

\*\*\*\*\*

CHAPTER III

CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN  
URBAN AREAS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

\*\*\*\*\*

### 3.1 Introduction:

The preceding chapter has attempted to explore the extent and nature of variations in labour force participation during the past few decades and there we have noted how various studies have traced the likely sources of such variations in the levels of female literacy and other characteristics of women, in India and abroad. With the present chapter starts the empirical investigation of female labour participation in the urban areas of Himachal Pradesh. A detailed (town-wise) examination has been attempted here for this state, in which some of the major factors which are relevant in understanding the participatory decisions of women, in the context of urban areas, have been identified and highlighted, to explore their socio-economic, demographic and cultural interactions with female participation rates.

As noted in chapter one earlier, a sample of 300 households was selected from six-towns of Himachal Pradesh viz. Chamba, Dharamshala, Nahan, Mandi, Solan and Shimla, using a proportionate random sampling procedure. A schedule was developed to obtain the requisite information from the women with regard to their personal, family and socio-economic and cultural characteristics.

The present chapter consists of three sections: In the first section, the significant characteristics of the sample households have been discussed briefly. The second one

includes the determinants of the labour force participation of urban women in Himachal Pradesh and lastly, the chapter ends with a summary and conclusion.

### **3.2 Significant Characteristics of the Sample Households:**

As noted above, data collected from 300 households form the basis of analysis here. The present section has been devoted to a short description of the significant characteristics of the sample households. All the sample households were settled urban families as our main focus was on the urban areas of Himachal Pradesh. The main socio-economic characteristics of these households are as below:

#### **3.2.1 Size and Composition of Sample Households:**

The sample population consisted of 1203 persons, out of whom, 603 were females and 600 were males. Thus, the male-female ratio was quite favourable. It was noted that the majority (66.3%) of the households were small-sized (upto 4 members); 31.7% were medium-sized (having 5-8 members); and only 2% were large-sized (more than 8 members).

#### **3.2.2 Structure of Family:**

The majority of the families were of the nuclear type (82.7%) having husband, wife and unmarried children in the family. Establishment of separate household after a year or two following marriage of the son or brother or the head

of the family appeared to be the most frequently followed practice in the sample towns of Himachal Pradesh. Only 17.3% of the sample families were joint families. Here, three types of joint families were noticed:

- (i) **Low joint families**, having only the husband-wife couple, with other joint family members (not a couple) staying in it;
- (ii) **Medium joint families**, having two couple lineal joint family with or without other joint family relatives (not a couple); and
- (iii) **High joint families**, having fraternal or lineal -fraternal joint family or three or more couples with or without other joint family members. Even a two couple fraternal joint family, without the parental couple is treated as high joint families, for here, even in the absence of parent or parents, brothers with their wives and children stay together. In the sample, all the three types of joint families were evenly spread, with 9.3% of the sample being low joint families, 4.7% medium joint families, and only 3.3% high joint families.

### **3.2.3 Sex-Composition:**

The classification by sex is one of the most important in almost all types of population statistics and at the same

time, one of the easiest to obtain in a census. The classification by sex usually places everyone unequivocally into one of the two- categories, male and female. The sex ratio is symbolically expressed below:

$$\text{Sex Ratio} = F/M \cdot K$$

Where, F = Number of females.

M = Number of males.

K = Arbitrary factor of 1000.

The sex ratio of the sample population worked out to be as follows:-

$$\text{Sex Ratio of Sample Population} = 603/600 \times 1000$$

Therefore, Sex ratio = 1005.

Here, the sex ratio was higher than the state average<sup>1</sup> and is quite favourable.

### 3.2.3 Age-Composition:

The study of age structure is of great importance. Age data are usually available in the form of single years ie. the number of persons in the population of age, 13, 14, 15, etc. The most serious errors do exist when the age classifications are based on single years. Therefore, it is customary to classify them in five year class intervals such

-----  
1. Sex Ratio of Himachal Pradesh as a whole was 996 according to the Census 1991.

as 0-5, 5-10, 10-15 years and so on, which is, of course, subject to less serious error and least serious when the age distributions are grouped into even larger categories such as "less than 15 years old", "15-59 or 15-64 years of age" and "60 or 64 years of age and over".

In the sample households, it was found that of the total population, 26.3% were in the age group of "less than 15 years", 72.1% were in the age group of "15-64" and only 1.6% were in the category of "64 years of age and over". These figures show that the maximum percentage of sample persons fall in the category of "15-64" which is considered to be the economically active part of the population.

### 3.2.5 Worker-Dependent Ratio.

Another measure to study the population structure is the dependency ratio. This measure indicates the number of dependents per 100 workers and may be computed on the basis of three broad age-groups as mentioned above.

Persons who are below "15 years of age" are considered to be the dependent youths and those in the age group of "64 and over" are old dependents. As said above, the age-group "15-64", considered to be the economically active part of the population, forms the basis for calculating the dependency ratios.

The dependency ratio is computed as below:

$$\text{Dependency Ratio} = (P_{0-14} + P_{65 \text{ and over}}) / P_{15-64} \times K$$

Where,  $P_{0-14}$  = Population in the age-group 0-14.

$P_{65\&over}$  = Population in the age-group  
of 65 & over

$P_{15-64}$  = Population in the age-group of  
15-64

K = Arbitrary number of 100.

