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STRUCTURE OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND GENDER GAP IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to analyse the gender disparity in employment in agriculture and non agriculture sector, public and private sector, wage and self employment, proportion in labour force, paid and unpaid workers and sector wise employment using NSSO secondary data from 1983 to 2009-10. There exist wide disparity in employment of male and female in India both in agriculture and non agriculture sector of our country. In 2007-08, 80.2 % of female labour force were working in agriculture sector where as 10.9% and 11.9 % were working in manufacturing and construction & services sector respectively. In 2010, women have only 20.41 % of total organized employment where as men have 79.69% of employment. Nearly one-half of women workers are employed in three occupational group sales (retail and personal services), services, and administrative support.

KEYWORDS: Gender, Labour, Participation, Unemployment, Women.

INTRODUCTION

The work done or services rendered by women has not been recognized. Nevertheless, certain broad circumstances in which Indian women live affect the ways they participate in the economy. Women are generally confined to home thus restricting their mobility and face seclusion. These cultural rules place some Indian women, particularly those of lower caste, in a paradoxical situation: when a family suffers economically, people often think that a woman should go out and work, yet at the same time the woman's participation in employment outside the home is viewed as "slightly inappropriate, subtly wrong, and definitely dangerous to their chastity and womanly virtue". Even professional women find discrimination to be prevalent: two-thirds of the women in one study felt that they had to work harder to receive the same benefits as comparably employed men.

But most women continue to remain marginalized as they are generally employed in a chain of work and seldom allowed independent charge of her job. Sharing of responsibility at work place or taking independent decisions is still a remote possibility for them. Economic independence of women is important as it enhances their ability to take decisions and exercise freedom of choice, action. Many of the working women, who control their own income, do contribute towards the economic needs of family as and when required. After globalization women are able to get more jobs but the work they get is more casual in nature or is the one that men do not prefer to do or is left by them to move to higher or better jobs. Globalization has indeed raised hopes of women for a better and elevated status arising out of increased chances to work but, at the same time, it has put them in a highly contradictory situation where they have the label of economically independent paid workers but are not able to enjoy their economic liberty in real sense of the term. India is the first among countries to give women equal franchise and has a highly credible record with regard to the enactment of laws to protect and promote the interests of women, but women continue to be denied economic, social and legal rights and privileges. Though they are considered to be equal partners in progress, yet they remain subjected to repression, marginalisation and exploitation. It has been advocated by many researchers (Amartya Sen, 1990) that independent earning opportunities reduce the economic dependence of woman on men and increase her bargaining power in the family. Consequently, female workers are joining the informal sector or casual labor force more than ever before. For instance, while new rice technology has given rise to higher use of female labor, the increased work-load for women is in operations that are unrecorded, and often unpaid, since these fall within the category of home production activities. Although most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for in official statistics. Additionally, women are traditionally responsible for the daily household chores (e.g., cooking, fetching water, and looking after children). In the past, cultural restrictions were the primary impediments to female employment now however; the shortage of jobs throughout the country contributes to low female employment as well. Women account for a small proportion of the formal Indian labor force, even though the number of female main workers has grown faster in recent years than that of their male counterparts. More women may be involved in undocumented or "disguised" wage work than in the formal labor force. There are estimates that over 90 percent of working women are involved in the informal sector and not included in, official statistics. The informal sector includes jobs such as domestic servant, These women do not have regular salaried employment with welfare benefits like workers in the organized sector of the labor market. Female workers tend to be younger than males. According to the 2001 census, the average age of all female workers was 33.6 compared with the male average of 36.5. In addition, the offices operate more extensively in urban areas, thus likely undercounting unemployment in rural areas. Throughout the economy, women tend to hold lower-level positions than men even when they have sufficient skills to perform higher-level jobs. Researchers have estimated that female agricultural laborers were usually paid 40 to 60 percent of the male wage. National Sample Survey data exemplify this trend. Since the 1970s, total female self-employment and regular employment have been decreasing as a proportion of total employment in rural areas, while casual labor has been increasing (NSSO, 1994). Other data reinforce the conclusion that employment options for female agricultural workers have declined, and that many women seek casual work in other sectors characterized by low wages and low productivity. Other agricultural work includes workers involved with livestock, forestry, fishing and hunting, plantations, orchards, and related activities. In India, women represent only 31 per cent of the total workforce and 32 per cent of the informal



