. On the contrary, the non-platform gig workers comprise casual wage workers and own-account workers, working part-time or fulltime (NITI Aayog, 2022). The focus, for the purpose of this paper, will be on platform based workers.

Platform-based gig workers face a number of challenges on account of being classified as "independent contractors" and fall outside of the traditional employer-employee relationship. Protections and entitlements (such as social security benefits, access to institutional credit and so on) that, in the normal course, would be available to an employee, may not be available to a gig worker. Moreover, inadequate legislative and regulatory efforts by the government and/ or lack of laws regulating gig work make it difficult to address worker protection and classification issues. (NITI Aayog, 2022; BCG Group, 2021; NCAER, 2023; Paigam, 2024)

Regulatory Framework – A Background

The regulatory framework poses a special challenge as far as gig work is concerned. The main bone of contention in legal cases revolves around the classification of gig workers as employees or independent contractors.

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[9] Such workers are largely concentrated in the unorganized sector but there has been a continued increase overtime in the relative share of such workers in the organized sector. Further, informal work relations persist (with workers typically not having a written contract of at least a year as opposed to formal work relations), despite the increase in the share of gig workers in the organized sector. (NITI Aayog, 2022).

The United Kingdom has a "worker" category that is intermediate to being an employee and being self-employed. Workers are, for instance, entitled to the national minimum wage and annual leave like the employees.[2] A UK employment court ruled in 2016 that Uber drivers are not self-employed and should be paid the national living wage and holiday pay thus paving the way for similar recognition by gig workers employed elsewhere (Osborne, 2016)

https://workingfamilies.org.uk/articles/employed-self-employed-orworker/#:~:text=Workers%20have%20some%20legal%20rights,enjoy%20none%20of%20these%20rights.

As far as the U.S. is concerned, it was not until 2019-20 that 3 states– New Jersey, California, and Massachusetts, challenged worker status. The demand of the workers (through their unions) was that they be treated as employees. California was the first state to grant more labor protections to gig workers through what is known as the Assembly Bill - 5 or AB-5. The bill, that came into effect in January, 2020, proposes an ABC test that, by default, treats a worker as an employee unless *all* of the three conditions outlined by a three-pronged criterion are met https://nbisems.com/blogs/news/the-abc-s-of-california-s-take-on-the-independent-contractortest)[3] Some exemptions were, however, made later since default classification as an employee may not suit every worker if one is a freelancer or herself prefers to be an independent contractor.

The AB-5 bill has the impact of making it harder for an employer to pass off a worker as an independent contractor. Moreover, the intention was to enact the act so that workers misclassified as independent contractors instead of employees get the protections (minimum wage, workers' compensation if injured on the job, paid sick leave, paid family leave, and unemployment insurance) that they are entitled to by the law. From the point of view of the employers, though, labor costs are bound to go up and the burden of the increase would most likely be borne by consumers as also lead to tighter work conditions for the workers.

In India, there have been occasional legislative attempts to recognise and resolve some hardships faced by these workers. At the central level, the Code on Social Security (COSS), 2020, recognises gig and platform workers as a separate category of workers. In 2023, Rajasthan also passed the Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act and in 2024, Karnataka released a draft bill - the Karnataka PlatformBased Gig Workers Bill. These legislations differ in the scope of social security they aim to extend but broadly seek to regulate gig and platform work by establishing welfare boards, mandatory registration for aggregators and their workers, and a welfare fund with contributions from the aggregators and the government. The COSS, 2020, provides for the framing of suitable schemes on matters relating to life and disability cover, accident insurance, health and maternity benefits, old age protection, etc. The Karnataka bill also introduces additional safeguards, including algorithmic transparency, fair contracts, protection against arbitrary dismissals, and an internal dispute resolution system. However, both bills have unresolved concerns. They neither explicitly define social security entitlements nor address the classification of gig workers as employees or independent contractors. As of February 2025, COSS (2020) and Rajasthan Bills have been passed but not yet implemented, and the Karnataka bill is yet to be introduced in the Assembly, thus rendering these regulatory efforts as ineffective and inadequate.

Research Idea and Research Question

A common thread in the employee- independent contractor classification debate is the increase in labor costs resulting from classifying workers as employees. Companies clearly have an incentive to use the independent contractor classification which, in turn, gives the recruiting company an unfair advantage against competitor companies. People v. Uber Techs., 56 Cal.App.5th 266 | Casetext Search + Citator. The issue is: could the workings of the gig economy in the light of recent trends result in a "dominant position" by the recruiting company and the abuse of such a position, in particular?

This paper seeks to examine the interlinkages between antitrust and labor markets in the context of the emergence of the gig economy. Any abuse of a dominant position needs to be avoided - A "dominant position" means a position of economic strength enjoyed by an enterprise that enables it to operate independently of its competitors, customers and ultimately the consumers, and thereby prevent effective competition prevailing in the relevant market (EU Competition Law as of 2013, the Competition Act, 2002 (India)). There is nothing wrong per se in holding a dominant position but it is the abuse of a dominant position that a competition body looks out for (Office of Fair Trading, 2004, Dhall, 2007).

The focus of antitrust is on monopolistic anti-competitive behavior which is gauged visà-vis consumers or in terms of trying to keep a competitor out. But, it also manifests itself in deteriorating or negligent care for employees. Monoposonistic patterns should also be included which highlights the need to expand the metrics for evaluating antitrust cases. A consideration of employee welfare in antitrust cases and a corresponding penalty for any abuse should act as a deterrent for any exploitative behavior vis-à-vis employees.

Thus, this paper seeks to address the following question: Can gig worker welfare be enhanced by expanding the metrics of competition law?

The research is, therefore, intended to : (1) address the issue of decent work deficit and facilitate better monitoring of the disbursement of social security benefits, and (2) help enrich the antitrust framework.

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Investigating the Rise in Female Workforce Participation in India: Patterns, Job Quality, and Data Methodologies (2017–18 to 2023–24)

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Priyanshi Chaudhary (Doctoral Research Scholar, O. P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat, Haryana)

Introduction

For the past few decades, India has faced the challenge of low and declining female labour force participation rate (LFPR) and workforce participation rate (WPR). However, since 2017-18, there has been noticeable reversal in the trends, showing a rising trend of LFPR (Figure 1) and WPR. This increase has been more pronounced since 2022, coinciding with the post-COVID-19 years. After two long years of the pandemic, the increase in the LFPR in 2022-23 could be due to the easing of economic restrictions.

While this rise seems encouraging, it is essential to understand the factors driving this trend. This study investigates the reasons behind the rise in female LFPR and WPR over the period 2017-18—2023-24, with a focus on the post-pandemic years. The LFPR of rural women rose by 6.1 percentage points, and for urban women, it increased by 2.6 percentage points in 2023-24 compared to the previous year, while male participation remained largely stable.

The latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023-24 conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) shows a sharp rise in the last year, raising questions about whether this reflects an actual improvement in women's labour market conditions or a statistical shift. This study aims to uncover the underlying drivers of these trends and assess the quality of jobs available to women during this time by analysing unit-level PLFS from 2017-18 to 2023-24.

FIGURE 1: LFPR FOR PEOPLE OF AGE 15 YEARS & ABOVE ACCORDING TO USUAL ACTIVITY STATUS (UAS)
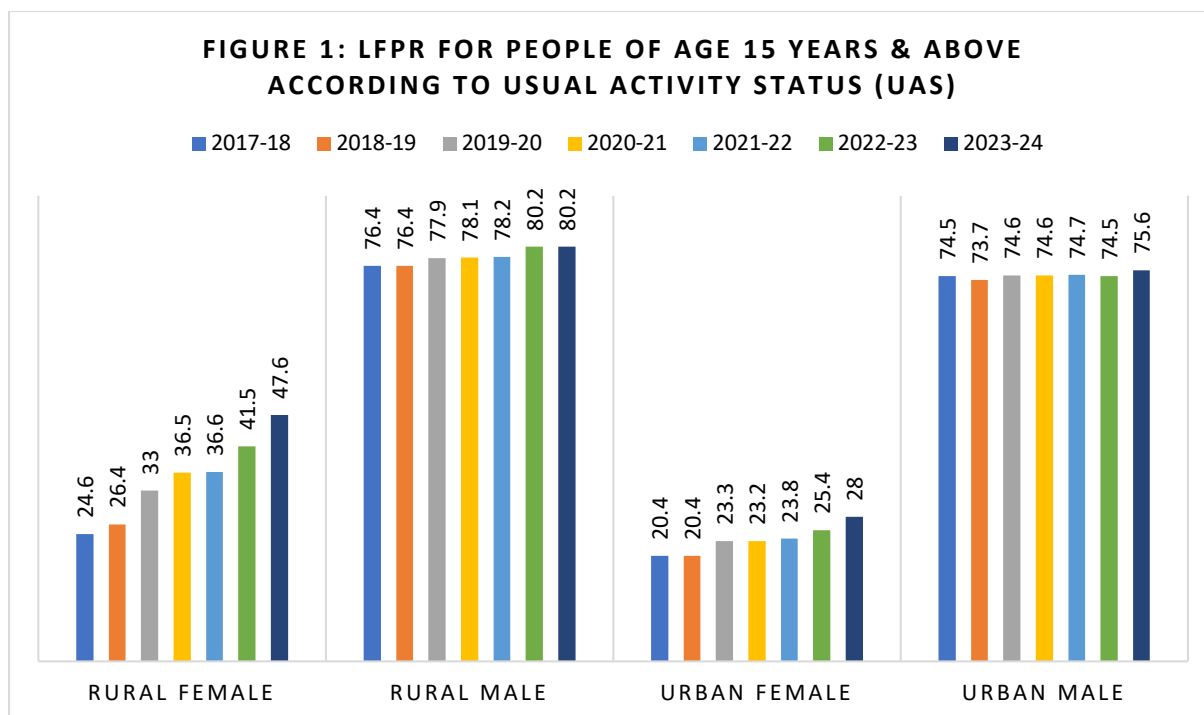
Methodology

The study captures trends in female employment patterns, employment structure, and quality of jobs over the period 2017-18 to 2023-24. It also examines the extent of underemployment among women to assess their working conditions and quality of job opportunities available.

The analysis is based on unit-level data from the National Sample Survey Organisation's (NSSO) Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) from 2017-18 to 2023-24. This paper evaluates the employment quality of women through shifts in employment structure, industry of employment, occupation type, and real average earnings during this period. Special focus is given to the change in such trends during the post-COVID-19 period. Additionally, the study explores reasons behind women's increasing LFPR and WPR in rural and urban areas, disentangling between actual improvements in the labour market and shifts driven by methodological changes in the PLFS survey.

Results & Discussion

The study highlights a significant increase in self-employment, particularly in the categories of own-account workers and unpaid family helpers (Figure 2). The data reveals a notable rise in employment within agriculture and allied activities. Wages have either declined or remained stagnant during the observed period for both rural and urban women. The data reveals a notable rise in employment within agriculture and allied activities for rural women. Average real wages have either declined or remained stagnant during the observed period.