The dependency ratio for the sample households worked out as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(a) Aged-Dependency Ratio} &= P_{65 \text{ and over}} / P_{15-64} \times 100 \\ &= 20/867 \times 100 = 2.3\% \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(b) Youth-Dependency Ratio} &= P_{0-14} / P_{15-64} \times 100 \\ &= 316/867 \times 100 = 36.4\% \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(c) Total Dependency Ratio} &= (316+20)/867 \times 100 \\ &= 38.7\% \end{aligned}$$

In other words, the total dependency ratio is simply the sum of the youth dependency ratio and the aged dependency ratio. Table 3.1 presents the total, youth and aged dependency ratios for the sample towns of Himachal Pradesh.

TABLE 3.1

Dependency Ratios of the Sample Population of Himachal Pradesh

Towns	Dependency Ratios		
	Total	Youth	Aged
Chamba	48.2	42.0	6.2
Solan	42.8	41.0	1.8
Dharamshala	42.4	35.3	7.1
Mandi	40.0	38.0	2.0
Shimla	36.5	35.5	1.0
Nahan	30.9	29.9	1.0
TOTAL	38.7	36.4	2.3

The two dependency categories - the youth and the old, are not the same in their relationship to total dependency. In all the towns, listed above, the part of the population which is under "15 years of age" is larger than the part which is "65 and over" and therefore, the youth dependency ratios in these towns are larger of the two components, which make up the total dependency ratio.

A high total dependency ratio always means that a large proportion of the population is "under 15 years" of age. It is clear from the Table that Chamba had the highest dependency ratio (48.2%) with 42.0% of youth and 6.2% of aged dependency ratios. On the other hand, Nahan had the lowest dependency ratio (30.9%) with 29.9% of youth and only 1.0% of aged dependency ratios. Thus, the figures showed that the total dependency ratios are very closely and positively associated with youth dependency ratios and are inversely or



less closely associated with aged dependency ratios.

### 3.2.6 Caste-Composition:

Caste is one of the peculiar social characteristics of our society. The total population of sample families is divided into two caste groups<sup>2</sup> of "General" and "Scheduled Caste" category. Lower caste category is a social barrier in deciding the status of the individual in social and economic hierarchy. Caste-wise distribution of the sample households indicates that 88.3% of the families belong to the "General Category" and only 8.3% to the "Scheduled caste" category.

### 3.2.7 Economic Level:

Economic level of the sample families is based on the total monthly income of the family from various sources (salary/ wage, Agriculture, rent, business, etc.) as shown in Table 3.2. The figures in the Table show that 42.7% of the sample families were in the income group of '2,000 < income < 6,000', followed by 41.6% in the '6,000 < income < 10,000'. 9% were in the income class of '10,000 and above' and the remaining 6.7% were in the income group of 'less than 2000'.

Thus the figures show that the maximum percentage

---

Here, we have excluded the category of "Scheduled Tribes" as it is not a caste category.

TABLE 3.2

## Size Distribution of Sample Households by Monthly Income

Income Class (in Rupees)	Number	Percentages
Less than 2,000	20	6.7
2000<Income<6,000	128	42.7
6,000<Income<10,000	125	41.6
10,000<Income	27	9.0

of sample persons belong to the middle income group. Second place is occupied by upper middle class families in the group of '6,000< income < 10,000'. Only 9% of the sample persons belong to the upper class families and the least percentage (6.7%) of the sample persons belong to the lower class.

### 3.2.8 Nature of Employment:

The classification of sample families by main activity indicates that 49.8% of the sample persons were workers. 68.8% of them were males and 31.2% of them were females. Of the total female workers, 85.9% were whole-time workers and the remaining 14.1% were part-time workers (nature of employment for both males and females are discussed in detail in chapter five).

### 3.2.9 Literacy Profile:

Literacy is one of the most important factors

which influences almost all the demographic variables<sup>3</sup>. It certainly helps the people to free themselves from the shackles of anachronisms and opens their minds to different and newer aspirations and ideas.

The extent of literacy in the population is calculated as

$$\text{Literacy Rate} = L/P \times K$$

Where, L = Total number of literate persons (of both sexes) in a population.

P = Total population.

K = Arbitrary factor of 100.

Table 3.3 shows the position of literacy rate in the sample towns of Himachal Pradesh.

TABLE 3.3

Literacy Ratio<sup>4</sup> in Sample Households, by Towns

Towns	Percentage of Literates
Shimla	97.8
Solan	96.3
Dharamshala	95.8
Mandi	92.6
Nahan	92.6
Chamba	82.8
TOTAL	94.8

3. W.G.Bowen et al., "Educational Attainments and Labor Force Participation", American Economic Review, Vol.LVI, No.2, May 1966.
4. Literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh as a whole, on the basis of the census 1991 was 63.5%.

The figures given in the Table show that the average percentage of urban literates worked out to 94.8%. The basic reason behind the high literacy rate in the sample towns may be that all the sample families were urban settled families.

The foregoing was a brief resume of the socio-economic characteristics of sample households. For associations between the variations in employment conditions and those of activity rates and labour supply contributions per worker, some analysis has been attempted in the next section.