workforce but of the female workforce, 96 per cent are informally employed. In this context this paper examines the gender disparity in employment in agriculture and non agriculture sector, public and private sector, wage and self employment, proportion in labour force, paid and unpaid workers and sector wise employment using NSSO secondary data from 1983 to 2009-10.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on gender disparity and women unemployment is vast in India. Some of the important literature are reviewed regarding causes of gender disparity. Sandhu and Singh(1979) reported that motivation factors viz. feeling of achievement, ability utilization, recognition and rewards, creative work freedom of expression and scope for professional growth contributed comparatively more to job satisfaction than factors like behaviour of immediate officers, job security and advancement, adequacy of salary, administrative set-up and social status attached to the job. Raka Sharan (2005) conducted a survey on women workers employed in industrial and non-industrial organizations in Kanpur city. The main objectives of her study were to analyze the working conditions of women workers to measure there socio-conditions states and to study their participation in trade union activities. She had selected 100 samples in the industrial sector and 100 samples in the non-industrial sector and collected the necessary data from them. Socio-economic status of women workers we one measured with the help of kappasamy's method of rating scale. Her study revealed some important aspects of women labour. Among the industrial and non-industrial women workers 80 percent were from the young category that is between 20 and 35 years. The working conditions of the women workers were far from satisfactory. There was sluggish participation in trade union activities among women workers. The bulk of the respondents adopted middle life style and value orientations.

Srilekha (2005) in her study states that developing countries are characterized by low income illiteracy, unemployment and low standard of living. In these countries extra income earned by women ids vital to cross the poverty line , of the initiative in making the intended changes must come from the government itself in the form of incentives to women who are bounded by tradition and constrained by interest bent on preserving the status-quota women in 15 to 59 age group if not in labour force are to be considered as unused resources (except when they are sake or students) A change in the attitude towards life is imperative to ensures that women gain confidence in their own capable and a new value system is accepted. Lalilthadevi (2006) points out that the need for extra income for family coupled with the demand for labour from industry is the greatest incentive for female workers. The availability of gadgets make household work light and less time consuming and enable women to work . Myrdal and klein (2006) conducted an international survey on behalf of the International Labour Office about the motivational forces. According to it, women work due to economic needs on the one hand and due to national necessity for increased production on the other hand. They further continue to state that a sense of vocation influences the desire of women to continue their work after marriage and some are inspired by the feeling of social responsibility and so they continue to be in labour force.

In a study conducted by Kaur and Punia (2008) about working women of Hissar District of Haryana, it is observed that most of the working women apt for job out of the gross economic necessity (50 percent), followed by the urge to raise economic status (23 percent), to make use



of education (11 percent) to have independent income (9 percent) and the remaining due to miscellaneous motives.

EMPLOYMENT PROFILE AND UNEQUAL PARTNERS

There exist wide disparity in employment of male and female in India both in agriculture and non agriculture sector of our country. Table-1 reveals that total agricultural male workers in 2004-05 is 151.3 million but female agricultural worker is only 107.8 million even if both have 50 % share in total population. Female agricultural workers have increased at 13.6 % between 1993-94 and 2004-05 but non agricultural female workers have increased at only 6.6 % compared to 25.9 % for male non agricultural workers.

TABLE-1 WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE AND NON-AGRICULTURE

Type of Worker	1993-94	2004-05	Increase
Agriculture Worker(Male)	144.0	151.3	7.2
Agriculture Worker(Female)	94.2	107.8	13.6
Non-agriculture Worker(Male)	50.3	76.2	25.9
Non agriculture Worker(Female)	15.2	21.8	6.6

Source- NSSO data, 61st Round

In 2010, women have only 20.41 % of total organized employment where as men have 79.69% of employment(Table -2). The proportion women in organized sector employment is stable from 2008 to 2010.

**TABLE - 2 OVERALL EMPLOYMENT IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS
SECTOR**

Sector	Employment 2008 (%)	Employment 2009 (%)	Employment 2010 (%)	% Change 2008/2009	% Change 2009/2010
Public	176.74 (64.157)	177.95 (63.166)	178.62 (62.22)	0.7	0.4
Private	98.75 (35.843)	103.77 (36.834)	108.46 (37.78)	5.1	4.5
Total	275.48 (100.00)	281.72 (100.00)	287.08 (100.0)	2.3	1.9
Women	55.12 (20.009)	55.80 (19.807)	58.59 (20.41)		

Source : Annual Employment Review 2010 & 2009, Directorate General of Employment and Training, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt. of India

In agriculture 64.0 % female are self employed but 36.0 percent are wage employed which is almost same for male workers(Table-3)



TABLE-3 EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN AGRICULTURE IN 2009-10

Employment	Male	Female
Self Employed	63.7	64.0
Wage Employed	36.3	36.0

The proportion of male farmers to total agricultural workers in 2004-05 is 58 % but it is only 42 % for females(Table-4). It further declined in 2009-10.