FIGURE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF WORKFORCE OF ALL AGES BY CATEGORY OF EMPLOYMENT (DISAGGREGATED SELF-EMPLOYMENT) ACCORDING TO USUAL ACTIVITY STATUS
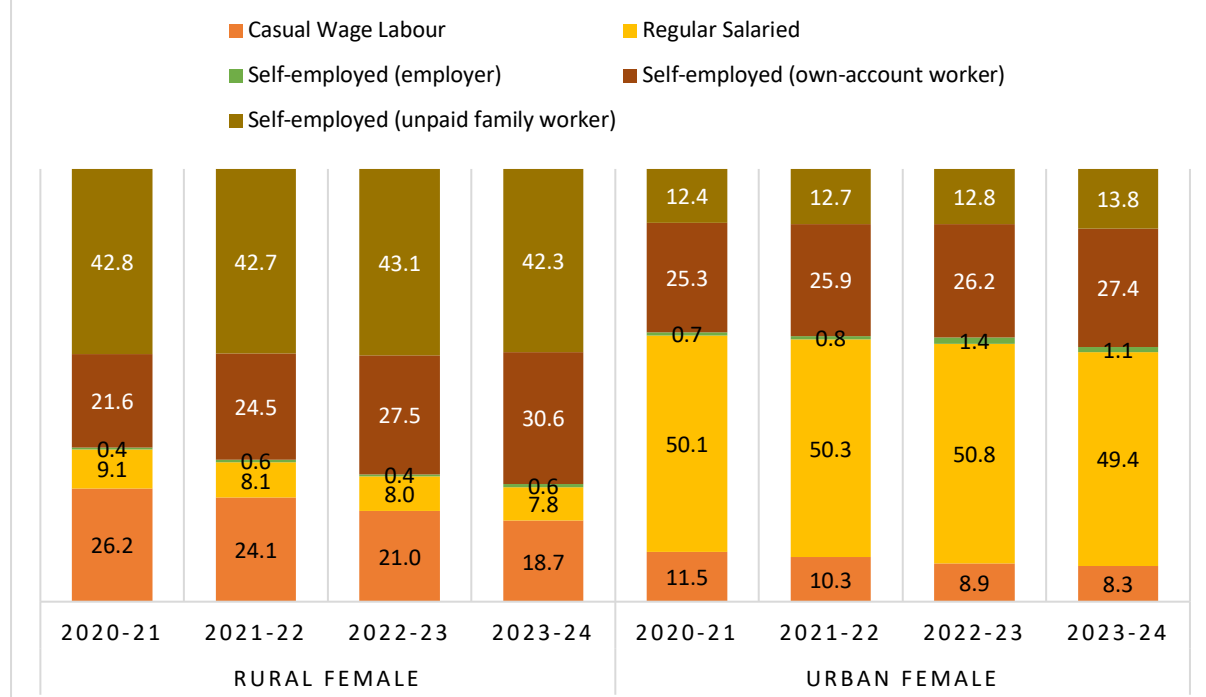
Part of the rise in female LFPR and WPR can be linked to economic distress during the COVID-19 period (2020–2022), marked by job losses and reduced income. Many women who were previously outside the labour force likely entered or re-entered the workforce to supplement family income as the economy began recovering from pandemic-related restrictions.

Additionally, changes in the methodology of the PLFS survey introduced in 2023-24 have significantly influenced employment estimates. **Activities such as collecting firewood, vegetables, and similar tasks for self-consumption, which were earlier categorized under "domestic duties," are now categorized as self-employment**. The latest survey also includes two new activities in self-employment to be undertaken with special care while recording the person's status. Both these changes are likely to shift workers from 'not in the labour force' to primarily self-employment, and the impact would be higher for female workers and more so in rural areas.

Table 1 and 2 show that there has been a significant decline (around 19.81 million) in female labourers classified under code 93 (domestic duties) in the latest survey, while code 92 (domestic duties with self-employment) saw an increase of nearly 12 million. A notable proportion (71%) of this increase is linked to subsidiary self-employment, contributing to a 77% growth rate in self-employment among workers previously recorded under domestic duties. Many of these workers are likely categorized as self-employed due to the change in the definition in the latest survey.

By examining three-digit NCO codes, the paper finds substantial increases in women working in forestry-related work (e.g., gathering firewood, lac, medicinal herbs), subsistence farming, fishing, handicraft production, and food processing and related works. These shifts are largely attributed to the methodological changes introduced in the latest survey.

Table 1: The structure of change within the activity code 92 (domestic duties) of female workers

	Usual Activity Status	Absolute change in millions			% change			Incremental change in % of total change for female		
		2020-21 to 2021-22	2021-22 to 2022-23	2022-23 to 2023-24	2020-21 to 2021-22	2021-22 to 2022-23	2022-23 to 2023-24	2020-21 to 2021-22	2021-22 to 2022-23	2022-23 to 2023-24
Attended Domestic duties only (Code 92)	**casual wage labour**	0.55	0.39	0.94	33.61	17.92	36.47	8.94	4.69	7.88
	regular salaried	-0.14	0.11	0.11	-46.10	63.82	41.08	-2.31	1.27	0.94
	self-employed (employer)	0.03	-0.04	0.05	68.12	-49.63	115.15	0.55	-0.49	0.40
	self-employed (own-account worker)	1.01	1.30	4.02	50.60	43.43	93.70	16.34	15.56	33.71
	self-employed (unpaid family worker)	1.47	1.42	4.38	38.83	27.03	65.78	23.82	16.96	36.69
	NILF	3.24	-11.52	2.43	2.20	-7.67	1.75	52.67	-137.98	20.38
	Total	6.15	-8.35	11.93	3.98	-5.19	7.82			

Table 2: The structure of change within the activity code 93 (domestic duties and free collection of goods for household use) of female workers

	Usual Activity Status	Absolute change in millions			% change			Incremental change in % of total change for female		
		2020-21 to 2021-22	2021-22 to 2022-23	2022-23 to 2023-24	2020-21 to 2021-22	2021-22 to 2022-23	2022-23 to 2023-24	2020-21 to 2021-22	2021-22 to 2022-23	2022-23 to 2023-24
Engaged in domestic duties and	**casual wage labour**	0.51	0.16	-0.07	31.32	7.67	-2.88	6.39	1.40	-0.33

free collection of goods for household use (Code 93)	regular salaried	0.05	0.01	0.00	79.22	9.34	1.66	0.69	0.10	0.01
	self-employed (employer)	0.08	-0.05	0.06	23398.38	-58.71	188.95	1.01	-0.41	0.32
	self-employed (own-account worker)	0.81	1.90	0.83	33.00	58.35	16.14	10.18	16.35	4.19
	self-employed (unpaid family worker)	2.22	3.39	1.24	36.21	40.62	10.56	28.02	29.24	6.26
	NILF	4.25	6.18	-21.88	7.51	10.15	-32.62	53.71	53.31	-110.44
	Total	7.92	11.59	-19.81	11.83	15.49	-22.93			

Conclusion

The study examines the recent rise in female LFPR and WPR in India, particularly the sharp increase observed in the post-COVID-19 period. While the rising trend appears promising, the findings suggest that it is driven by a combination of economic distress during the COVID-19 period and methodological changes in the PLFS survey. These changes, including the recategorization of domestic and self-consumption activities as self-employment, have significantly changed labour force estimates for women.

While the increase in female LFPR and WPR has often been celebrated as a positive development, it is critical to contextualize these changes. The observed rise is largely driven by definitional changes or economic distress rather than actual improvements in job quality or economic opportunities. Stagnant or declining wages, along with a rise in self-employment in subsistence activities, highlight worsening labour market conditions for women. Such shifts can misrepresent the status of female workers and overstate the effectiveness of policies designed to enhance their labour force participation. There is a need for careful interpretation of employment statistics and targeted policy interventions to promote genuine economic empowerment for women.

The Impact of Childcare Subsidisation on Women's Employment Participation: Evidence from Jharkhand

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Introduction

Evidence indicates a positive relationship between access to affordable childcare and women's labour force participation (Attanasio & Vera-Hernandez, 2004; Barros et al., 2013; Nandi et al., 2020). In India, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), primarily implemented through Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), is the principal program subsidizing childcare nationwide. AWCs provide a range of services, including supplementary nutrition, health check-ups, preschool education, and immunization (Jain, 2016). However, empirical evidence on the program's impact on women's employment participation in India remains limited (Nandi et al., 2020).

This paper contributes novel evidence by examining the effects of the widespread closure of AWCs in Jharkhand in 2019, triggered by a strike led by Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs). Specifically, we assess the impact of this disruption on the labour force participation of mothers with children aged zero to four years, the primary beneficiaries of AWCs.

Data and Methods

This study utilizes data from the 2019 Time Use Survey (TUS), conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO). Data collection in Jharkhand took place between January and December 2019 in four phases, each spanning three months. In each phase, data were gathered from a roughly equal number of randomly selected villages or Urban Frame Sampling (UFS) Blocks.

Between August 16 and October 5, 2019, a state-wide strike by Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) also called as *Anganwadi Sevikas* and Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) or *Anganwadi Sahayikas* led to the closure of all Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) for 50 days (NewsClick, 2019). The strike was driven by demands for higher honorariums and improved social security benefits. We exploit the disruption in the services provided by AWCs during this period to assess its impact on women's participation in employment related activities.

To assess the impact of this disruption, we compare the time use patterns of mothers during the strike period (n = 138) with those of mothers with children aged zero to four years during the remainder of the survey period (n = 868). Our final sample consists of 1,006 mothers aged 18 to 40 in Jharkhand, along with detailed individual- and household-level socio-economic data.

To ensure comparability between samples collected during the Anganwadi strike and those collected before and after the event, we employ Inverse Probability Weighting (IPW) in our estimations. Given that each village or UFS Block was surveyed at different times of the year, the disruption in Anganwadi services (treatment) and women's participation in employment-related activities (outcome) may be correlated within these sampling units. For instance, agricultural villages surveyed during the sowing (June–July) or harvesting (November–December) seasons for paddy—the primary crop in Jharkhand—may exhibit higher female labour force participation. Similarly, villages or UFS blocks with higher demand for and more effective provision of Anganwadi services, particularly pre-schooling, may be disproportionately affected by the disruption. To account for this potential clustering, we employ clustered bootstrapped estimation, resampling village- or UFS block-level clusters 1,000 times to obtain robust standard errors.

Findings

The participation of women with children under the age of four in employment-related activities is relatively low in Jharkhand, at 5.4%. However, during the Anganwadi strike, participation among this group was observed to be 89 percentage points lower, underscoring the critical role of publicly subsidized childcare in enabling women's engagement in economic activities.

This observation of low employment participation was accompanied by a significantly higher in the time spent on unpaid domestic work, suggesting that the reduction in employment participation could be the consequence of the disruption in publicly provided childcare services, such as those offered through ICDS. Women who typically rely on these services for childcare support appear to have withdrawn from employment-related activities in response to their unavailability.