### **3.3 Determinants of the Labour Force Participation of Urban Women of Himachal Pradesh:**

Household behaviour with respect to demographic and economic decisions is generally subject to a joint determination process as noted earlier in chapter two. The process of labour force participation in Himachal Pradesh can be better understood by analyzing the inter-relationship between the labour force participation and various social, economic and demographic factors such as, age, education, marital status, age of children, husband's as well as parents' education and occupation, caste and family income with the help of sample data. Through our field study we collected data on various facets of the socio-economic life

of sample persons<sup>5</sup>. It may be noted here that of sample persons, 413 were males and 451 were females in the working age group of '15-64'. Thus male and female participation rate was worked out to be 72% and 30% respectively.

The determinants of female labour participation referred to above are discussed below with regard to the sample persons. An attempt has been made here to notice the association between these factors and the labour participation rates of the sample persons.

(i) Age:

In our study of age-specific activity rates in the urban areas of Himachal Pradesh, age data was classified into ten-year class intervals such as, 15-25; 25-35; 35-45; 45-55 and 55-64. Such data for both males and females are given in Tables 3.4 and 3.5. It is noted in the Tables that the labour force participation for males and females differs markedly from each other. First of all, we consider the male workers (figures for which are given in Table 3.4). It is clear from the Table that male work participation rate for age-group of 15-25 years appears to be only 5.0%, which was quite low. This was due to the fact that most of

5. Only those persons were sampled for our study, who fall in the category of working age-group of '15-64'.

TABLE 3.4

## Distribution of Males by Age in the Sample

Age class	Total		Chaaba		Dharanashala		Nahan		Mandi		Solan		Shiela	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
15-25	5	96	1	3	1	7	-	12	-	8	-	11	3	52
	(5.0)	(95.0)	(25.0)	(75.0)	(12.5)	(87.5)	(0.0)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(100.0)	(5.4)	(94.6)
25-35	91	7	13	-	3	2	14	1	14	-	15	2	32	2
	(92.8)	(7.2)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(60.0)	(40.0)	(93.3)	(6.7)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(88.2)	(11.8)	(94.1)	(5.9)
35-45	106	-	9	-	13	-	10	-	14	-	13	-	47	-
	(100.0)	(0.0)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(9.9)	(100.0)
45-55	75	2	2	-	8	1	10	-	7	-	6	1	42	-
	(97.4)	(2.6)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(88.9)	(11.1)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(85.7)	(14.3)	(100.0)	(0.0)
55-64	20	14	3	2	3	-	1	2	2	2	3	1	0	7
	(58.8)	(41.2)	(60.0)	(40.0)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(33.3)	(66.7)	(50.0)	(50.0)	(75.0)	(25.0)	(53.3)	(46.7)

Note: W: Male Workers ; NW: Non-Working Males.

Figures given in the brackets are percentages of total sample males in different categories of age class

them were students. The participation rate rose with increase in age class, almost become 100% for the age group of 35-45 years. The reason for this is obvious because just after completing their education people immediately engage in some work (salaried/wage or work on own account), as they are mainly meant to be the bread earners of the families. The participation rate of those males in the age class 55-64 was found to be low (only 20%) as this is the age of retirement or withdrawal from the labour force.

On the other hand, a different pattern of participation rates was noticed in the case of females (as shown in Table 3.5). The figures given in the Table show that only 8.3% of women were working in the age-group of 15-25 and the reason seemed to be identical to that of males in this age class. Maximum participation (42.9%) was noticed for females in the age group of 35-45 years. 36.6% of participation was observed in the age group of 25-35 years. Besides the usual tendency of lower female participation in India, another obvious reason here is that the age-group 25-35 years is the age of child bearing and rearing, which inhibits labour force participa-

TABLE 3.5

## Distribution of Women by Age in the Sample

Age class	Total		Chamba		Dharamshala		Nahan		Mandi		Solan		Shimla	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
15-25	8 (8.3)	101 (91.7)	1 (9.09)	10 (90.9)	1 (8.3)	11 (91.7)	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	1 (8.3)	11 (91.7)	1 (6.2)	15 (93.8)	2 (6.1)	47 (93.9)
25-35	56 (36.6)	97 (63.4)	3 (15.8)	16 (84.2)	9 (56.3)	7 (43.7)	6 (31.6)	13 (68.4)	7 (35.0)	13 (65.0)	9 (40.9)	13 (59.1)	22 (38.6)	35 (61.4)
35-45	36 (42.9)	48 (57.1)	5 (71.4)	2 (28.6)	3 (50.0)	3 (50.0)	- (0.0)	5 (100.0)	3 (33.3)	6 (66.7)	4 (50.0)	4 (50.0)	21 (42.9)	28 (57.1)
45-55	31 (47.7)	34 (52.3)	- (0.0)	5 (100.0)	6 (66.7)	3 (33.3)	2 (25.0)	6 (75.0)	1 (16.7)	5 (83.3)	1 (20.0)	4 (60.0)	2 (70.0)	9 (30.0)
55-64	4 (10.0)	36 (90.0)	- (0.0)	6 (100.0)	1 (25.0)	3 (75.0)	- (0.0)	6 (100.0)	- (0.0)	5 (100.0)	1 (14.3)	6 (85.7)	2 (8.3)	12 (50.0)

Note: W: Women Workers; NW: Non-Working Women.