TABLE -4 PROPORTION OF FARMERS TO TOTAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

	1993-94	1999-00	2004-05	2009-10
Male	60	61	58	57
Female	40	39	42	43

Regular and casual employment plays an important role in income and standard of living of workers. In non agricultural sector only 20 % female workers are regularly employed where as it is 24 % in case of male workers(Table-5). It indicates disparity in employment profile of male and female workers.

TABLE-5 EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN NON-AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN 2009-10

	Male(%)	Female(%)
Self Employed	47	60
Regularly Employed	24	20
Casually Employed	29	20
Total	100	100

Labour force participation rate is an important indicator of economic development. Table-6 shows the trend in labour force participation for men and women, and urban and rural. First, the large difference is observed in the LFPR of women residing in the rural and urban areas. In rural areas the LFPR has hovered around 45 percent The international norm for LFPR for women is around 60 percent, and so even rural India is some distance away from "fitting" the worldwide pattern. Urban India is lower, much lower, and with a labor force pattern not very dissimilar from that prevailing in most Islamic countries. And the rate has not changed much for the last 25 years with an average rate around 23 percent or a level a little more than half the level prevailing in the rural areas. Another issue concerning female LFPR in India stems from the fact that women receive substantially lower wages than men. This "discrimination", it is hypothesized, can lead to the lower participation rates. However, according to NSS data for paid work, the unadjusted wage ratio (average women wages to men wages) has increased from a low of 45 percent in 1983 to about 58 percent in 2007-08.



TABLE-6 PERCENT OF POPULATION IN THE LABOUR-FORCE¹
(IN % , AGES 15-59)

	1983	1993-94	1999-00	2004-05	2007-08
All India	68.3	71.2	62.8	62.5	58.7
Females	40	46.5	38.9	38.6	32
Males	90.5	90.2	85.6	85.5	84.6
Rural India	70.5	75.5	66.3	65.9	61.7
Females	45.1	53.1	45.2	44.7	37.6
Males	91.1	92	87	86.9	85.6
Urban India	61.8	54.3	54.2	55	52.2
Females	23	23	22.5	24.3	19.7
Males	88.6	82.4	82.4	82.7	82.5

Source- Surjit S. Bhalla and Ravinder Kaur, Working Paper, Asia Research Centre, www.lse.ac.uk/collections/AsiaResearchCentre

