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CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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Having come to the end of our study, we are going to present in this chapter the summary and conclusions of the study and its policy implications.

### **6.1 The Female Labour Participation Process:**

The position of women in a nation's labour force is an important indicator of the country's economic and demographic development. Indian women's involvement in national progress at all levels, social, economic and political, is an indisputable reality, though the degree of this involvement has varied from time to time. Wide variations are also observed in female labour force participation rates between countries, regions and age groups.

We observed in this study that our socio-economic system has undergone rapid changes during the last few decades. More and more women are now progressively taking up gainful employment in various fields particularly in the non-agricultural sector. It is the spread of education that has opened up many occupations for them. Despite the opportunities that have been opened for women, they either fail to find the work suited to their taste or it lacks satisfying conditions. This may be because of the fact that in many urban and modern sectors of developing countries, training facilities are often grossly inadequate to meet the women's needs. Many studies point out that the main cause of this worsening situation of employment is the sex substitution.

Women are less likely to continue the education to higher levels than men. There is also the family constraint where girls are encouraged to aspire to a limited range of occupations which are believed to be feminine and compatible with the demands of their primary gender roles of housewife and mother. Such jobs are found to have low status and low remuneration. Our review of studies earlier has clearly brought out that in our patriarchal society women continue to be marginalized from the main stream and even where they are included they do not get proper recognition. It is because of the fact that female activity rates in less developed countries seem to be more influenced not only by the socio-economic and demographic factors but also by the methods used in classifying economically active females.

Mincer's model, referred to in chapter two, was one of the very first to focus attention on variables such as, marital status, age and number of children besides the traditional market variables such as wages and labour demand in analyzing labour force participation. He provided the basic framework for the analysis of labour force participation. His household labour supply model modified the concept of work and emphasized the importance of the family as the unit of analysis. He further analyzed the relevant choices of married women between leisure, work at home and work in the market and also focussed on the timing of the market activity

during the working life.

## 6.2 Objectives and Methodology:

The specific objectives of the present study were as follows:

1. To study the participation rate for males and females in urban areas of Himachal Pradesh.
2. To examine the occupational structure of urban females in Himachal Pradesh (with reference to the occupational classification which was specifically made for the field study).
3. To examine the time pattern of work done by women at home and in the labour market.
4. To analyse the relationship of the labour force participation of urban women in Himachal Pradesh, with respect to the following variables.

### a) Demographic Variables:

- (i) Age
- (ii) Education
- (iii) Marital Status
- (iv) Number and age of children.
- (v) Husband's education and occupation
- (vi) Parents' education and occupation

**b) Social Variables:**

- (i) Caste
- (ii) Tribal/Non-Tribal status
- (iii) Rural/Urban background.

**c) Economic Variables:**

- (i) Family Income.
- (ii) Source of Income.

The present study was based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected with the help of a schedule, which was canvassed among a sample of 300 urban households from six towns of Himachal Pradesh viz. Chamba, Dharamshala, Nahan, Mandi, Solan and Shimla, using a proportionate random sampling procedure. And the secondary information was gathered from the Official Documents, Books, Journals, Reports including Census, National Sample Surveys and International Labour Organisation (ILO).

**6.3 Summary of Conclusions:**

Our first objective was to study the participation rates for males and females in urban areas of Himachal Pradesh. The examination of the association between labour participation of sample women and various socio-economic and cultural characteristics of their households, it was found that this association could bring out only the joint effect

of these various factors on the labour force participation of women. This examination, however, failed to give the independent effect of each of the variables separately. This analysis of course helped in isolating the important factors which are strongly correlated with female labour participation. But the researcher's ingenuity lies in assessing the importance of each of the variables in a given micro-level situation. The independent effect of each of these identified variables on female labour participation was obtained by using a multiple regression model.