Policy Implications

Due to prevailing gender norms, the majority of child-rearing responsibilities and associated unpaid domestic labour fall on women, particularly mothers. In this context, the subsidization of childcare through programmes such as ICDS emerges as an effective measure to support women's economic participation. State-provided subsidized childcare appears to have a positive impact on women's employment, particularly for those with young children.

A strong and reliable state-sponsored childcare system is crucial for supporting women's labour force participation. However, our study indicates that the implementation of ICDS in Jharkhand, as it existed until 2019, was both unreliable, due to frequent disruptions, and inadequate, in terms of infrastructure. These findings underscore the urgent need to enhance the quality and effectiveness of ICDS to maximize its impact on women's employment participation.

Improving the quality and effectiveness of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) must begin with enhancing the morale and working conditions of AWWs and AWHs and ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of these essential public health and childcare services. Although the state of Jharkhand agreed to increase the honorariums of AWWs from Rs 5,900 to Rs 6,400 and AWHs from Rs 2,950 to Rs 3,200, which led to the resolution of their protest, these amounts remain significantly lower than the Rs 18,000 for AWWs and Rs 9,000 for AWHs, along with other social security benefits, that they had originally demanded (Business Standard, 2019).

Recognizing the critical role these workers play in public healthcare and support they provide for women's economic participation, the governments must ensure fair compensation, better working conditions and training to prevent future disruptions and sustain the effectiveness of ICDS services. As key personnel in the implementation of ICDS, AWWs and AWHs are responsible for delivering health services and early childhood education, yet they continue to receive inadequate compensation. Chronic underpayment, delays in wage disbursement, and the denial of basic employment benefits have resulted in repeated ICDS worker agitations, causing service disruptions across the nation.

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Invisible but Indispensable: Unpacking the Female Unpaid Work in India

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Abstract:

Historically, household duties and childcare have been linked to the women residing within the household as it has been believed that women are specialised to do these (Shelton & John, 1996; Hirway & Jose, 2011; Ferrant et al., 2014). This burden multiplies after a woman reaches motherhood thus imposing a penalty (time and wage) on the mothers and restricting them from participating in the labour force. The evidence from a certain number of surveys reveals that unpaid work which includes household chores and childcare is performed or is expected to be performed by the women of the household (Hirway, 2011). India's first national Time Use Survey released in 2020 by the National Statistical Office, finds that 81.2% of all women are engaged in unpaid domestic services, compared with 26.1% of men. On average, weekly the men spend 42 hours on activities within the production boundary, i.e. what is traditionally counted as economic activity, whereas women spend 19 hours. However, women spend 10 times more time on household maintenance and care for children, the sick and the elderly - 34.6 hours versus 3.6 hours weekly. The ILO also reported that women's unpaid work in India is essential to the economy, contributing 3.1% of the gross domestic product. However, the extra work can also lead to women having less time for leisure and self-care, which can affect their ability to build community and may lead to isolation. Working women experience a "double burden" where they work outside the home to contribute to the family income but still have to take on most of the household responsibilities hence, creating a hindrance to participation in paid work. Women facing the motherhood penalty have two choices: step away from their careers to manage the household or find a substitute to share the load. Is it true for India as well where the non-nuclear family structure allows more than one family to coexist under the same roof? In a joint family structure, family members of various age groups are available to take up a significant burden of the childcare duties. According to MoSPI, in the year 2022-23 an average Indian Household had more than 4 members reside together indicating the prevalence of joint family structures. In a joint family individuals from different generations reside together within the same household which allows some of the family members to step up into the role of mother thus, reducing her unpaid work burden.

As highlighted in existing literature, the world of invisible yet indispensable female unpaid work is intricately woven into individual, familial, societal, patrilocal, and household-level dynamics. To unravel this complexity, our research seeks to address three critical questions, outlined as follows:

1. Influence of Family Demographic Structure on Domestic Work and Childcare:

   Objective: To analyse how the demographic structure of the family (such as number of children, presence of other female members and presence of other male members) influences the time young married women spend on domestic work and childcare.

   Hypothesis: Larger families and the presence of elderly members may increase the burden of unpaid work on young married women, while extended family structures might provide support, thereby reducing their hours.

2. Impact of Social and Patrilocal Norms on Domestic Work and Childcare:

Objective: To assess how the prevalence of social and patriarchal norms within households and communities (village/urban block) influences the hours young married women spend on domestic work and childcare.

Hypothesis: Stronger patriarchal norms and traditional gender roles may increase the burden of unpaid work on young married women.

3. Variation Across Sectors and Income Levels:

Objective: To examine how the effects of family demographics and social norms vary across different sectors (rural vs. urban, formal vs. informal) and income levels.

Hypothesis: The effects may be more pronounced in lower-income households and informal sectors where support systems (like paid childcare) are limited.

Through these interactions, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how social norms, sectoral differences, and income levels intersect to influence the motherhood penalty and the role of surrogates within households. Apart from these, there are several reasons that influence a mother's hours spent on unpaid domestic duties and childcare. In our paper, we have highlighted a few of such factors. Using a Tobit Regression Model, we delve into how family dynamics, social norms, and economic factors shape the invisible yet indispensable time young married women in India dedicate to domestic duties and childcare, based on insights from the 2019 Time Use Survey.

The findings will offer valuable insights into the complex factors driving family dynamics and labour allocation in India.

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Labour Migration as an Employment Trend in West Bengal: A Legal Review in Light of the ILO India Employment Report 2024

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Abstract

ILO's India Employment Report 2024 draws attention to the trends of youth employment within the evolving matrix of the economic and labour market from 2000 to 2022, with a postscript of 2023. It draws upon the data from National Sample Surveys, Periodic Labour Force Surveys, and other key sources. One of the primary trends that it shows is that the labour force participation and employment rate have improved post-2019. However, it is noted that employment quality remains a pressing concern. There is a significant rise in self-employment and unpaid family work. Women, primarily, are imposed upon with this kind of work. On the other hand, informal employment shows a trend of being dominant in the labour market. Nearly 90% of the individuals in this workforce lack formal job security. Another significant trend this report marks out is that the long-term transition from agriculture to non-farm employment has stalled. This is a reversal of the post-2019 trend, which is analysed as due to the economic distress and Covid-19 pandemic. Other issues affecting employment, which are present in the Report, are wage stagnation and declining real earnings, especially for casual and self-employed workers. Digitisation is increasing employment in the gig economy and platform work; however, this sector remains notorious for its lack of adequate social security. This draws us to the analysis that regional disparities in India remain stark. States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand struggle with poor employment conditions.

Now, coming to the specific focus of this paper. The ILO India Employment Report 2024 observes that the migration patterns indicate a rising trend in urbanisation. It also projects that the migration rate is likely to increase in the future. It is projected that India's urban population will reach 40% by 2030. It is discussed that over the past two decades (2000–2021), India's overall migration rate has seen a slight increase of 2.1 percentage points, rising from 26.8% to 28.9%. The pattern of migration also shows that there is a regional imbalance in the labour market, i.e., the direction of migration is from eastern, northeastern and central regions of India to southern, western and northern regions. One of the reasons for migration has been projected to be due to employment related reasons. In 2021, 10.7% of all migrants moved for employment-related reasons, including job searches, better opportunities, work transfers, proximity to the workplace, or lack of employment in their previous location. However, this proportion varied significantly by gender. Several states and union territories recorded employment migration rates above the national average, including Delhi (87.1%), Karnataka (63.2%), Maharashtra (59.5%), and West Bengal (48.5%).

India currently employs the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, with regard to migrant workers. Although not yet implemented, the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, and the Code on Social Security, 2020, are poised to impact this burgeoning migrant issue in the country. However, before the implementation of the new Code, it is necessary to relook into the existing law and understand what facilities exist currently, and how the States have failed to implement the same, underling the implications of such failure. For instance, understanding the provisions with regard to the duties of the contractor, the prohibition against employment of inter-state migrant workmen without registration, the revocation of registration in certain cases, otherwise the social security through the wages, welfare and other facilities accorded such

as the journey allowance, displacement allowance, role of inspectors, become necessary be re-visited under the light of the new Codes and the data provided by the ILO Report 2024.

Now, here we come to the crucial issue of migration with regard to the state of West Bengal. There are several crucial aspects which need to be highlighted in order to understand the constant flow of out-migration from the state to other parts of the country. Firstly, there is an abject lack of regular employment in the nations, which is visible by analysing state government records. Secondly, there is a severe disparity between the average daily wage for workers in West Bengal. This economic stagnation, coupled with regional disparity in economic growth, is pushing workers in West Bengal to migrate to other states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra in the South and Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh (the national capital region) in Northern India for high-wage income. Thirdly, there has been a steady decrease in the State's contribution to the national GDP, where it has declined from 10.5% in 1960-61 to 5.6% in 2023-24, reflecting the lack of growth to support and employ a young population. These issues also hold a sectoral aspect which requires an additional lens to examine. For sectors like agriculture, the non-viability of it being a source of primary income in West Bengal can be attributed to the fact that the land holdings are fragmented (almost 70% of land holdings are less than a hectare of land), and the land productivity is progressively becoming lower. This is a symptom of regional disparity of economic development when farmers in Bengal have to depend on obsolete farming methods, which drown the sustainability of practicing agriculture in the State, thereby forcing them to take up alternative sources of employment in other states where they earn a higher wage. West Bengal also suffers from high rates of chronic rural unemployment, which is aggravated by the seasonal nature of agriculture, thereby driving the labourers towards alternative employment.

Recently the State has launched a special drive for registration of migrant workers in the *Karmasathi Parijayee Shramik* portal, which is a government database that maintains records of migrant workers from the State. However, data reveals that only monetary assistance as a form of social security on the instance of migrant's death has been put to practice. On the other hand, the overdue payment of MNREGA has believed to have given a new vigour to the migration from the State. There has been reports of migrant workers from Bengal dying in cities as far as Chennai.

The efforts to control and contain migration has been seen as both sporadic and directionless. The ILO Report 2024, among other economic recommendations, suggested that India should secure a strong supportive role of labour policy and labour regulation by ensuring a minimum quality of employment and basic rights of across all sectors. Hence, in pursuit of targeted solutions to the state-specific problems elucidated above, the paper aims to critically examine whether the minimum quality of employment and basic rights can be ensured vide the existing Indian legislations and judicial precedents concerning migrant workers across the major sectors. The paper shall also further analyze whether the yet-to-be-implemented labour codes introduce any substantive changes to the status quo and further examine any State specific legal measures ensuring the required supportive role as highlighted in ILO recommendation.

