CHAPTER II

WOMEN WORK PARTICIPATION - THEORETICAL APPROACH
AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Approach

Women contribute a lot under several odds. They make up nearly 50 per cent of the world’s population, comprise 33 per cent of the official labour force, perform about 70 per cent of all working hours, receive 10 per cent of world’s income and own even less than one per cent of world’s property. Due to these statistical hard facts the relevance of women-based study has been felt inevitable today. It has also been observed that women have been subjected to under education, exploitation and social castigation.

Now-a-days their importance as a workforce has been either neglected or misrepresented especially in developing nations. Many activities of women in economically gainful work are either given no recognition or not properly represented in statistical data. As a matter of fact neither their domestic activities are economically evaluated nor are their participation and assistance in agricultural and non-agricultural activities linked to production. One of the most glaring facts which working class women have to confront today is the discrimination which accompanies them from the time of recruitment. It is
evident from the way women are treated as secondary labour, the wage differential discrimination in training and promotional avenues (Joshi, 1976; Chermont, 1987). Their value in the labour market is determined by these notions and therefore their entrance and concentration is confined to limited pockets in both organized and unorganized sectors. The discrimination in wage payment is revealed in the data furnished by Ministry of Labour’s report (1974-75). According to Labour Bureau’s report there are basically four factors which determine female employment. These are:

1. Permanent and growing inadequacy of the income of the principal bread winner.
2. Temporary fall in the family’s income due to accidental circumstances.
3. The death of the bread winner, and
4. Women’s desire for economic independence or for securing a higher standard of living for the family.

These four reasons are purely economic in nature. Verma(1990) argued that it was very difficult to attribute the low female work participation rate to any specific factor. However, four factors may further be considered as explanatory variables. These are as follows:

1. Buffer factor
2. Segregation factor
3. Substitution factor and
4. Income factor.
The buffer hypothesis assumes that some women are treated as reserve army of labour who are drawn in the labour market in the peak season and expelled in the slack seasons. As per job segregation hypothesis, a few occupations are sex-typed. Hence, demand for female labour is dependent on the demand in the female dominated sectors. According to substitution hypothesis, as the recession intensifies the search for cost-saving technique induces substitution towards cheaper form of labour such as women. Finally, according to the income hypothesis women enter the labour market to raise their earnings either due to lack of sufficient income or because of the need to enhance their socio-economic standard.

Several demographers argue that the tendency to participate in labour force changes with the variations in demographic factors. The involvement of women in non-household work varies with their marital status, dependency ratio and age. Generally, the married women work less than the unmarried, widows and divorced ones. Among the married women those having smaller children are less likely to work than the mothers of older children and those without children. It has also been proposed that a U-shaped curve for female participation in relation to demographic transition runs parallel to economic transition (Bindary, 1973). In a pre-industrial society high mortality among children forced the women to be occupied with their reproductive role. Their participation was hardly affected because economic activities carried out at home enabled them to combine
reproductive role with work. Reduction in infant and child mortality diminished the need for higher number of children making it possible for women to join the labour force. Developed nations went through this process after World War 1 while developing economies are passing through the second stage because childcare is not institutionalized and household activities are not mechanized. In addition, fertility rate is also considered as one of the most important variables influencing women’s participation inversely. An inverse relation between fertility and women’s participation rate probably explains the higher participation rates among women of older children. A study (Willis, 1973) showed that participation rates of mothers with smaller children increased much more than the participation rates of mothers of older children. A decline in fertility and women’s work participation rates are related to each other. But causal relationship is not so simple because these tendencies may be caused by factors like desire for higher standard of living and more independence.

In addition to the above analysis from the angles of economic and demographic disciplines, there are a few other approaches of various subjects which examine the determinants of female workforce participation in different ways. Important among these are the neo-classical approach, institutional approach, radical approach, biological approach and anthropological approach.
**Neo-Classical Approach**

The neo-classical explanation for the increasing number of women going for paid employment rests heavily on the impact of income and prices on the behaviour of women. For example, a cross-section study showed that women labour force’s participation and husband’s income were inversely related while a time series study showed the opposite. This contradiction had to be resolved and so attempts were made to study the factors behind the choice made by women between market work leisure and home work. Finally, the contradiction is supposed to have been resolved by showing that they ‘prefer more leisure’, that is the substitution effect is greater than the negative income effect (Rene, 1975; Boserup, 1970).