Figures in the brackets are percentages of sample women in different categories.



tion. Within the class of female workers as a whole, the pattern was characterized by increasing activity rates from the age-group of 15-25 years to 35-45 years and thereafter dropping sharply to relatively low levels, because of the withdrawal from the labour force. Maximum participation rate was observed for the age group of 35-45 years which appears to reflect a tendency for married women to enter the work force at the end of child bearing period and when home responsibilities of looking after now school-going children are relatively less. In other words, the female activity rates are influenced by changes in the phases of the life-cycle of married life. This causes variations in the age patterns of female participation rates<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, where the marriages are late, there is an interval of early adult years in which females have little useful alternatives to participate in the paid jobs or work as unpaid helpers in family enterprises<sup>7</sup>. But this kind of association was seen very little in our sample, where girls are married at a very young age. In our sample it was found that 51.3%

-----

6. D.Majumdar, The Urban Labor Market and Income Distribution - A Study of Malaysia, Oxford University Press, 1981, p.38.

7. Ibid., p.38.

of women were married at "20-25" years of age, but 42.5% were married early at "13-20" years of age and only 6.2% of them were married late at the age of "more than 25 years".

The figures given in the Table show that a dome-shaped curve seems to emerge from this association between participation rates and age pattern of females in the sample. The Table also presents a clear picture of the activity rates of females in each sample town. It is noted there that an almost identical association was observed in the case of Chamba, Mandi, and Solan. In Dharamshala and Nahan, the distribution of women's employment was found to be M-shaped, which reflects two-peak periods: The higher one occurring in the age group of 25-35 years and the lower one in the age group 45 and over. Shimla was an exception where participation was found to increase steadily upto the age of '45 and over'. Such kind of variations depend on the type of the family that exists in different towns (referred to the preceding section of this chapter). Thus, the Table doesnot show the pure effect of age on labour force participation of females.

(ii) Education:

Education is very important factor in determining the participatory decisions of the people in the labour market (as given by the studies already been reviewed in the second chapter). Tables 3.6 and 3.7 show the participation rates by education of sample persons. The figures given in the Tables show a U-shaped relationship between work force participation and education of both the sexes. In other words, labour participation rate is more for those people who are 'less than matriculates' on one hand and 'post graduates' on the other. In between at graduate level, participation rate is moderate. Our result is also consistent with other studies<sup>8</sup>.

Coming to the differences between the two sexes, higher participation rate was observed for males as compared to those of females at each level of education. Here in explaining the gender differences in participation rates, factors other than education, such as age at marriage and social status are more important (as discussed subse-

8. See W.G.Bowen et al., The Economic of Labor Force Participation, Princeton University, 1969; pp.115-117, and B.B.Patel, et al, "Female Labour Force Participation Rate: Direct Verification of Some Hypotheses", Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Vol.XX, No.4, Jan 1978, pp.308-316.

TABLE 3.6

## Distribution of Males by Educational Levels in the Sample

Educational Level	Total		Chamba		Dharamshala		Nahan		Mandi		Solan		Shimla	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
Less than	32	23	9	2	2	3	5	-	-	2	4	3	12	13
Matriculates	(58.2)	(41.8)	(81.8)	(18.2)	(40.0)	(68.0)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(100.0)	(57.1)	(42.9)	(48.0)	(52.0)
Matriculates but not	64	67	17	3	4	5	5	10	8	6	10	9	20	34
Graduates	(48.9)	(51.1)	(85.0)	(15.0)	(44.4)	(55.6)	(33.3)	(66.7)	(57.1)	(42.9)	(52.6)	(47.4)	(37.0)	(63.0)
Graduates	81	14	2	-	10	1	10	3	16	2	10	2	33	6
	(85.3)	(14.7)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(98.9)	(9.1)	(76.9)	(23.1)	(88.9)	(11.1)	(83.3)	(16.7)	(84.6)	(15.4)
Above	120	12	-	-	12	1	15	2	13	-	13	1	67	8
Graduates	(98.9)	(9.1)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(92.3)	(7.7)	(88.2)	(11.8)	(100.0)	(0.0)	(92.9)	(7.1)	(89.3)	(10.7)

Note: W: Working Males ; NW: Non-Working Males.

Figures in the brackets are percentages of total males in different categories.

TABLE 3.7

## Distribution of Women by Educational Levels in the Sample

Educational Levels	Total		Chamba		Dharamshala		Mahan		Mandi		Solari		Shiela	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
0-10	34 (19.5)	140 (80.5)	3 (8.3)	33 (91.7)	3 (18.8)	13 (81.2)	2 (14.3)	12 (85.7)	1 (5.3)	18 (94.7)	5 (20.8)	20 (80.8)	20 (31.3)	44 (68.7)
<Graduates	19 (18.6)	83 (81.4)	84 (57.1)	3 (42.9)	7 (58.3)	5 (41.7)	3 (27.3)	8 (72.7)	3 (15.8)	16 (84.2)	2 (20.8)	8 (80.8)	0 (0.0)	43 (100.0)
Graduates	31 (35.2)	57 (64.8)	2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)	4 (57.1)	3 (42.9)	0 (0.0)	11 (100.0)	4 (57.1)	3 (42.9)	3 (23.1)	10 (6.9)	10 (39.1)	20 (60.9)
>Graduates	51 (59.7)	36 (40.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	6 (50.0)	6 (50.0)	5 (45.5)	6 (54.5)	4 (57.1)	3 (42.9)	6 (60.8)	4 (40.8)	30 (65.2)	16 (34.8)

Note: Figures given in the brackets are percentages to total in each class.

quently in chapter two).