Green jobs in green sector: tracing the decent work deficits in informal waste-pickers of Guwahati, India

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Abstract

Purpose: Waste management and recycling sector exists at the cusp of green and circular economy. And being a labor-intensive sector especially in developing world, it is identified as one of those green sectors with the highest potential of employment generation (European Commission, 2018). Now, ILO defines a job to be decent work if it ensures provision of livelihood

(i.e. decent income), workers' rights, social protection and advancement of social dialogue. Hence their definition of green job deliberately includes 'decent work' as a necessary condition of an economic activity to be declared 'green job'. Because employment in green sectors or activities directly/indirectly aimed at environmental protection does not automatically guarantee goofquality job (Saliba, Glutting and Brown, 2023). And this is ever relevant for informal waste industry of developing nations with visibly hazardous and precarious jobs, poverty and various kinds of exploitation as informal waste industry employs the most marginalized communities of society (Kashyap and Visvanathan, 2014). With this backdrop, this paper utilizes primary data and aims at identifying decent work deficit faced by waste-pickers of Guwahati, India, and what influences such deficits in order to close them.

Research question:

1. Identifying decent work deficits faced by waste-pickers of Guwahati city 2. Identifying how these gaps vary across different categories of waste-pickers

3. Investigating whether these gaps vary with their social capital or not.

Methodology:

Survey design: The primary survey took place in Guwahati Municipal Corporation area and connected parts of North Guwahati during May,2023-August, 2023. A random sampling frame could not be created due to the marginalized ethnic background of the waste community. Majority of the waste community come from Bengali-speaking Muslim background (which is arguably the most persecuted minority community of Assam). Hence a total 241 waste-pickers were interviewed using snowball sampling and convenience sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to get qualitative and quantitative data which was further supplemented with field notes by surveyors.

Analytical framework: The seven work-based security framework from Peoples' Security Survey (Anker, 2002) has been broadly used and localized to evaluate decent work deficits. For informal waste-picking communities, especially in Guwahati, skill reproduction security is not relevant as informal waste-pickers do not receive formal training in waste work, and union or work-based organization is non-existent for them in this region. Hence, decent work deficit has been evaluated in five dimensions only- labour market security (getting a job), employment security (keeping a job), work security (working condition), job security (appropriateness of work) and income security (remuneration). Additionally, some social capital related indicators have been evaluated to assess the social support and

community strength of waste-pickers since most of them are migrant in nature (80%). An individual decent work deficit index and a social capital index have been constructed normalizing the arithmetic means of the respective indicators for further econometric analysis (Banerjee and Kundu, 2020).

Causal analysis: The baseline OLS model used to investigate the impact of social capital and other influencing factors on decent work is as follows:

$$(Decent\ work\ deficit\ index)_i = a_0 + a_1(Wastepicker\ category)_i + a_2(Social\ capital\ index)_i + a_3 Z_i + e_i$$

Where waste-picker category is a set of dummy variables- dumpsite/landfill wastepickers, itinerant buyers, on-route/doorstep wastepickers and sorters, keeping street waste-pickers as control (following WIEGO categorization), and Z is a set of demographic variables- age, education, gender, migrant status, asset-holding.

Result- The findings suggest that compared to the minimum wage of Assam in 2023 (Rs.240 per day for unskilled workers), waste-picking is a remunerative profession. Only 19% of the responders reported to earn below minimum wage, although 70% of the responders reported inability to save. The average hourly wage is highest for itinerant buyers and lowest for dumpsite waste-pickers. For 12% waste-pickers the weekly working hour exceeds 48 hours. 50% wastepickers do not have any social security scheme and 32% of the waste-pickers fear job loss. The regression results reveal that social capital has a consistently negative impact on decent work deficit and social capital tends to be more effective for male waste-pickers. Beside this, owning land or house also has negative impact on decent work deficit. Higher working hour per day contributes to decent work deficit. Our findings suggest older waste-pickers tend to have better decent work condition. This may appear counter-intuitive but waste-picking profession gets more remunerative with experience and knowledge of different recyclables, their profitability and method of extraction/segregation. Lastly, street waste-pickers understandably suffer from higher decent work deficit than almost all other categories. Street waste-picking has lowest entry barrier and lowest requirement of equipment among all other categories, hence waste-pickers often start with street waste-picking while they build connection and networks for more gainful shifts.

Conclusion: This study is novel in the sense that it is one of the very few studies that focuses upon decent work deficit across different categories of waste-pickers of a region, emphasizing the heterogeneous nature of waste-picking profession. The most important finding of this paper is the impact of social capital on decent work condition of waste-pickers of Guwahati which highlights the close tie between the professional well-being and socio-ethnic background for marginalized working communities and advocates for multi-sector coordinated actions to improve their working condition.

Key words: Green job, Decent work deficit, Social capital, Informal waste industry, Wastepickers

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Income Support, Labour Market Outcome, and Structural Transformation

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Abstract

Poorer households often receive direct income support in developing economies. This paper theoretically analyses the effect of such income support (*pure* income effect) on the optimal time allocation between different economic activities and therefore on the optimal labour supply decision. Changes in time allocation also determine the way in which the composition of output and employment across different broad sectors of an economy change with economic growth known as structural transformation (ST).

We consider three types of time allocation in this paper – hours allocated to market production (market work), home production (homework) and leisure. The first one is the conventional measure of labour supply. The broad trends in data show that:

- Annual labour hours per worker have declined significantly between 1870 and 2018 – from about 3000 hours to 1500 hours for the now developed economies. o Leisure hours is more or less constant (no "trend" in data) o Labour hours decrease for men, substituted with more of home hours o Home hours decrease for women, and substituted with more of labour hours

- Annual labour hours per worker in India and China are constant at about 2000 hours between 1970 and 2018.

- South Korea followed an inverted U-shape – increased from 2300 hours in 1950 to 3000 hours in 1980, and decreased thereafter to 2000 hours in 2018.

For the world as a whole, using national time use surveys from sixty-four countries for the

2000s, the International Labour Organization reports that there are about seven hours of homework for every ten hours of market work (Addati et al., 2018). In general, market hours and home hours are negatively correlated. Ramey and Francis (2006) compiled US time series data for hours allocated to market production, home production and education since 1900. They find a negative correlation between market hours and home hours. Freeman and Schettkat (2005) show that in the United States people consume more restaurant food and families with children under three take up more formal daycare than in Europe. In these examples the lower home production time in the US is reflected in higher market work time and is due to the marketization of cooked food and child care. In India, men work more (more market hours), but women enjoy less leisure time, meaning women devote a significant amount of their time to home production of goods and services.

Though the *pure* income effect on labour supply is analysed in some early models of home production, the models were essentially static in nature – see Gronau (1986) for a survey.[10] On the other hand, the recent literature on structural transformation (Gottlieb et. al, 2024; Ngai and Dinkelman, 2021; Ngai and Petrongolo, 2017; Ngai and Pissarides, 2008 etc.) looking specifically at the home production have not addressed such income effect either directly or adequately. The objective of this paper is to analyse

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[10] To be precise, we are not speaking of the income effect associated with wage elasticity of labour supply.

the pure income effect on the composition of market work and homework in the models of structural transformation where agricultural sector is still a large component of GDP.

In static models of labour supply for a large class of preferences the income elasticity of labour supply is negative. We consider here two standard preferences to illustrate the income effect. We also highlight other properties which will be useful to understand the modelling technique that will be adopted to address our questions. The first preference is logarithmic:

Max U(C, Z) = ln C + β ln z

s.t. C = wh + N, z + h = 1 (unit time endowment), *h* = market supply of labour hours, *z* = leisure, *w* = real wage, *N* = non-labour income

Optimal labour hours is given by, $h^* = 1/(1 + \beta) - \beta/(1 + \beta)(N/w)$

Clearly (Marshallian) wage elasticity = 0 with $N = 0$ and the labour supply increases with wage if $N > 0$; $\partial h^*/\partial w = \beta/(1 + \beta)(N/w^2) > 0$. This implies that the substitution effect > income effect. Further, $\partial h^*/\partial N < 0$, implying a negative income effect. In a static framework, the negative income effect is the primary reason behind richer countries, having higher non-labour income,

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working less. Note that $\partial/\partial N(\partial h^*/\partial w) > 0$, so that households with higher non-labour income would require a larger change in wages to increase their labour supply.

However, the logarithmic preference is restrictive for two reasons. First, the elasticity of substitution between consumption and leisure is governed solely by the parameter *β* only.

Second, the elasticity of substitution between consumption at two different dates is unity, and the Frisch elasticity of labour supply is also unity. In the intertemporal context, as the data shows, these elasticities are usually not one. To allow for such possibilities consider the following preference, known as the MaCurdy preference (MaCurdy, 1981). This preference is widely used in the growth literature as it can match the data quite well and is consistent with balanced growth.

$$U(C,h) = \frac{C^{1-\eta}}{1+\eta} \; ; \; \frac{h^{1+\gamma}}{1+\gamma} \quad \eta \geq 0, \quad 0 \leq \eta \leq 1 -$$

Where $1/\eta$ is the intertemporal elasticity of substitution and $1/\gamma$ is the Frisch elasticity. While *η* governs the strength of income effect, *γ* governs the strength of substitution effect (see below).

Budget constraint is as before: $C = wh + N$. The static efficiency condition yields:

$$\frac{h^{\gamma}}{[wh + N]^{-\eta}} = w$$

The preference does not have a closed-form solution. However, using the above MRS condition

$$N h \qquad (s-1) \qquad wh$$

we can easily derive the income elasticity which is: $\left.\dfrac{\quad}{\quad}\right| = \dfrac{\quad}{\quad}$; $s = \dfrac{\quad}{\quad}$, the share of

$$h N_{w} + s \qquad wh N+$$

labour income in total household income. Since $s < 1$, income elasticity is negative. Obviously for $N = 0$, $s = 1$ and the elasticity is zero. The elasticity (absolute value) is increasing in η and decreasing in γ.

Therefore, both the preferences imply that a larger non-labour income decreases market supply of labour hours, and increases leisure hours. But several concerns remain. The first is the general equilibrium concern. The examples above are partial equilibrium models – there is no production side and the source and dynamics of non-labour income remain unexplained. Second, all nonleisure time is labour supply. But as we noted, a significant amount of time is spent on homework that produces market-competing goods. Third, in the context of growth and ST, growth and capital accumulation need to be addressed. The question of optimal time allocation within the framework of ST can be thought of as consisting of three optimal allocation decisions.

- The top layer: intertemporal decision (capital accumulation and growth) – optimal allocation between total consumption expenditure and saving

- The middle layer: allocations across sectors (structural transformation) – optimal allocation of total consumption expenditure to different sectoral consumption goods

- The bottom layer: allocations between market and home (marketization) – optimal allocation of total time to different types of work (leisure + market hours + home hours)

We will illustrate only the bottom layer in this abstract by allowing one market produced good and one home produced good to highlight the changes in composition of market and home hours due to changes in non-labour income. Following is the (partial) model.

Preference

Max U(C, Z) = ln C + θ ln z

s.t.