The neo-classical theory further opines that even the question why the family exists at all is explained in terms of marginal utility and marginal productivity. According to Becker “women hire men as bread winners because men earn more than women in the market and men hire women to bear/rear the children as women have superior skills for the task. “In this way the existing division of labour between sexes is justified as being consistent with the principle of maximization. The neo-classical theorists do not consider the lower earnings of women to be due to social justice but attribute it to small investment in human
capital voluntarily made by women which in turn leads to their lower productivity. This happens because

(a) Women are not in the market during child bearing and rearing periods.
(b) They choose jobs which provide lower opportunity for on-the-job training.
(c) They avoid jobs which require training.

The difference in unemployment rates between men and women is attributed by them to the movement of women in and out of the labour force (Kakwani, 1981). Thus the neo-classical explanations seem to see the role of women as that of adjusting to the market forces. They do not pass any value judgment about the position of women.

**Institutional Approach**

In recent years academic activities have been involved in attempts to develop methodologies to understand better the truth about women’s oppression and exploitation and to integrate patriarchy into theory and theoretical models. These efforts at analyzing and integrating women’s exploitation and oppression into theoretical explanations have focused upon evolving an interdisciplinary approach. This approach, while necessary and crucial, has tended to isolate
women’s studies as a new social science rather than integrating it into existing disciplines. A new field of study dissociates itself from other areas of study. Consequently, gender segregation has taken place. This trend is disturbing as it has led to the general acceptance of women’s studies as a separate paper to be offered only to those students who are interested in them rather than being incorporated into all existing courses to which students are exposed.

People of poor household do not act properly in terms of maximizing their own utility either as consumers or as producers; rather they attempt to maximize the survival of the households as a unit. Neo-classical rationality is more concerned with under-developed, overpopulated countries where the poor find it rational to have more children to add to the family income far beyond what they consume.

This reality is directly opposed to the dominant macro-economic theories of fertility which equate children to ‘consumer durables’ and more recently to ‘household produced goods’ (Schults, 1981). These economists assume that households like firms, behave ‘rationally’ and they maximize utility in the context of scarcity. They can choose to either consume commodities or produce children subject to the usual constraints of income, prices, tastes and time. Thus, the quantity and quality of children, like other goods, are a function of time and the resources allocated to their production and maintenance.
In some neo-classical models children are included as ‘public goods’ where their welfare and consumption are incorporated in the parents’ utility functions. This model, apart from treating children as objects, intensifies women’s earnings for children as a commitment or a responsibility or even a constraint. “Rotten Kid Theorem” assumes male as the head of the household. According to this theorem head of a family reaps rich dividends. If ‘he’ provides generously for everyone, even the most selfish beneficiary ‘rotten kid’ in the family will be motivated to maximize family income and consumption and thereby would internalize all effects of ‘his’ actions on other beneficiaries. Ultimately there will be no free riders in the family.

Another issue central to mainstream economic theory is the unit of analysis taken. A firm is generally taken in the context of working of the market. This does not hold true for a capitalist semi-feudal country with large segments of both economic activity and people in the non market sector. However, even where the household has been taken as unit of analysis the underlying assumption is that it is a homogeneous unit. In fact, it is precisely at this level that the system of production and reproduction interact tightly particularly in agrarian societies where small scale household production dominates. The exclusion of the concept of family from economic theory has important implications for price theory, utility maximization, consumption theory, etc. Since many of the commodities produced at home are substituted for purchased goods what is maximized,
therefore, is a common utility function in which the household and not the individual is the unit of inquiry. This utility function is generally equated with the household head’s utility function. Further, allocation of work and power relations within the family work outside the price mechanism. Family members do not share commodities and work through market transactions within the household.

An alternative model has also been suggested. The unit of analysis being the household, it is family which operates on the basis of ‘co-operative conflicts’ (Sen, 1983). The bargaining problem is one of finding a particular co-operative solution yielding a particular distribution of benefits sensitive to various parameters, including the respective powers of the members of the family. Whether one sees the family as an unit of co-operative ‘conflict’ or of ‘non-antagonistic’ contradiction there is no denying of the importance of carrying out analysis at both inter-household and intra-household levels particularly in underdeveloped subsistence economies where a significant proportion of goods and services is produced in the informal household sector where women are the main workers.

This logically brings us to one of the most glaring lacunae in economic theory. Work in economics is generally equated with market work or paid, i.e. labour power which has an exchange value without getting into the entire debate on the definition of ‘work’. Neo-classical concept of ‘market work’, ‘market time’ is not fully applicable either in subsistence economies or in relation to
gender based division. And, majority of women work in the non-market sector. They are classified as non-workers, non-producers and hence invisible which leads to the underestimation of labour forces as well as the underestimation of their economic contribution.