In the regression model, the dependent variable, labour force participation of women, was dichotomous in nature taking only two values 1 and 0: 1 if a woman is in the labour force and 0 if she is not in the labour force. Here, in the model, not all the explanatory variables were qualitative in nature, which indicate the presence or absence of a quality, but all of them were taken as exclusively dummy variables and these dummy variables were taken as quantitative variables for our analysis. As the model was revealed to be free from the problem of multicollinearity by the multiple correlation matrix, OLS procedure was applied directly to the model. There, it was noticed that the variables, which were found to be the important determinants of labour participation according to the studies reviewed and which were adopted as the hypotheses for this study, showed relatively less strong effect on the female participation in the case of

urban Himachal Pradesh. It was found from the tests of significance (ie. t and F- tests) that the age of females, education, marital status, caste, mother's education, father's education and occupation, do affect significantly the participation of females, at 5% level of significance.

On testing the hypotheses it was, however, noticed that the values of coefficient of Multiple Determination,  $R^2$ , turned out to be rather low. But in view of the large sample size, the values of  $R^2$  were still significant on the basis of the F- test. The significant result emerging from our study, therefore, was that the determinants of female labour participation which were found to be the most important ones by other studies, were observed to be less important in the case of female workers of urban Himachal Pradesh. Such differences in the pattern of determinants may be explained by the fact that in each real world situation there may be peculiar social, cultural and even geographical factors which are relatively more important and it may be much more so in hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh.

In the study, we also examined with the help of our field data, two further things viz. the occupational pattern among the participating sample females, which is an index of the nature of labour participation, and secondly, the time allocation pattern among them, which showed the degree of participation. An examination of work pattern of

sample persons(864) showed that 50.1% of them were workers, out of whom 68.8% were male workers and 31.2% were female workers. A close look at the labour market for both sample male and female workers showed that the latter tend to have different occupational pattern from the former. In the case of females, a greater concentration in a few occupations was observed. It was noticed that the largest percentage of males were employed in high salary posts of government jobs such as, Engineers, Doctors, Managers, Advocates, College teachers, while a high proportion of sample women were more likely to be concentrated in 'female jobs' like Teaching, Clerks, Assistants, Peons and as Domestic workers, which usually have lower status and lower remuneration. Only an insignificant number of women seek career in Engineering, Medical profession, Administration and Research.

On analysing the data on time allocation in different activities performed by sample persons it was noted that the large percentage of males worked for about 43.7% to 62.5% (ie. 7-10 hours) of their awakened time in the economic activities and rest of the time was enjoyed as leisure. Very few of them devoted time in domestic chores. By comparison, it was seen that the largest percentage of working women spent about 37.5% of their awakened time in the earning activity and the rest of the time was devoted to household work and leisure. The non-working women devote

about 50% of their time to the household work and the rest was enjoyed as leisure. Hence, when the total number of hours of work done by women both at home and in the gainful work was taken into consideration, it was observed that women work for much longer hours than the menfolk, but out of the hours so spent, much smaller proportion of time was allocated to economic activities. This showed a much lower degree of participation among urban females in Himachal Pradesh.

#### **6.4 Policy Implications:**

It is important to admit that even after three decades of planning and development, insufficient attention has been given to proper development of women power. Even after their extreme participation, census reports quite low participation for them. The undervaluation of female labour in the official data is a reflection of the subordination and accord of low priority to such work. What needs to be emphasized today, therefore, is not so much to bring women into the mainstream activity but to recognize their participation in it. First of all, it would be very important to reduce the disparities in occupations and families and also to redefine the sex roles in the family. It emerged from our study that education and socio-cultural traditions play an important role in making the participatory decisions of women. Therefore, it would be important for the government to take appropriate measures to improve the level of education

and training facilities among females which would ultimately improve the skills of women and provide them greater equality of opportunity and treatment in employment. High fertility also affects the status of women. Therefore, it is necessary to raise the age at marriage through education and through multi-media publicity thereby reducing the size of the family and freeing them to spend more time in the labour market.

It is also important to reorient the traditional division of work at home so that husband and wife share in the rearing of children and the various household tasks which so far have been considered to be the female work, for the resolution of the role conflict experienced by working wives. The second approach to the resolution of the conflict between the family responsibilities and employment outside the home is to consider working wives as a 'special employment group'. The society should provide suitable adjustments such as flexible working hours and housing facilities for child care. The improvements in the conditions of work within the existing pattern of occupational segregation are important to ease the housewives' burden of two full-time jobs. It is also important to require acceptance by the society of the multiple roles of women as home makers and mothers as socially and economically productive in the same manner as direct participation in the economic progress.

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