(1) $C_M = wL_M + N$ (household budget constraint)

(2) $z + L_M + L_H = 1$ (unit time endowment)

$$^{-1} \qquad ^{-1} \; ^{-1}$$

(3) $C = \quad C_M \quad + -(1 \quad)C_H$,   0 (Total consumption C is a CES aggregator of C_M &

C_H)

where L_M = market supply of labour hours, L_H = home hours, z = leisure, w = real wage, N = non-labour income, C_M = market produced goods, C_H = home produced goods, σ = elasticity of substitution between C_M & C_H,

Production Technology

$$C_M = A_M K_M^{\alpha} L_M^{1-\alpha} \qquad (4)$$

$$C_H = A_H K_H^{\alpha} L_H^{1-\alpha} \qquad (5)$$

$$K_M + K_M = K$$

The technologies have different productivities but have same capital shares. Since we do not consider the ST, we abstain from capital accumulation and treat sectoral capital as given. So, changes in production come from changes in the productivity parameters and labour hours. Balanced growth in the aggregate requires constant productivity growth rates. We assume that productivities grow at a constant and exogenous rate.

$$\frac{\dot{A_M}}{A_M} = \gamma_M ; \frac{\dot{A_H}}{A_H} = \gamma_H$$

Static Efficiency

Rate of transformation between C_M & C_H from the preference side must equal that of from the production side. This condition gives us:

$$\frac{\theta}{1-\theta} \left(\frac{C_M}{C_H} \right)^{-\frac{1}{\sigma}} = \frac{A_M}{A_H} \qquad (6)$$

Note that capital-labour ratio is equalized across two sectors. Using this fact along with (4) and (5), and then (6) we get,

$$\frac{L_H}{L_M} = \left(\frac{1-\theta}{\theta} \right) \left(\frac{A_M}{A_H} \right)^{1-\sigma} \qquad (7)$$

In proportionate growth terms,

· ·

LM LH

$$\dot{L}_M - \dot{L}_H \equiv (\quad -1)(\dot{M} - \dot{H}) \qquad (8)$$

The market clearing for C_M is given by:

$$A K_{LM} M M \quad 1- = wLM + N$$

At constant K_M, and noting that $w = (1-)A K L_{MM M}{}^-$, in proportionate growth terms,

$$\frac{\dot{L}_M}{L_M} \equiv \frac{1}{1-} \quad \frac{\dot{N}}{N} \quad \dot{M}- \qquad (9)$$

where $\quad$ = exogenous constant growth rate of non-labour income. Substituting in (8), N

$$\frac{\dot{L}_H}{L_H} = -(1 \quad)(\dot{M} - \dot{H}) + \frac{1}{1-} \quad \frac{\dot{N}}{N} - \dot{M} \qquad (10)$$

We may have several cases depending on the parameter values.

(*i*) $\sigma > 1$: Goods are good substitute (vegetables grown in the backyard vs bought from market).

$$\dot{N} \qquad \dot{L}_M \qquad \dot{L}_H \qquad \left| \frac{\dot{L}_H}{L_H} \right| \quad \left| \frac{\dot{L}_M}{L_M} \right|$$

(*a*) If $\dot{M} \quad \dot{H}$, then both $\frac{\dot{L}_M}{L_M} < 0$ and $\frac{\dot{L}_H}{L_H} < 0$. Moreover, $\quad$. So,

- the market supply of labour hours and home hours both decrease and hence leisure hour increases

  LM

- $\quad$ within non-leisure hours increases (relative marketisation) L_H

$$\dot{N} \qquad \dot{LM} \qquad \dot{LH} \qquad \left|\frac{\dot{L}_H}{L_H}\right| \quad \left|\frac{\dot{L}_M}{L_M}\right|$$

(*b*) If $\dfrac{}{N}$ $_H$ $_M$, then both $\dfrac{}{LM} > 0$ and $\dfrac{}{LH} > 0$ with $\phantom{\left|\frac{\dot{L}_H}{L_H}\right|}$. So,

- the market supply of labour hours and home hours both increase and leisure hour decreases

    LM

- decreases (relative de-marketisation) L_H

(*ii*) $\sigma < 1$: Goods are poor substitute (making consumer durables at home vs bought from market).

$$\dot{N} \qquad \dot{LM} \qquad \dot{LH} \qquad \left|\frac{\dot{L}_H}{L_H}\right| \quad \left|\frac{\dot{L}_M}{L_M}\right|$$

(*a*) If $\dfrac{}{N}$ $_M$ $_H$, then both $\dfrac{}{LM} > 0$ and $\dfrac{}{LH} > 0$ with $\phantom{\left|\frac{\dot{L}_H}{L_H}\right|}$. So,

- the market supply of labour hours and home hours both increase and leisure hour decreases

    LM

- decreases (relative de-marketisation)

    L_H

$$\dot{N} \qquad \dot{LM} \quad \dot{LH} \qquad \left|\frac{\dot{L}_H}{L_H}\right| \quad \left|\frac{\dot{L}_M}{L_M}\right|$$

(*b*) If $_H$ $_M$ $\dfrac{}{}$, then both $\dfrac{}{LM} < 0$ and $\dfrac{}{LH} < 0$ with $\phantom{\left|\frac{\dot{L}_H}{L_H}\right|}$. So,

- the market supply of labour hours and home hours both decrease and leisure hour increases

    LM

- increases (relative marketisation) L_H

    •

There are other possibilities depending on the relative values of $_{HM}$, and $\frac{N}{N}$. Hence, we see that when non-leisure time is disaggregated to market and homework, in a dynamic context the composition of market-to-homework depends on productivities and substitutability between goods. We have kept the growth of non-labour income exogenous to get a sense of the possibilities.

In the full paper we wish to explore the following.

- The non-labour income must be endogenised as in a model of growth and ST this income must come from somewhere.

- There is only one broad type of consumption goods. To address ST, we need three distinct types of consumption goods – agriculture, manufacturing and serves.

- Capital accumulation.

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The New Job Market Reality: When Privilege Becomes a Barrier

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Abstract

Overview

1. This paper outlines the critical need to identify and nurture talent early in India's educational system, particularly from the school level, in order to align student skills with industry needs. By effectively harnessing the potential of the country's youth, we can ensure sustainable economic growth, enhance employability, and build a workforce that meets the future demands of the labor market.

2. This paper explains how we can refine and expand upon this concept to ensure it's not only comprehensive but also actionable.

Objectives

3. Talent Identification: Establish mechanisms to identify students' talents early in their educational journey, based on their abilities, interests, and personality.

4. Career Exploration Skill Development: Provide necessary skills to channelize identified talents into appropriate, industry-relevant skill development programs that align with current and emerging job market demands.

5. Enhanced Employability: Improve placement rates and job readiness by ensuring educational outcomes match employer expectations, helping students transition to industry readiness.

Current Education Landscape

(source: Microsoft Word - UDISE+ Report 2021-22 10.10.2022)

6. India's education system is one of the largest globally, comprising:

   a. 14.89 lakh schools

   b. 95 lakh teachers

   c. 26.52 crore students from pre-primary to higher secondary levels.

   d. 1113 universities

   e. 55092 government approved Colleges/Institutions

7. Despite this robust framework, recent statistics (mentioned below) indicate a significant gap between educational qualifications and job readiness.

Achievements and Statistics

8. Paris Olympics 2024: India secured only 6 medals, from 117 participants, reflecting the importance of early talent identification and nurturing even in sports.

9. Skill Development (2021-22): (source:Education_All India Survey_2021-22_Cover.cdr)

Semi-Skilled Workforce:

10. 1.08 crore trained under 11 PMKVY schemes, achieving a placement of 23.95 lakh at a rate of 22.18%., which leaves us with the question of "is the training imparted to the right candidate". A significant portion of India's workforce remains semi-skilled or underemployed. Of the 1.08 crore individuals trained under the PMKVY schemes, only 23.95 lakh secured placements—an industry placement rate of 22.18%. This raises questions about whether the training is targeting the right individuals, in alignment with both the current labor market needs and student aspirations. Graduates and Postgraduates:

 (source: Indian graduate: Just 45% of India's graduate jobseekers meet industry needs: Study - The Economic Times)

11. Out of 4.30 crore graduates and postgraduates, 1.77 crore found placements, with an overall placement rate of 41.18%. This suggests a clear mismatch between academic preparation and industry requirements, emphasizing the need for better talent identification and targeted skill-building initiatives.

12. This underscores the critical need to identify and nurture talent early on—not just in academics but in sports as well. By spotting potential early and providing the necessary support and training, we can pave the way for even greater achievements. Whether it's the classroom or the playing field, fostering talent from a young age can have a profound impact. This holistic approach is essential for shaping well-rounded individuals who can excel in any arena.

Student Enrollment:

(source: Education_All India Survey_2021-22_Cover.cdr)

13. With approximately 5.71 crore students in classes IX to XII and nearly 4.33 crore in higher education, that's a significant talent pool preparing to enter the workforce each year. By honing in on early talent identification and providing tailored training, we can ensure that students are well-prepared and matched with suitable opportunities.

14. Integrating career guidance into the school curriculum from an early stage can help bridge the gap between education and employability, making sure students acquire the skills they need to thrive in the industry.

Government Initiatives and Employment Data

(source: Education_All India Survey_2021-22_Cover.cdr)

15. The Indian government has launched several schemes to enhance skill development and employability. Analyzing the effectiveness of these programs is crucial to ensuring they meet the needs of both students and the labor market.

Need for Talent Identification

16. Identifying talent early, before students make irreversible educational or career decision ensures:

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

17. Capacity Utilization: There is a need to optimize the use of existing infrastructure and human resources, especially in underutilized schools or regions, to provide continuous talent development support.

18. Training Effectiveness: Ensuring the relevance and quality of training programs in alignment with the evolving demands of industry is crucial. There is a growing need for skill development programs that are not just theoretical but also practical and applicable to real-world job scenarios.

19. Industry Mismatch: As highlighted by a recent study, 45% of India's graduate jobseekers do not meet the skill requirements of employers. Addressing this mismatch requires targeted interventions both at the educational and recruitment levels.

Recommendations

20. Talent Identification: Implement assessments and career guidance from Class VIII onwards.

21. Incorporating standardized tools into the talent identification program in schools is essential for providing tailored advice that aligns with each student's abilities, interests, and personality. These assessments can help identify the best career paths and suggest training programs for students.

22. Sensitizing Program: Empower teachers to become active career mentors by providing them with comprehensive training programs, continuous professional development, and access to the necessary tools (e.g., career assessments, industry insights) through a Comprehensive Teacher Training

23. Career Exploration Skill Development: Empower students to identify with career opportunities, which match their ability, interest and personality and learn the skills by taking admission in such training programs

24. Enhanced Employability: Integrate personalized career development plans for students, based on their abilities and interests, to guide them toward career oriented higher education or vocational training options, thus aligning the right person for the right job.

Conclusion

25. By focusing on early talent identification, aligning skills development with industry needs, and empowering teachers to become career mentors, India can bridge the gap between education and employability. This will lead to a generation of students who are not only academically competent but also ready to excel in the workforce, contributing to India's growth in a sustainable and meaningful way.