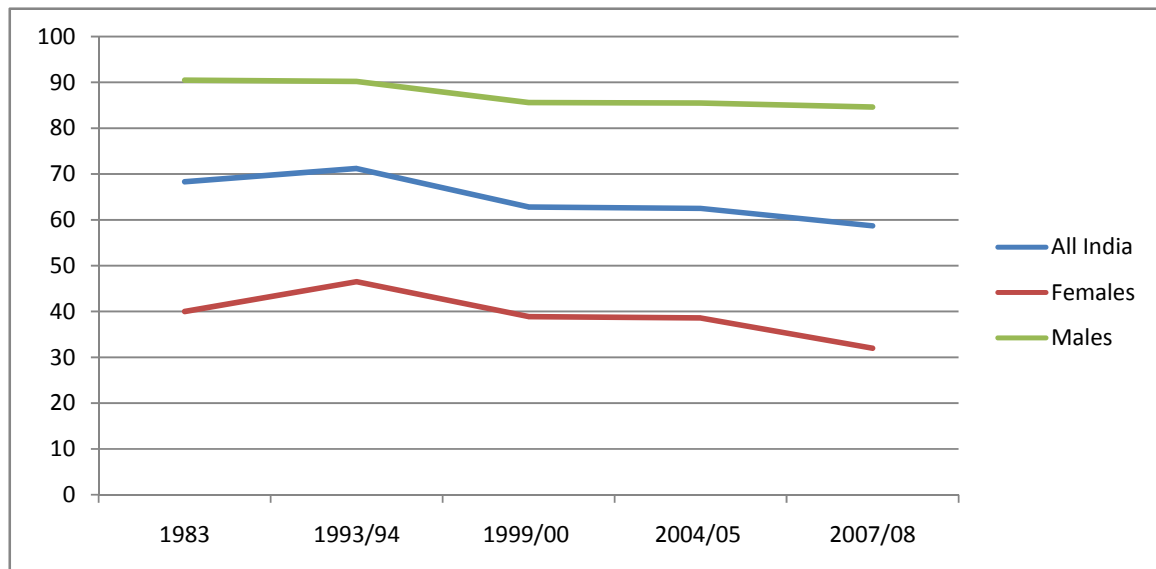


FIG -1 TREND OF PERCENTAGE OF MALE & FEMALE POPULATION IN LABOUR FORCE

In developed economies, such a “raw” ratio is closer to 75 percent; on this unadjusted basis, the data are suggestive of sex-discrimination in wages, and discrimination of a fairly large magnitude – male wages nearly double that of female wages in the last decade. Women likely have less work experience than men was extensively documented. In most developed economies, the share of students in the working age group stays relatively constant. In developing countries, and those involved in a transition, more education is the alternative to going out to work at the age of 15 or 16 or even 22. Hence table-7 presents is an adjusted definition of whether one is in the labour force or not. The numerator of a labour force

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

participation ratio is the number of people working or unemployed; the denominator is the number of people in the relevant age group 15 to 59. The adjusted definition changes the numerator to include those attending school. The results underline the radical change taking place in the education/work arena.

TABLE-7 PERCENT OF POPULATION IN THE ADJUSTED² LABOUR-FORCE

	1983	1993-94	1999-00	2004-05	2007-08
All India	72.9	77	70.9	71.6	68.9
Females	43.1	50.9	45	45.9	40.6
Males	96.3	97.1	95.6	96.4	96.4
Rural India	74	79.7	72.7	73.5	70.5
Females	46.8	55.9	49.5	50.4	44.4
Males	96.1	97.3	95.6	96.4	96.3
Urban India	69.8	66.4	66.3	67.4	65.6
Females	30.5	33.3	33.4	35.5	32.3
Males	96.9	96.1	95.6	96.3	96.5

Source- www.lse.ac.uk/collections/AsiaResearchCentre

In 1983, only 47 percent of women in rural India were in the adjusted labour force, compared to 45 percent in the “unadjusted” labour force. In 2004-05, the comparable numbers are 50 and 45 percent. Urban India shows a larger change – the adjusted number of women in the labour force is 36 percent in 2004/5 compared to the unadjusted 24 percent level. Given the trends in fertility documented in many studies, it is likely that this number will approach the international “norm” of 50 to 60 percent in the next 10 to 15 years.

Table-8 aggregates into three categories with the first as the second category as paid and the third category as education. The first point to note that in 1983, for example, almost half the rural female work force was working as “unpaid” labour, and that this number had declined to 43 percent in 2007-08. However, it is not the case that women work as unpaid labour and men as paid. The fraction of the work force that is “unpaid” is nearly the same for women and men, with the fraction marginally higher for women (54 percent unpaid women vs. 46 percent unpaid men in 2004-05). Second, almost an equal amount of women and men were attending educational institutions, 7.3 per cent women vs. 6.2 per cent men, both in 1983, 11.5 and 9.1, in and 2004-05.

TABLE-8 STRUCTURE OF LABOUR FORCE IN INDIA – UNPAID, PAID AND IN EDUCATION

	1983	1993-94	1999-00	2004-05	2007-08
All India Females					
% Unpaid	48.6	51.1	47.8	54.2	42.6
% Paid	44.1	39.5	40.8	34.3	35.7
% in Education	7.3	9.4	11.4	11.5	21.7
Rural Females					
% Unpaid	52.7	56.3	52.3	58.5	48.7

² Adjusted refers to the labour force that is either working or in education (15-59 age group).



% Paid	43.6	37.8	40.7	33.8	35.6
% in Education	3.7	5.9	7	7.7	15.7
Urban Females					
% Unpaid	27.1	34.6	29	36.5	23.6
% Paid	47.1	44.7	41.3	36.4	35.9
% in Education	25.8	20.7	29.7	27.1	40.5

Source- www.lse.ac.uk/collections/AsiaResearchCentre

Only three years later, in 2007-08, the fraction of women attending school had increased to 21.7 percent. This seems to be too high a jump for the data to be accurate; however, only when data are released for subsequent years, will we be able to ascertain the outlier nature of 2007-08 data with any accuracy. These results suggest that explanations for low LFPR rates have to lie elsewhere i.e. it is unlikely to be the unpaid/paid nature of the job, that explains labor force participation of women, in either rural or urban areas of India.