The figures given in Table 3.7 show that in the sample as a whole, maximum percentage of women was working in the category of 'above graduates' (ie. 59.7%), whereas participation rate for those women who were 'educated upto matriculate level' was only 19.5%. In between, the activity rates were found to be moderate, which gives the U-shaped relationship between participation rate and education. The Table also presents a clear picture of the activity rates of females in the sample towns of Himachal Pradesh. It needs to be reiterated that the Table doesnot show the pure effect of education on activity rates of females; rather it shows the joint effect of female's education and other socio-economic characteristics.

**(iii) Marital Status:**

On analysing the participation rates of sample persons with respect to marital status, it was found that male labour force participation was not influenced much by this factor. On the other hand, female participation rate is found to be influenced strongly by the marital status (as shown in Table 3.8).

TABLE 3.8

## Distribution of Women by Marital Status in the Sample

Marital Status	Total		Chamba		Dharamshala		Nahan		Mandi		Solon		Shimla	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
Married	112 (36.5)	198 (63.5)	5 (17.9)	23 (82.1)	17 (60.7)	11 (39.3)	8 (25.0)	24 (75.0)	10 (27.0)	27 (73.0)	16 (36.4)	28 (63.6)	56 (40.4)	85 (59.6)
Unmarried	11 (10.6)	93 (89.4)	2 (18.2)	9 (81.8)	1 (7.1)	13 (92.9)	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	1 (9.0)	10 (91.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (100.0)	6 (12.5)	42 (87.5)
Others	12 (32.4)	25 (67.6)	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	2 (40.0)	3 (60.0)	1 (16.7)	5 (83.3)	1 (25.0)	3 (75.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)	6 (60.0)	4 (40.0)

Note: Figures given in the brackets are percentages of total females in different categories.

From theory as well as other studies<sup>9</sup> we would expect to see that widowed, divorced and separated women have activity rates less than those of single women but generally much higher than those of married women of corresponding ages. In other words, the lowest participation may be expected for married women, as their role is accompanied by qualitatively different responsibilities, duties, pressures and obligations than the unmarried women.

Let us notice the situation in this respect in the sample. The Table shows the activity rates of women by marital status in the sample towns. Maximum percentage (36.5%) of participation was observed for married women followed by widowed/divorced women (32.4%). Only 10.6% of participation rate was observed for unmarried women. The low percentage of participation of unmarried women may be explained by the fact that many of them being in the younger age groups and thus being in the process of completing their education. There are inter-regional variations in this respect as shown in the Table.

---

9. See United Nations, The Determinants and Consequence of Population Trends, New Summary of Findings on Interaction of Demographic, Economic and Social Factors, Vol.1, No.50, 1973, p.305.



(iv) Number and Age of children:

This factor is very important in making participatory decisions of married women (Its importance has been discussed in chapter II). Actually it is not the number but the age of the children 'under three' which plays an important role in determining the participation rates of women<sup>10</sup>. Table 3.9 shows the association between labour force participation and the age of dependent children. From theory and other studies (as referred to chapter two), we would expect that the presence of very small children, ie. under three years of age, which inhibits labour force participation. Empirical evidence<sup>11</sup> from developed countries has indicated that labour force participation is higher for women with no children and with grown-up children, who make less demand on the mother's time.

The Table shows a weak association between labour force participation of women and the age of their

- 
10. E.A.Eyland, et al, "The Determinants of Female Employment", The Economic Record, Vol.58, Nov 1982, pp.11-17.
  11. T.P.Shultz, "The Influence of Fertility on Labor Supply of Married women", Research in Labor Economics, Vol.II, 1978 and M.A.Hill, "Female Labor Force Participaiton in Developing and Developed Countries - Consideration of the Informal Sector", The Review of Economics and Statistics, Vol.LXV, No.1, Feb 1983, pp.459-466.

TABLE 3.9

Distribution of Women by the Age of Children  
(in the case of ever-married women) in the Sample

Age of Children	Total		Chaaba		Dharaashala		Nahan		Mandi		Solan		Shiela	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
No Children	13 (42.4)	20 (57.6)	1 (20.0)	4 (80.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	3 (60.0)	2 (40.0)	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	2 (20.6)	5 (71.4)	5 (54.5)	6 (45.5)
<3 years	15 (41.7)	21 (58.3)	2 (25.0)	6 (75.0)	3 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	3 (50.0)	3 (50.0)	4 (33.3)	0 (66.7)
>3 years	85 (34.2)	163 (65.8)	4 (16.7)	20 (83.3)	15 (53.6)	13 (46.4)	4 (13.8)	25 (85.2)	9 (25.7)	26 (74.3)	11 (31.4)	23 (68.6)	52 (40.6)	76 (59.4)

Note: Figures given in the brackets are percentages of total sample women in different categories.

own children, where the highest participation of 42.7% was observed for married women with no children. This was followed by those with children "under three years of age", with 41.7% of participation rate. This evidence was in contrast with that observed in most developed countries. This may be because of different conditions prevailing here as compared to developed countries. For example, the joint family system is much more prevalent in our country. In our sample, 17.3% of the families were joint families. The Table shows that only 34.2% of participation rate was observed for those women whose children are old enough, in Himachal Pradesh as a whole. In the sample towns also, no significant variation pattern emerged from the data as seen in the Table. In Shimla only, the expected pattern was observed where higher participation (54.5%) existed for women without children on one hand and 40.6% for those women with children above 3 years of age. Thus, the strong association between labour force participation and the age-composition of children of married women can be seen only in Shimla town.