26. To ensure India's long-term economic sustainability and capitalize on its demographic dividend, it is essential to identify and nurture talent from secondary school levels. By integrating skill development with early talent identification, empower with career exploration skills   and creating pathways that directly link education with industry needs, India can bridge the growing skills gap and ensure a future-ready workforce.

Quality of Employment and Decent Work Deficit- A Conceptual Study

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Abstract

Introduction

Quality of Employment implies the conditions, ethics, working time arrangements, and monetary and non-pecuniary benefits associated with employment and affecting an individual's work and non-working life. These conditions are essential for an individual as they directly impact an employee's performance and efficiency in their work. In the corporate sector, a good quality of employment refers to employment that is adequate to the qualifications of the labour force and has a skilled and efficient workforce, leading to high productivity rates. Individual employees may rate the quality of their employment high if certain conditions such as safety, health and security of employment are met and if the remuneration satisfies the needs of the individual. Other hygiene factors also play an important role, like it is preferable by both the employees and the employers to avoid any accidents in the workplace that will affect productivity. However, sometimes differences in opinions occur as employees are interested to work in a profitable organization and the employers might consider the wages and salaries paid to the employees as high labour costs, which weigh down the firm's overall profit.

Objective

The main objective of this research is to provide a thorough understanding of employment quality and decent employment along with their theoretical foundations, critical components, and policy implications. Besides, the study also aims to review the existing literature on these themes, fusing insights from multi-disciplinary perspectives to add value to the ongoing debates and policy discussions**.**

Literature Review

Decent Work

As defined by the ILO, decent work is productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity. It has several core elements:

• Fair Income: Decent work pays an income that is sufficient for workers to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves and their families.

• Job Security and Safe Working Conditions: Protection with respect to safety and health hazards related to work and stable working environment.

• Social Protection: Workers and their families should be covered by social security, which includes health benefits and unemployment benefits.

• Personal Development and Social Integration: Decent work gives opportunities for training and participation.

Freedom of Expression and Organization: Workers must have the freedom to present their grievances and to organize themselves collectively..

Decent Work Deficit

A Decent Work Deficit refers to a significant gap between available employment opportunities and the standards of decent work. This is characterized by factors like low wages, poor working conditions, lack of social security and informal employment. This is mainly caused due to inadequate skill development, poor education levels, and a large informal sector, which leads to negative consequences for individual livelihoods, economic growth and social stability.

There has been a significant change in the labour of India since the time of independence. Initially, most of them belonged to the agriculture sector, but with the advancement of technology, there has been a significant shift towards the service sector. Trends show that there is an increase in job creation across various industries throughout the country. Also, there has been a requirement of skill-based labour which is encouraging more individuals to learn the necessary skills for the industry.

The fast-growing economy of the country has seen a significant shift in the quality of employment since 2016. Factors like demonetization, faulty implementation of goods and service taxes and the lockdown caused due to the pandemic, India is facing high unemployment and income inequality. Due to the unstable economic conditions, there is a huge gap in the availability of skilled labour and the actual requirement of skilled people in the industry. Srinath Mallikarjunan, CEO and Chief Scientist at Unmanned Dynamics recently disclosed that their Indian office had an opening for two interns, for which there were over 1200 applicants.

Decent Work Deficit in India: Causes and Consequences

1. *High Informal Sector Domination*
   Informal sector is the part of the Economy that is not regulated by the Government. This economy consists of activities that have market value but are not formally registered. Individuals and firms choose to be outside the tax system to avoid taxes and social contributions or to avoid any other compliance regarding standards and licensing needs. Some individuals rely on informal sectors as a safety net, i.e, they lack the basic requirements like education and skills to be employed in the formal sector.

2. *Skill Mismatch/ Limited Access to Quality Education and Training*
   Skill Mismatch is one of the reasons why there is a Decent work Deficit in India. Often there is a mismatch between the skills and knowledge required by the industry and the actual workforce that are seeking employment in that particular sector. The education sector of India is also inadequate compared to the large population of the country. Apart from that, the education sector fails to provide technical and job-oriented skills, due to which there is a gap between education and employment. As a result, the industry sectors are not able to properly hire the individuals suitable for a particular task.

3. *Weak Labour Law Enforcement*
   The Labour Laws in India are not that strong or in favour of the employees/ workers in the country. Unlike western countries, where there is a strict law which states that any individual is not allowed to work for more than 40 hrs in a week, India has no such regulations. Hence, the workers are encouraged to work way beyond the working hours, which physically strains and exhausts them. On the long run, this unhygienic condition makes many of them develop serious health conditions that often disable them from working in the future.

4. *Economic Disparities*
   Lack of proper infrastructure in this still developing country is a major factor for Decent work conditions. Again, this lack of proper infrastructure in the industry leads to employees and workers having to work in certain unhygienic conditions, which overall impacts the life and health of employees.

Methodology

This conceptual research paper relies on a qualitative analysis of existing literature, drawing from academic studies, policy documents, and reports from international organizations like the ILO and the European Union. The methodology involves a review of key texts and concepts related to decent work and quality of employment, synthesizing findings to provide a comprehensive overview of these topics.

Quality of Employment

The quality of employment is a larger notion that contains decent work but at the same time stands for job features on intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. It has the following considerations:

•Job satisfaction: The subjective experience of workers in terms of their work environment and tasks.

•The intrinsic quality of work: The well-being experienced by workers in their jobs and their autonomy4.

•Desirability of Work: Objective features that make a job appealing, such as variable scheduling, time off for good reasons, and tasks that are meaningful.

Comparison and Commonality

Decent work concentrates on societal and labor market realities, while employment quality centres on the specific characteristics of the jobs. The two concepts are vital for the understanding of workers' general well-being and sustainability of labor markets. The European Union has, by and large, been successful in coming up with comparable indicators of employment quality, whereas the ILO has concentrated on decent work.

Policy Implications

Policies for decent work and employment quality are needed for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. The fact that decent work was integrated into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a testimony to its worldwide importance. Besides, Social dialogue and collective bargaining offer significant chances for respecting workers' rights and employing their voices in decision-making processes concerning policy. Notwithstanding the significant advances made in the past, the informal economy, and areas with less social protection continue to pose enormous challenges. In the future, studies should work on developing more subtly differentiated indicators for decent work in a quality of employment in as diverse economic contexts as is possible. Furthermore, there is a need for transdisciplinary approaches that combine insights from diverse fields such as psychology, sociology, and economics and law to tackle the complexity of these nearby concepts.

The concepts of decent work and quality of employment are interconnected yet distinct. Decent work provides a broad framework for understanding the societal and economic conditions necessary for equitable labor markets. Quality of employment, on the other hand, delves deeper into the specific characteristics of jobs that contribute to worker well-being and job satisfaction.

Discussion

While having an interconnecting view, decent work and quality of employment are two distinct constructs. Decent work presents a broader understanding of the minimal societal and economic conditions that should allow equitable labor markets. Quality of employment, on the contrary, looks into the particulars of certain job characteristics promoting the well-being or job satisfaction of workers.

Impact on Workers and Societies

The promotion of decent work and better quality of employment can truly have far-reaching effects on workers and on societies. For workers, it makes for better working conditions, increased job security, and avenues for personal development. It does, furthermore, guarantee a more egalitarian economic growth, reduced poverty, and enhanced social cohesion at the societal level7.

Policy Recommendations

With this literature review, several policy directions arise:

1. Strengthening Social Protection: The impoverished governments must, therefore, invest in stronger social security systems to protect workers and families.

2. Tackling Job Quality: The policymaking focus must be toward improving working conditions that are conducive to job satisfaction and rewarding for fair pay.

3. Set in Place an Environment for Strong Social Dialogue: Engaging in collective bargaining and providing avenues for worker participation in every decision-making process will suffice to respect their dignity and rights.

4. Support Education and Training: Ensure investment in education and training with a special focus on enhancing workers' skills and adaptability to changing labor markets.

Conclusion

Employment quality and decent work justly constitute a challenged area in India, badly affecting millions of workers from diverse sectors. There is job creation; employment conditions are still dotted with inequality, especially for the marginalized. To mitigate them, a diverse approach for the redress of policy implementation, social dialogue, and investment in human capital development must be built up. Giving priority to labor rights, decent wages, and skill enhancement will ensure that policymakers act toward gainful employment for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Research needs to conduct projects on assessing the implementation of old labor policies and recommending new measures to fill the gap between the quality of employment in India.

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Impact of Gender discrimination on Women Development: A study of Information Technology Industry

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Abstract

Gender Development focuses on the evolution of gender equality across the world in the context of the development process. Gender-based employment discrimination refers to the unequal distribution of female and male workers across and within job types. This discrimination can be horizontal (with women and men concentrating in different sectors, industries, occupations, types of products, and business sizes) and vertical (with gender disparities in positions with different statuses, managerial responsibilities, or potential for promotion). Gender-based employment discrimination imposes significant costs on the economy.

By examining policies, attempts have been made to reduce the employment discrimination of women by targeting supply-side gender gaps in skills, capital, domestic and care responsibilities, safety and mobility, role models and networks. There are certain dimensions that focuses on widening the gender gap, has been mentioned below.

- Choice of educational stream by gender: The falling gender gap in educational attainment does not appear to reduce employment segregation. Rather, segregation is closely linked to educational sorting and choice of educational stream. Boys are more likely to specialize in highly remunerated STEM fields. Choice appears to be highly influenced by teachers and parents, knowledge of returns to a field, the belief that ability is malleable, and confidence.
- Gender gap in access to assets and capital: The gender gap in access to capital is tied to differences in property rights, inheritance, decision-making power over earnings, and discrimination in capital markets.
- Intra-household allocation of time: Gender norms on the division of household responsibilities contribute to employment segregation by making women self-select into jobs and occupations that allow temporal flexibility, or that build general skills that are more transferable to other firms if they dropout at the time of childbirth.
- Safety and mobility: Women's mobility may be constrained by social norms, gender-based violence and general safety.
- Networks and role models: Employment segregation can result in smaller and weaker networks for women and the presence of fewer female role models, which further perpetuates gender norms on women's occupations and discrimination.

Women and development is becoming an important aspect in India for last couple of decades. From 1991, India has started its reform process and one of the principal drivers of this reform has been its services sectors, importantly led by information technology sector. The Information Technology (IT) sector has not only created a large number of jobs, but also has started to offer new types of challenging careers. In the IT sector, emphasis is on intellectual rather than physical resources. As emphasis is on knowledge, the IT industry is considered to be non-discriminating. It is considered to be an equal opportunity employer for men and women, minorities and handicapped. Workforce participation trends show that a large number of women are joining the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector.

Between 1980 and 2008 the gender gap in labour force participation narrowed from 32 to 26 percent. This has been attributed to a combination of factors such as:

i) Increasing demand for female labour which is cheaper and perceived to be more suited to the type of work that has increased through international trade and export production.

ii) Pressure on women to seek paid work in order to replace or complement the (falling) earnings of other household members due to impact of economic crisis and

iii) A growing tendency on the part of women to seek paid work because of their rising level of education, falling fertility rates and changing aspirations.