It is necessary to point out the relationship between change in the definition of work in an agrarian society and women’s activity rates (Anker, Khan and Gupta, 1988). The activity rate for women was 13 percent when workers were defined as ‘paid labour force’ (i.e. persons engaged in wage/salary employment); when the definition used was ‘market oriented labour force’ (i.e. persons in paid labour force plus those engaged in family farm or enterprise that sells some or all of its goods and services) the rate increased to 32 percent. The International Labour Organization (ILO) labour force definition includes persons engaged in national income statistics. According to United Nations (UN) recommendation (i.e. production of primary goods plus processing of primary goods by producers of these goods plus production of other goods by producers of these goods plus production of other goods partly sold and partly consumed) the activity rate for women became 38 percent. The fourth definition includes all the above categories of work plus those persons who perform an activity that contribute to meet the family’s basic needs for goods and services that are generally purchased in industrialized countries. The activity rate here was 9 per cent.
Now it is evident that the definition of work and other conceptual and methodological biases in data systems must be modified.

Further, it is necessary to analyse to what extent house-work functions as a wage subsidy for the market sector. The relationship between patriarchy and development thus assumes significance particularly in relation to the power relationship between men and women within the family. The family is a unit in which production and redistribution of income occur on the basis of material aspects of gender relation and division of labour resulting in conflict and change. The central instrument for maintenance of patriarchy is occupational segregation which reinforces the traditional division of labour. This leads to lower wages for women which maintain their economic dependence on men. Simultaneously, the domestic division of labour reinforces occupational segregation by weakening women’s status in the labour market (Sinha, 1980). In under-developed economies the primary production unit is the household, where non-commodity characteristics are retained along with commodity production. It is necessary to incorporate both in theory and analysis the material basis of house work which is an economic function integral to the systems (Kishnaji, 1980).

Non-market activities have remained out of the scope of non-classical economics. This has been since the rise to dominance of supply and demand theories. This resorts to methods which restrict the incorporation of the wide
variety of conditions under which changes in methods of production, output consumption and distribution take place. They hardly provide a basis for building up an interrelated analysis of a real economy (Bharadwaj, 1988). Gender as other aspects of social relation finds little place in neoclassical economics. In recent times some economists have begun incorporating women’s activities in the market and family maintenance work. Non-market activities have been dealt with primarily by economists in the backward agrarian economies.

Higher entry of women in the market is associated with growing availability of women’s work. This is to show that women have no preferences. Market decides what jobs they would do. However, the dichotomy between home and market work of women should not be carried too far since home is conditioned by the market. While the neo-classical concept maintains that inspite of the segmentation of labour market women get a wage equal to their marginal product, the institutionalists attribute the lower wage of women to labour market segmentation and sex typing of jobs. Division of labour by sex has always been there. At certain stages of economic development the rewards of specialization are equitably distributed between the sexes.

It has been found that even in the advanced stage of capitalism, the differences between men and women cannot be explained merely by the differences in their productivity due to age, schooling or experience. Institutional
economics maintain that sex inequality takes the form of job discrimination and not wage discrimination, i.e. sex discrimination manifests in not unequal pay for equal work but rather an unequal job assignment. They also point out that sex-oriented branding of jobs is also the cause of higher unemployment of women.

The main point that emerges from the institutional standpoint is that the role of women is confined to certain sectors of the economy. It is the market which imposes such a role so that they can be paid lower wages.

**Radical Approach**

This approach can be traced back to Engles’ historical explanation of the dialectical relationship between the development of the means of production, food, theories of property, the state of evolution of monogamy and the subjection of women. This school emphasized the development of means of production through the periods of savagery, barbarism and civilization. At first private property was unknown. In the pastoral stage, when surplus of wealth in terms of cattle, milk and meat was available, the need for private property emerged. It is at this stage that there was a shift from the mother’s right to the father’s right, namely to patriarchal society. Thus as wealth increased, it bestowed on man a more important status in the family than woman. The overthrow of the mother’s right signified the world’s historic defeat of the female sex. Man seized the reins
of control in the house also, while assigning a derogatory and degrading role for women as mere instruments for breeding children.

Hence, the radical approach views women’s labour force participation in a historical perspective. Although they also say that women’s labour force participation outside the household was very much related to the family’s budget requirements, yet they place greater emphasis on change in nature of the family. For example, during the last century, working daughters contributed to the family’s income. But gradually single working girls started keeping their wages for themselves. Thus the old familiar values were replaced by new ones. Due to gradual transformation of family, especially after the second world war, the number of married women offering themselves for paid jobs went up. This brings us to the radical approach which focuses on material and political benefits which capitalists derive from family. They consider that family survived because it served the interests of the capitalists demonstrating the fact that sex inequality in the market was based on sex inequality at home.