**(v) Educational Level of Father:**

Association between father's education and the

TABLE 3.10

Distribution of Women by Father's Educational Level in the Sample

Father's Educational Level	Total		Chamba		Dharamshala		Nahan		Mandi		Solani		Shimla	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
Illiterates	24 (21.4)	88 (78.6)	3 (12.0)	22 (88.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (100.0)	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	1 (6.2)	15 (93.8)	1 (9.1)	10 (90.9)	18 (48.9)	26 (59.1)
0-5	6 (24.0)	19 (76.0)	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)	1 (20.0)	4 (80.0)	2 (20.0)	8 (80.0)
6-10	39 (36.4)	68 (63.6)	5 (31.3)	11 (68.7)	11 (61.1)	7 (38.9)	4 (36.4)	7 (63.6)	4 (33.3)	8 (66.7)	5 (22.7)	17 (77.3)	10 (35.7)	18 (64.3)
>10	66 (38.6)	141 (82.4)	0 (0.0)	4 (100.0)	8 (38.1)	13 (61.9)	4 (16.7)	20 (83.3)	7 (33.3)	14 (66.7)	9 (45.0)	11 (55.0)	38 (32.5)	79 (67.5)

Note: Figures in brackets are percentages of total sample women in the different categories.

labour force participation of sample women in Himachal Pradesh has been shown in Table 3.10. It is clear from the Table that highest participation (38.6%) was observed for women whose fathers were educated 'above matriculate' level of education. Their participation decreased directly and steadily with their father's education. The lowest participation (21.4%) was observed for those women whose fathers were illiterates. Those whose fathers were educated upto fifth standard, only 24% of participation was observed. The low percentage of participation for such women may be because of the orthodox attitude of their parents. Thus, it seems that the father's education and labour force participation of women are strongly and positively related. This is so far as the sample as a whole is concerned. There was, however, a large regional variations in this respect in the different sample towns, as shown in the Table where different factors other than the father's education affected the participation rates.

**(vi) Mother's Educational Level:**

Table 3.11 shows the association between mother's education and participation. The figures given in

TABLE 3.11

## Distribution of Women by Mother's Education in the Sample

Mother's Education	Total		Chamba		Dharamshala		Nahan		Mandi		Solan		Shimla	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
Illiterates	60 (27.8)	156 (72.2)	9 (22.0)	32 (78.0)	5 (27.8)	13 (72.2)	4 (23.5)	13 (76.5)	5 (19.2)	211 (80.8)	8 (25.0)	24 (75.0)	29 (35.4)	53 (64.6)
0-5	14 (28.6)	35 (71.4)	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)	7 (63.6)	4 (36.4)	1 (20.0)	4 (80.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)	1 (14.3)	6 (85.7)	5 (25.0)	15 (75.0)
6-10	49 (48.0)	53 (52.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (100.0)	7 (70.0)	3 (30.0)	4 (33.3)	8 (66.7)	4 (26.7)	11 (73.3)	6 (50.0)	6 (50.0)	28 (57.1)	21 (42.9)
>10	12 (14.3)	72 (85.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (12.5)	7 (87.5)	1 (7.7)	12 (92.3)	3 (37.5)	5 (62.5)	1 (14.3)	6 (85.7)	6 (12.5)	42 (87.5)

Note: Figures given in the brackets are percentages to total sample women.

\*

the Table show that the highest percentage (48%) of women in the working force were those whose mothers had attained at least 6-10 years of schooling. Followed by those whose mothers were educated upto 5 years of level of education. A low percentage of participation was observed for those women whose mothers were completely 'illiterates' (27.8%) on one hand and 'above matriculates' (14.3%) on the other. It is clear that the relationship between labour force participation rate of females and their mothers' education was not very systematic.

**(vii) Husband's Educational Level:**

Husband's educational level has also been found to be an important factor affecting the participation of married women in the labour market<sup>12</sup>, as it also signifies the socio-economic status of the family. Table 3.12 shows the association between the two variables. The data in the Table shows that the highest participation of 39.3% was noticed for those women whose husbands had qualifications of less than matriculation. This might be explained in two ways. Firstly, their

---

12. F.R.Marshall, et al, Labor Economics: Wages, Employment and Trade Unionism, Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1980, pp.203-204 and United Nations, 1973, op.cit., p.316.