Through the world, the number of women participating in labour-force is increasing over time. Although women have increased their participation in science, mathematics and technological careers for last three decades, the participation is still below parity when compared to the men (Farmer et al., 1995). It is apparent that the question is no longer whether women participate in labour-force or not, but far more relevant question is now what types of careers women choose and what factors influence their choices in the light of evidence that most women are found in what could be described as "feminine" occupations. Perhaps, even more important questions are those directed at students who are in the initial stages of their career development. Women suffer from different types of powerlessness in social and economic sphere of life. In this backdrop, the present study tries to capture the gender and employment quality, the decision-making power of women in IT industry. The specific objectives of the research paper are:

1)What are the important determinants that influence the links between gender and employment quality focusing on IT industry?

2) Which institutional and economic factors determines increase in women's participation in the labour force particularly in IT Industry?

3)How is participation in skill-building initiatives impacting on women's involvement in decision-making?

The study was conducted using primary data. Data were collected from 198 females and males in managerial and professional positions in Information Technology industry in West Bengal. A structured questionnaire was prepared to analyse not only socio-economic and role-related status of the women but also their attitude towards the extent of freedom of decision making, extent of empowerment and gender inequality in case of career development issues. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysing data have been adopted in the study.

This research makes an attempt to find out contributions of family (parental socio-economic factors and parental or family involvement in the career choice of their children), cultural (like attitude toward work) and individual difference (achievement, motivation) to the prediction of choice of gender dominated occupation among women in territory. Women's well-being is not measured merely in terms of access to resources but also in terms of their sense of worth and dignity. Forms of employment, quality of employment and access to social security condition, which are also invariably, linked to women's well-being which ultimately, leads to women empowerment.

Key Words: Women empowerment, Discrimination, Decision making ability, Information technology industry, employment

Waves and Tides: Quarter wise Variations of Unemployment in India

Dr. Madhusree Mukherjee & Prof. Atanu Sengupta

Abstract

Since independence, one of the major social issues, which our Indian economy is facing, is the problem of unemployment. It is one of the major social issues for a developing country like India. It creates an unequal distribution of wealth as well as social status of an individual. Streeten (1994) have argued that a poor man do not has the option to being unemployed. He/she simply has no asset to fall back upon for generating income. Without selling his/her labour power he/she cannot hope to earn his /her life sustaining necessities. From this era of liberalization, a huge transition is noticed from the formal to informal sector (Hensman,2001). Thus presently researchers found that the main employment structure of Indian economy becomes informal in nature and people are engaging in multiple informal activities in different quarters of a year for sustaining their livelihood (Olsson at el., 2014). Even as an example we can notice that rickshaw pullers may divide the day time among themselves so that everybody gets an earning. Thus, we should be very careful in defining employment or unemployment status of the country where jobs are often informal and unorganised, especially in case of urban India.

There is a debate among the economists regarding the employment and unemployment situation of a person- that means who should be considered as employed and who as unemployed. In different countries (sometimes in the same country) different committees are established with well recognised economists, for defining how to measure of employment and unemployment situations of individuals and thereby the whole country. However, apart from all debates, let us consider the NSSO data for measuring employment-unemployment situation of the country, since NSSO data is considered as rich enough among all other secondary data sources for measuring employment-unemployment situation of Indian economy. National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) has tried to measure the employment unemployment situation of the country on behalf of the Govt. of India, by providing three types of definitions. These are i) Usual Status Approach, ii) Weekly Status Approach, iii) Daily Status Approach. According to the usual status approach, the status of activity in which an individual spent relatively longer time of the preceding 365 days prior to the date of survey, is considered to be his or her usual activity status. According to weekly status approach if a person had worked for at least one hour on any day of the reference week, he/she was considered as working. In assigning the activity status on a day, a person is considered 'working' for the entire day if he or she had worked for four hours or more on a day. But if the work is done for 1 hour or more but less than four hours, he/she was considered as working for half day and seeking or available for work for the other half of the day depending whether he/she was seeking or was available for employment on the day. Therefore, the latter two approaches are more inclusive compared to the usual status approach. These help to understand the quarter wise variations of employment condition of the country. So, here we have used the CWS approach for observing the employment - unemployment pattern of the country.

In recent days NSSO is publishing the PLFS report annually. In the first report of PLFS (PLFS:2017-18) it is observed that there is a sudden hike in unemployment estimates for both the rural and urban sectors and for both the male and female populations from EUS: 2011-12 data. Thus, here our study attempts to investigate the socio-economic pattern of unemployment situation of the country as well as quarterly variations. A regression exercise is also done to understand the significance of relationship between unemployment rates and other socio-economic variables. Our analysis mainly focuses on the changes observed in employment-unemployment states of the country of urban India.

Finally, our study reveals that there are some significant changes for the urban unemployment scenario. For regular wage-based households previously unemployment rates were significantly lower but now a days it becomes higher. It may indicate a hidden informalization in organised sector. As Kapoor (2019) has argued that as per PLFS: 2017-18, 71.1 % of regular wage salaried (RWS) workers had no written

job contract, 49.6% are not covered under the social security benefits and 54.2% are not entitled to paid leave. In all the time periods unemployment rates are significantly high for casual wage-based households. In urban areas unemployment rates increases with the increase in the proportion of Muslims & Christians in states. It has also substantial effect on the employment of the educated class specially among the graduates. However, previously it is noticed that the unemployment rates are lower for not literate groups of people but presently it becomes higher among the urban not literates, this may indicate that there is some basic education is needed for being engaged in any type of job in urban India. In 2019-20 data it is seen that the proportion of adult female people have not any significant effect to increase the unemployment rates of the country like 2011-12 & 2017-18 data. The unemployment rates become significantly lower with the increase in average income.

Let us now focus on the quarterly effect across different time points specially in the urban India for lean seasons. Previously the urban sector was able to absorb labourers but now it fails to do so in the season of summer: Q4 as seen in PLFS: 2017-18 & 2019-20 databases. Presently there is a decreasing trend of urban employment mainly noticed for construction industry and wholesale and retail trade business because some informal activities are dried up in this time period.

Hence our discussion reveals a saga of distress and suffering that are revealed when we consider quarterly variation of unemployment. These have important effect on the living standard of the people. Government should take steps in providing training in human skills so as to cope with this problem.

Unlocking Women'S Workforce Potential in India: Quantifying the Labour Market Impact of Formalising Part-Time Employment and Gender Equality in Unpaid Care Work

Aakash Dev (Associate Fellow,NCAER) and Ratna Sahay

Abstract

In this paper, we investigate the macroeconomic and labour market implications of gender equality in unpaid care work and the formalisation of part-time employment in India. The unequal distribution of unpaid care responsibilities significantly limits women's labour force participation, perpetuating gender disparities in employment and economic outcomes. Using the McCall-Mortensen macroeconomic job search framework, this paper models the potential impacts of policy interventions on female labour force participation rates (LFPR). A key contribution of the paper is to derive quantitative estimates via model simulation. We find that formalising part- time employment contracts and equalising the time burden of unpaid care work between genders predict a 6-percentage point increase in female LFPR, raising the current rate from 37% to 43%. The findings underscore the critical need for formalising part-time employment contracts in India. Equalizing the burden of unpaid care would require raising public investment in childcare and eldercare infrastructure, and policies promoting paid parental leave and tax incentives for shared care. Drawing on best practices from the advanced world, the study emphasises the role of flexibility in enabling women to balance professional and domestic responsibilities.

Why Migrants become Entrepreneurs Dr. Farhat Naaz

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Abstract

Migration theories postulate that movements take place due to difference in relative attractiveness of different regions - much like a process of osmosis. If a region is relatively more attractive than the other region, people will move from second region to the first region. However, this relative attraction depends on household and individual characteristics and type of endowments of they have. Since such characteristics are different for different households and individuals, relative attractions of regions also vary across 'human' space. Thus, while few people may prefer second region over the first, there would be some who prefer one over other. Thus, the flow of people is rarely unidirectional, rather almost always these are two-way movement of people between regions. Over a n-region space there are thus always movements of people in to a given region and out from a given region. Using the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS 2020- 21) data the nature of migration and its implications for Entrepreneurial perspective has been explored in this paper. The 2020-21 PLFS data provides valuable insights into migration patterns categorized by National Industrial Classification 2008 and National Classifications of Occupation-2004. Migration in India is predominantly driven by economic reasons. Among them rural to urban and urban to urban migration are significant one. Todaro (1969) while analysing rural to urban migration in the context of developing countries, highlighted that migration decision is accompanied by a risk of being unemployed as the migrant does not necessarily get a job upon arrival in the city. Rural to urban migration occurs, as long as the expected real income differential is positive. They argued that it is positive expected income differential which attracts migrant despite urban unemployment. Keeping this argument in context this study explores this study examines the relationship among migration pattern, labour force participation and entrepreneurship. Further study also examines the NIC and NCO classification of migrants and their economic activities after relocating to destination place. The study also investigates how these align with the entrepreneurial activities at the place of destination. As migrants move on the basis of higher expected wage at the destination place and if it is not realize there because of either low job opportunities or mismatch of skill and job opportunities then migrants are absorbed in the petty works and self-employment. And then they behave like small entrepreneurs. The analysis highlights a patterns where migrant workers are mainly absorbed in some specific type of industries. For example, rural migrants are absorbed in primary activities and urban migrants are absorbed mainly in manufacturing, construction, trade and service sector. Further a significant dependency of migrant workers on informal sector is also observed. This highlights the key features of easy to entry, creates opportunities for self-employment and a part of small scale industries which represent small scale entrepreneurship. However, rural to rural migrants are mainly absorbed in the low-skill primary economic activities. Economic mobility of people and entrepreneurial activities face constraints of capital, skill as well as networks which creates a hurdle in the growth path of the economy.