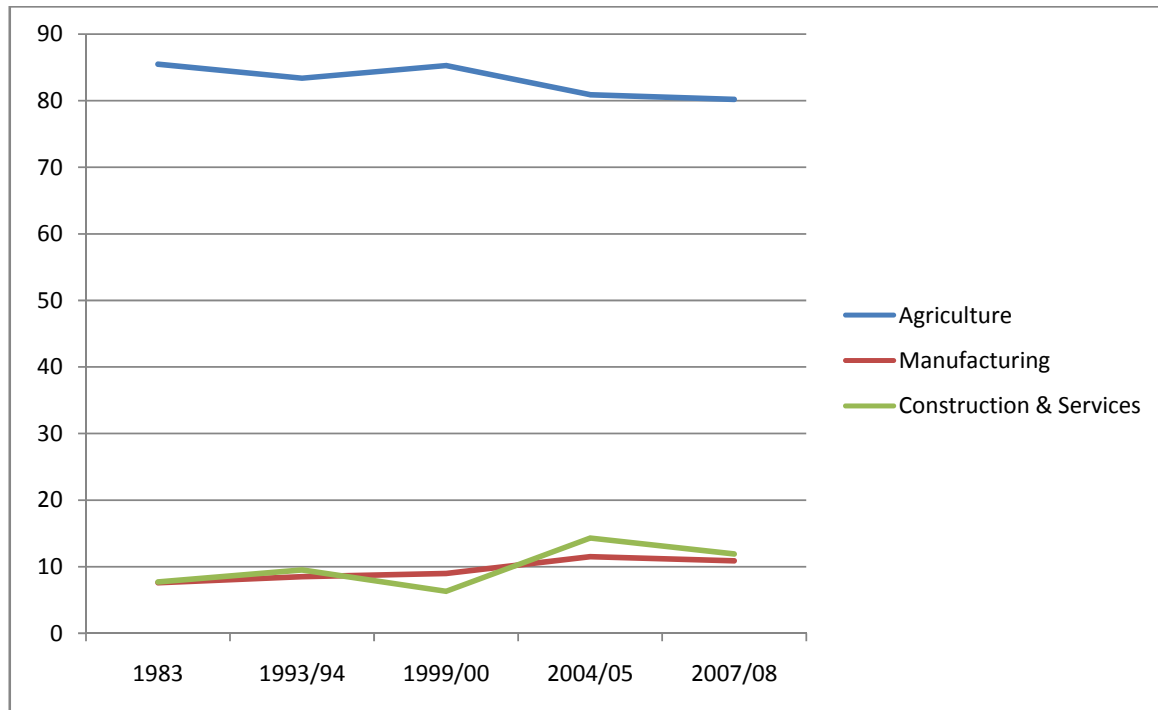
TABLE-9 LABOUR FORCE³ BREAKDOWNS FOR RURAL FEMALES

	1983	1993-94	1999-00	2004-05	2007-08
% of Female Labour force					
Agriculture	85.5	83.4	85.3	80.9	80.2
Manufacturing	7.6	8.5	9	11.5	10.9
Construction & Services	7.7	9.5	6.3	14.3	11.9
% of Female Paid Workers					
Agriculture	84.9	82	85.8	72.1	77.9
Manufacturing	7.4	8.5	7.9	13.6	10.2
Construction & Services	7.7	9.5	6.3	14.3	11.9

In 2007-08, 80.2 % of female labour force were working in agriculture sector where as 10.9% and 11.9 % were working in manufacturing and construction & services sector respectively (Table-9). Female unpaid workers are found in agriculture sector only.

³ Note-Labour force refers to the 15-59 age group that reports that they are working, or looking for work, according to the 'weekly status' definition of employment.



FIG-2 TREND OF PERCENTAGE FEMALE LABOUR FORCE IN SECTORS

CONCLUSION

The profile of female employment reveals wide gender disparity in India. The labor force participation rate for adult women rose dramatically during the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, growth in participation has slowed substantially. There is large difference observed in the LFPR of women residing in the rural and urban areas. Women are more than twice as likely as men to work part time—that is, fewer than 35 hours per week. In 2002, about 25 percent of employed women were part-time workers, compared with 11 percent of employed men. Despite the movement of many women into managerial and professional jobs, they still are concentrated in clerical and service jobs. Nearly one-half of women workers are employed in three occupational group sales (retail and personal services), services, and administrative support—compared with about one-fifth of male workers. In 2010, women have only 20.41 % of total organized employment where as men have 79.69% of employment. There is urgent need to address gender inequality in employment, particularly in organized sector. The women reservation in organized sector jobs in India can reduce gender disparity in future.

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