TABLE 3.12

Distribution of Women by Husbands' Education  
(in the case of currently married women) in the Sample

Husband's Education	Total		Chaaba		Dharaashala		Mahan		Mandi		Solan		Shimla	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
Less than Matriculates	11 (39.3)	17 (60.7)	1 (12.5)	7 (87.5)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	9 (64.3)	5 (35.7)
Matriculates	10 (24.4)	31 (75.6)	1 (7.7)	12 (92.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	1 (25.0)	3 (75.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)	3 (42.7)	4 (57.1)	5 (38.5)	8 (61.5)
Matriculates & Graduates	12 (32.4)	25 (67.6)	2 (40.0)	3 (60.0)	2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)	2 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (28.6)	5 (71.4)	1 (14.3)	6 (85.7)	3 (25.0)	9 (75.0)
Graduates & above	79 (38.7)	125 (61.3)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	15 (71.4)	6 (28.6)	5 (20.0)	20 (80.0)	8 (29.6)	19 (70.4)	11 (40.7)	16 (59.3)	39 (38.2)	63 (61.8)

Note: Figures given in the brackets are percentages of total sample women in different categories.



husbands might have grown up in low middle class families, with the result of which they could not attained that level of education which they wanted to attain. Secondly, due to lack of education, the husbands might not have got good jobs. Thus, women of low income-class families basically work to supplement the family income, such women showed the highest participation (39.3%). A slightly lower participation 38.7% was noted for those women whose husbands were educated upto graduate level or above. Thus, U-shaped relationship was observed between labour force participation and husband's education in the sample as a whole. But the Table doesnot show a clear region-wise relationship in this respect because of the intervention of some other relevant factors in each case.

Again, it must be noted that the Table doesn't give the pure effect of husband's education alone on labour force participation rate but at the same time also shows the effect of other relevant variables. In other words, in the Table we are observing the joint effect of husband's education and other variables on the labour force participation of women in the sample.

(viii) **Father's Occupation:**

Table 3.13 shows the gross association between father's occupation and the labour force participation of the women. The figures in the Table show that 35.1% was the highest participation rate for those women whose fathers were in class I or II jobs (ie. who were salaried professionals). The reason in this case may not be so much economic in nature. Rather women in the upper strata of society may take up gainful employment in pursuit of a career or as individuals to attain a higher social status in the society. Another reason might be that as these women had grown up in the upper strata families, so they might have acquired higher education comparably to other women. Next to this class, 29.4% of participation rate was observed for those women whose fathers were non-salaried professionals. Predictably, not much decline was observed in this category, as women in this class basically belong to the foregoing class. On the other hand, women whose fathers were self-employed workers or farmers had participation rate of only 26.7% and 25.4% respectively. In these two classes, the need for women to support their families financially may be relatively important, though other factors may have inhibited

TABLE 3.13

## Distribution of Women by Father's Occupational Levels in the Sample

Father's Occupation	Total		Chamba		Dharamshala		Nahan		Mandi		Solan		Shimla	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
Salaried professionals	60 (35.1)	111 (64.9)	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	6 (33.3)	12 (66.7)	4 (17.4)	19 (82.6)	8 (44.4)	10 (55.6)	9 (50.0)	9 (50.0)	32 (35.2)	59 (64.8)
Salaried non- professionals	20 (29.4)	48 (70.6)	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	5 (62.5)	3 (37.5)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	1 (14.3)	6 (85.7)	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	11 (33.3)	22 (66.7)
Self-employed	23 (26.7)	63 (73.3)	4 (21.1)	15 (78.9)	7 (53.8)	6 (46.2)	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	0 (0.0)	4 (100.0)	2 (15.4)	11 (84.6)	8 (28.6)	20 (71.4)
Agricult- urists	32 (25.4)	94 (74.6)	3 (17.6)	14 (82.4)	2 (25.0)	6 (75.0)	4 (30.8)	9 (69.2)	3 (13.0)	20 (87.0)	3 (16.7)	15 (83.3)	17 (36.2)	30 (63.8)

Note: Figures given in the brackets are percentages of total sample women in different categories.

their participation like social taboos. Thus, it must be noted here, that the father's occupation, education and socio-economic status are inter-related and what we are observing is the joint effect of such variables on the labour participation of women.

With regard to the mother's occupational levels, it was observed that 90% of the mothers of the sample women were housewives, only 10% of them were working as teachers. Thus no strong effect was observed between labour participation of women and the mothers' occupational level.

**(ix) Husband's Occupational Level:**

Table 3.14 shows the association between the husband's occupational levels and the labour force participation of their wives. The figures in the Table show a similar pattern of association as was observed between fathers' occupation and labour force participation of the women. These figures show that 50% of women had participation rate in the category where, husbands were agriculturists and their husbands live far away from their houses in the rural areas to work on their agricultural lands, whereas the rest of the family live in the urban areas. So in order to look after

TABLE 3.14

Distribution of Women by Husband's Occupation  
(in the case of currently married women) in the Sample

Husband's Occupation	Total		Chamba		Dharamshala		Nahan		Mandi		Solan		Shimla	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
Salaried professionals	69 (41.8)	96 (58.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	13 (76.5)	4 (23.5)	4 (19.8)	17 (81.0)	8 (32.0)	17 (68.0)	9 (40.9)	13 (59.1)	35 (44.3)	44 (55.7)
Salaried non-34 professionals	62 (35.4)	64 (64.6)	4 (26.7)	11 (73.3)	2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)	3 (42.9)	4 (57.1)	2 (25.0)	6 (75.0)	5 (38.5)	8 (61.5)	18 (36.7)	31 (63.3)
Self-employed	2 (7.1)	26 (92.9)	0 (0.0)	8 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (100.0)	1 (12.5)	7 (87.5)
Agricult- urists	2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Note: Figures given in the brackets are percentages of total sample women in different categories.