Wage Discrimination in Rice Mills: Striving for Decent Work

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formed a worldwide agenda with the goals of ending poverty, preserving ecosystems, and ensuring equitable and sustainable prosperity by 2030. The seventeen interrelated goals that made up these objectives were developed in order to address key problems in the social, economic, and environmental areas. Adequate fair pay for workers was essential because it minimized poverty (SDG 1) and fuelled decent work and economic growth (SDG 8). The ability for workers to obtain fair wages became essential to enable family support, educational investment (SDG 4), and enhanced health benefits (SDG 3). Earning money is workers' top priority in a work. Most of the individuals work for the purpose of earning their livelihood so as to ensure a financial security. Fair treatment in employment ensures that all workers are dealt with equity and without discrimination. A decent work environment contains distinct employment elements which promote worker dignity and wellbeing. Adequate earnings are an essential component of decent work and play a vital role in attaining a fair and equitable work structure. Decent work reflects the importance of fair wages for workers. This extends beyond just the minimum wage and goes to offering a living wage that permits workers to meet their essential needs including food, clothing, housing, education, and healthcare. Adequate earnings are strongly connected to social protection, as employees need adequate income to contribute to an advantage from social security programs. Adequate earnings make sure that workers can take necessary social services. Therefore, the adoption of fair wage system has been crucial to the achievement of the SDGs, particularly for industries like manufacturing, services, and agriculture that are the backbone of the economy in developing nations like India. But, wage discrimination becomes an important issue in workplaces globally, outlining disparities in earnings and adequacy to resources, contributing to decent work deficit. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), income inequality frequently arises due to wage differentials in equal and decent jobs, gender, and unequal chances. Wage discrimination affects employee morale, productivity and satisfaction and consequently organizational performances. Based on this background, the study constructed some research questions like: Is there any wage discrimination with workers in respect to gender? Does inequality exist in earnings within male workers or within the female workers? What are the key components that contribute to earnings adequacy for workers? Is there any gender-based inequality or disparity in the adequacy of earnings? In this connection, the purpose of this study was to investigate whether wage discrimination exists in respect of gender. It looked at whether the wages received presently were sufficient to satisfy essential needs and concentrated on finding the main components of adequate earnings. Furthermore, the study investigated the disparities in earnings adequacy in respect of gender. The study used different articles, books, papers, and websites for secondary data. For the empirical analysis the study used primary data. Primary data were collected through interview method using a semi-structure questionnaire. Rice Mill sector, as a prominent sector, of Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal was chosen as the surveyed area of the study. Three blocks of the district, Raina I, Raina II and Jamalpur, were taken into the consideration purposively for collecting responses from 162 workers covering 14 rice mills during August 2024 to January 2025. The Gini coefficient was used to measure earnings inequality or wage discrimination across and within the

gender groups. Moreover, in order to identify the disparity on the responses of workers on each component of earnings adequacy in respect of gender, Mann-Whitney U test statistic was used. The study showed the wage discrimination in distribution of income among the workers, where the male workers have a relatively homogenized earning pattern as compared to the female workers. Further, the analysis revealed that in all the components of earnings adequacy, gender differences seem to persist and males seemed to be much more adequate than their female counterparts. The study pointed out the persistent gaps in achieving decent work for SDGs, particularly regarding competitive compensation, and negotiation opportunities for female workers. The study also highlighted some measures to address discrimination, eliminate decent work deficit, and promote rightful pay, bargaining options and equitable treatment at workplace.

Gender wage gap across occupation & skill wise and women labour force participation in the context of Indian emerging market economy.

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Abstract

Gender is a social, rather than a biological construct which varies with the roles, norms and values of a given society or era. It exerts influence on all parts of life: social, economic and political. The perception of the social milieu have always routinely prioritised men over women in the context of family decision making, workplace, health and nutrition, education etc. Given an unequal treatment of the "lesser" gender, female, it becomes imperative to distinguish the notions of gender inequality and gender discrimination. Gender inequality is a discriminatory practise on the basis of privilege and priority between genders. Gender inequality can be observed with respect to asset holdings, consumption, healthcare, educational attainment, inheritance etc. On the other hand, the notion of gender discrimination arises from the differential treatment of males and females due to strong patriarchal norms of our society.

Gender inequality has remained a matter of concern since it has a negative relation with economic growth. Inequality in education and employment reduces economic growth by lowering the average quantity and quality of human capital by lowering productivity. Moreover it can also have indirect effects on economic growth via its effects on fertility rates, infant mortality, children's health and Education. [See Klasen and Lammana, Altuzarra et al., 2021]. It has always been the social perception since historical times that women should undertake maximum burden of domestic work and care while their male counterparts are recognised as family wage earners. This leads to underutilisation of human resources along with less financial independence and economic power in the hands of women and dampens economic growth. Higher education on the other hand makes women more informed and aware which contributes to the well-being of women and child and thus promotes economic growth.

Some of the literatures has been studied are Becker (1962) and Mincer (1962) explained wage gap by productivity differences between men and women. Carlson and Persky (1999) have shown in their study the regional specific discrimination among the various sects Indian suburban and urban areas. Banerjee (2019) showed that social obligation, lack of education and job oriented skills, less mobility leads to discrimination at workplaces and low labour force participation among women. Oostendorp (2009) has shown occupational gender wage gap differences in context to developed and developing countries. Reimer and Schroder (2006) have identified that due to wage discrimination women are in disadvantageous earning position than men. Chakraborty and Majumder (2016) have analysed the relative importance of intra and inter- occupational earning differences between men and women.

Using the Annual Report of Periodic Labour Force Survey, (July 2019-June 2020) and National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-2020. This paper examines the simultaneous determination of Gender Wage Gap and Female labour force participation at sub-national level. The objective of this paper is to explore the impacts of different socio-economic factors in explaining the variation in gender wage difference and female labour force participation at Indian sub-national level. In this study, Blinder Oaxaca decomposition (Blinder 1973, Oaxaca1973) method is used to decompose the mean differences in log wages based on regression models. It divides the wage differential between two groups that is "explained part" and "the unexplained part". Simultaneous equation system estimation method is used, further we use 3SLS three stage least squares considers the entire structure of the model and it is also more efficient because it uses full information.

As our main objective in this paper to investigate skill wise and occupation wise male female wage gap and women labour force participation in the context of emerging market economy like India, in this study bi-directional relation between gender wage gap and female labour force participation has been shown. Low participation causes under representation in decision making bodies, that in turn causes gender discrimination and wage difference. On the other hand, often high gender wage gap discourages the women to participate in the formal labour force. In this paper, empirical analysis shows the average log wage of male worker is higher than that of female workers by 0.4237901, 58.3% of the difference is explained by the skilldifference, difference in literacy rate, access to internet, gross enrolment ratio and etc. whereas the unexplained part is around 41%. Decomposition method confirms the presence of market discrimination against female workforce at Indian sub-national level in 2019-2020.

3SLS robust estimation shows that increase in labour force participation significantly reduces the wage difference. Wage differences reduces significantly when we move from skill level 1 to skill level 4, implying that skilled women face less discrimination than unskilled one. Male literacy rate has significant positive impact on wage difference, inferring that literate men are more conscious and less discriminating against their co-gender. Access to internet to women significantly reduces the wage gap, whereas the access to internet to men increases it, this may imply gender with higher access to information is less discriminated. Macro-variable NSDP has significant negative impact on wage difference and economically discriminating. Estimation of equation shows, that wage difference have significant negative impact on female labour force participation, increasing gender pay gap discourages the women to participate in the labour force. Higher the participation in the higher education by the women leads to significant reduction in their labour force participation. The early marriage and high fertility rate significantly reduce women labour force participation.

<u>Discussions and Policy Prescriptions</u>

Given the stark discrimination between male and female labour force participation and wage structure, different policies are considered to reduce the gender gap in the labour market. Our result confirms wage gap exists at the lower level of skill where wage gap is maximum. At higher skill level women are less discriminated. Male literacy rate, access to internet, NSDP are the important determinants of wage gap. Early marriage and higher fertility rate are the important determinants of labour force participation. Policy prescriptions are: Empower girls and women with information, skill and support networks. Enhance girl's access to high quality education, Provide economic support and incentives to girls and their families, spreading consciousness against early marriage and child birth.

Invisible Labour: Assessing Women's Unpaid Domestic Work and Their Aspirations to be Employed in India

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Abstract

In India, unpaid domestic and care work rendered by women is an essential but invisible backbone of the economy. The traditional gendered norms have always relegated women into the domestic sphere, resulting in a disproportionate burden of the unpaid work. Women's work remains unrecognized despite giving tremendous labour to manage the household and care giving. This study tries to evaluate the gendered division of unpaid work and its impact on females to participate in the workforce of the country, with a focus on the aspirations of females to engage in the paid work with socio-economic constraints.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze unpaid domestic chores by women across the different states of India. 2. To point out the socio-economic and cultural norms that enable women to perform domestic responsibilities rather than working in the formal sector.

3. To explore the other duties performed by women other than the domestic chores. 4. To assess the part of the women population who are willing to work in the paid sector despite the household unpaid work burden

Methodology:

The study uses the secondary data source, primarily the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) Employment and Unemployment data (2011-12), to explore unpaid work across different Indian states performed by women. The study further investigates socio-economic cultural barriers that hinder women from being employed, emphasizing the rural and urban sector.

Findings:

1. Division of domestic work

The findings show that Indian women bear a disproportionate burden of domestic duties. Women render 297 min each day, defining the women's role in caregiving and household work. Nationally, 91 percent of people involved in domestic duties are women. The domestic work participation of states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, and West Bengal is highest in female unpaid domestic responsibilities. This is the result of traditional cultural norms and low employment opportunities. Contradictorily, Sikkim and Mizoram report a lower participation of women in domestic unpaid work, due to progressive gendered norms.

2. Women performing domestic duties - rural and urban differences

In the rural areas, women are more involved in the unpaid working sphere due to scarcity of paid employment opportunities and strong gendered roles. The states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan are more burdened with household duties and care responsibilities. In addition to these

women in states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, not only manage household chores but also work as seasonal agricultural labourers.

In urban areas, women face a lower burden compared to rural areas due to access to hired help, but the idea of "double burden" is still existing. Women in the urban areas are expected to

balance both paid work and also the unpaid domestic work. Despite having a higher educational qualification, women withdraw themselves from the workforce due to household responsibilities and lack of support. States like Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan have social norms where cultural roles discourage females from working outside household premises.

3. Additional domestic responsibilities

Apart from domestic duties like cooking, caring, women also perform other additional unpaid work for the proper sustenance of the household. In the rural areas, it includes the firewood collection, preparation of cow-dung, and fetching water from outside premises. Sewing and tailoring, poultry. While in the urban areas, the work such as tutoring children, sewing and tailoring, household management remains a significant part. In both the sectors, preparation of food plays a major role. However, these other unpaid work in the rural area are more of survival-driven and in urban it is an income-supporting role.

4. Women's willingness to work despite unpaid barriers

Despite the burden of the tremendous load of domestic work, a significant number of women are expressing their eagerness to join the paid labour force. 53.75 million in rural areas and 20.39 million in urban areas are ready to take up "paid work" if given the opportunity. Rural areas like Uttar Pradesh (12M), Bihar (6.53M) and West Bengal (6.58M) are the highest in number where women aspire to be paid workers. While urban areas, in states like Maharashtra (3.59M), Uttar Pradesh (3.26M) and Tamil Nadu (1.52M) are interested in joining the paid sector. Southern and eastern states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Mizoram already have higher female workforce participation due to advanced social norms and employment opportunities.

Policies to undertake

Policies should be undertaken to recognize the unpaid work of the women as an essential economic activity. Childcare and elderly care facilities, that are affordable, should also be addressed, along with flexible working hours for women. skill development programs should be initiated, especially in rural areas.

Conclusion

The study emphasizes the invisibility of the unpaid work rendered by women in India and its direct impact on their workforce participation. Undeterred by the barriers, a significant number of the women's population expresses their willingness to work in the paid employment, reflecting the untapped economic potential.

Key Words: women's employment; economic empowerment; informal sector; rural-urban disparities; India