the family, women enter the labour market. On the other hand, 41.8% of participation rate was observed for those women whose husbands were salaried professional or in a better job. The rate was moderately high (35.4%) for women who were married to salaried non-professionals. In the last case, the main reason to join the job may be economic necessity. The lowest participation (7.1%) was observed for the wives of self-employed persons, as they did not have much need to join the job economically. Again, differences exist in different towns of the sample in this respect. This is due to the fact that we are observing the joint effect of various socio-economic variables and the females' activity rates in the labour market.

**(x) Caste:**

Table 3.15 shows the percentage of women workers on the basis of the caste category for which they belong. It was observed from the Table that labour force participation rate was the highest for those women who belong to 'scheduled caste' group. The possible explanations for it may be partly the reservations for SC groups in govt. employment and partly the low family income of this class. In the sample towns, Dharamshala, Nahan and Mandi are

TABLE 3.15

## Distribution of Women by Caste in the Sample

Caste Categories	Total		Chamba		Dharamshala		Mahan		Mandi		Solan		Shiela	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
SC	14 (42.4)	19 (57.6)	- (0.0)	- (0.0)	- (0.0)	2 (100.0)	- (0.0)	1 (100.0)	- (0.0)	- (0.0)	- (0.0)	1 (100.0)	14 (48.3)	15 (51.7)
General	116 (29.1)	283 (70.9)	6 (17.7)	29 (82.9)	20 (44.4)	25 (55.6)	10 (22.2)	35 (77.8)	12 (23.5)	39 (76.5)	14 (25.5)	41 (74.5)	54 (32.1)	114 (67.9)

Note: Figures in the brackets are percentages of total sample women in different categories.

seen to be the exceptions, where not even a single family of 'scheduled caste' category came in our sample.

(xi) Family Income:

Family Income, a priori, seems to be the most important factor influencing the labour force participation of women (as this association we have discussed in detail in chapter two). Table 3.16 shows the association between family income and labour force participation of sample women. From the figures in the Table we observe the highest participation (38.3%) for those women whose family income was between Rs 0,000-2,000 per month. This is surely due to the financial compulsions of such low income households. The participation rate declines for middle income category and then rises in the case of the highest income brackets.

Thus, a U-shaped relationship was observed between activity rates of females and the family income<sup>13</sup>. Obviously, females from low income households work due to economic compulsions. While

---

13. This hypotheses was also supported by R.H.Dholakia, et al., "Interstate Variation in Female Labour Force", Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Vol.XX, No.4, Jan 1978, p.310 and N.W.Chamberlein, The Labor Sector, McGraw-Hill Inc., 1965, p.11.



TABLE 3.16

## Distribution of Women by Family Income in the Sample

Family Income(Rs)	Total		Chamba		Dharanshala		Mahan		Mandi		Solan		Shiela	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
0-2000/-	18 (38.3)	29 (61.7)	3 (28.0)	12 (80.0)	3 (60.0)	2 (40.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	2 (28.6)	5 (71.4)	8 (53.3)	7 (46.7)
>2000 - 3000/-	21 (26.9)	57 (73.1)	2 (13.3)	13 (86.7)	4 (57.1)	3 (42.9)	3 (50.0)	3 (50.0)	1 (12.5)	7 (87.5)	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)	9 (25.0)	27 (75.0)
>3000/-	79 (28.9)	194 (71.1)	2 (28.6)	5 (71.4)	9 (36.0)	16 (64.0)	5 (15.6)	27 (84.4)	9 (25.7)	26 (74.3)	11 (27.5)	29 (72.5)	43 (32.1)	91 (67.9)

Note: Figures in the brackets are percentages of total sample women in different categories.

those from very high income group do so for self realization or for passing time usefully. In the middle income class, the inhibiting factor perhaps is the typical middle class attitude of sending out females to work being considered as undignified.

#### **3.4 Summary:**

In the present chapter, we attempted a detailed town-wise examination of the association between labour force participation of sample women and various socio-economic and demographic characteristics of their households. On the whole, it has been found that the foregoing Tables do not show the pure relationship between labour force participation and each of these variables. In each case, what is observed is the joint effect of various independent variables and labour force participation. This exercise can only seem to isolate the important factors which are strongly correlated with female labour participation and it has shown that in our sample, the most important determinants of labour participation were age, education, marital status, presence and age of children, father's education, husband's education, father's occupation, caste and family income. However, the independent effect of each of the variables on labour force participation can be obtained only by using a multiple regression model which is attempted in chapter four subsequently. But before proceeding to the next chapter it would be important

to note that apart from the factors like age, education, marital status, caste, family income, and age of children, which were recognized by the studies reviewed earlier, father's education and occupation, as well as husbands's education and occupation, were also found to be important factors in determining the female labour participation in the case of Himachal Pradesh.

\*\*\*\*\*