For the radicals the overthrow of capitalism is a pre-condition for liberation of women. More important, nevertheless, is the closing of ranks against the patriarchal family structure. The economic independence and the so-called liberation of women in the advanced industrialized countries is seen by the radicals as an illusion. Although for many women the transformation of the
family into industry centred patriarchal capitalism appears to be a liberation, yet it is not so because capitalist exploitation cannot be called liberation. Under patriarchal capitalism women’s oppression does not end, it only takes another form. This is evident in the advanced countries. In US it is believed that there are more than 3 million such family units headed by a divorced or separated mother looking after the children.

The labour market segmentation during the transition from competition to monopoly capitalism arises in response to the needs of capitalists to divide and rule over working class. Even trade unions sometimes pressurize women to stay at home in order to restrict the supply of labour or occupationally segregate them. Hence class struggle and trade unions sometimes go against the interests of women.

**Biological Approach**

Proponents of biological view state that there are some fundamental biological differences which not only distinguish women from men but are also responsible for their secondary status and role in the society. In primitive times many vital and life sustaining functions such as food gathering, hunting, preservation of meat and food stuffs, cleaning and sewing, child bearing and child rearing necessitated division of labour. The way out was allocation of duties and
functions keeping in view biological, structural and other physical differences between males and females.

This approach followed the basic logic that women, because of their child bearing function and lesser mobility, stayed closer to home and assumed domestic rules. Males, because of their greater muscular strength assumed the arduous roles such as hunting and farming and seized power in the society over which they have maintained their control till the present time. Society continues to believe that men should have roles outside their homes where they interact with other people while women should work inside (the home), closer to kitchen because of their child bearing and rearing functions. The male’s role has come to be regarded with value and more power because the only way to achieve political power and authority is the assumption of public roles and interaction with other people. This also explains why the isolated, house-bound female role has been underestimated.

Thus, according to this view, the division of labour in simple societies is based upon the biological differences. Due to child bearing and child rearing functions women are forced to be sedentary. During pregnancy, a woman is dependent on man for fulfillment of her requirements, since during this interval she cannot move freely whereas man is always free; he does not have such interruptions.
In other words, the division of labour in primitive societies was based upon biological factors. Freed from biological imperative the young males could roam out for hunting. Women foraged too, but constrained by the necessities of carrying and nursing babies, stayed closer to home. During this stage the division of labour into public and private domain became universal. The males, due to their contacts with other bands, became knowledgeable about a larger geographical area. The female due to child bearing role stayed home having less contacts with the outside world. The field of women thus became more limited.

Stressing the biological differences between men and women on the basis of the sexual division of labour in society, Murdock suggests that biological differences such as the greater physical strength of men and the fact that women bear children led to gender roles. Given the biological differences between men and women, a sex based division of labour is the most efficient way of organizing society. In a cross-cultural survey of 224 societies ranging from hunting and gathering bands he examines the activities assigned to men and women and finds tasks such as hunting and mining to be predominantly male roles and cooking, water carrying and making and repairing clothes to be largely female roles. He states that “Man with his superior physical strength can better undertake more strenuous tasks, such as mining, quarrying and house building. Not handicapped, as is a woman by the psychological burdens of pregnancy and nursing, he can range a further field to hunt, to fish, to herd and to trade. “Women are at no
advantage, however, in lighter tasks which can be performed in or near the home, like the gathering of vegetables, the preparation of food, etc. as due to biological functions of child bearing a woman is tied to home. Because of her physique she is attached to less strenuous tasks. Murdock finds that sexual division of labour is present in all the societies in his sample and concludes that “the advantage inherent in a division of labour by sex presumably accounts for its universality”.

Beneria (1982) also talks of the sexually determined “instrumental” and “experience” based division of labour. According to him women play the role of emotional leader in the family whereas the husband is the “instrumental” leader. He writes that the fundamental explanation of the allocation of roles between the biological sexes lies in the fact that bearing and rearing of children establish a strong relation of mother to the small child. Thus because mothers bear and rear children they have closer and stronger relationship with them. Criticizing this approach, Ellis says that problems of man and woman cannot be a question of comparative merits of the two sexes. Mankind is one. Men and women are two aspects of one essence. Therefore, the question of the superiority or inferiority of either sex does not arise. However different they may be the two sexes are designed for each other and are complementary to each other.
**Anthropological Approach**

Biological fact is not enough to provide an adequate answer to the question of inferior status of women. The task is to discover how the nature of woman has been affected through the course of history. People who believe in the anthropological quest begin with the assumption that human behaviour is largely directed and determined by culture. Thus norms, values and roles are culturally determined and socially transmitted. According to this perspectives gender roles are product of culture rather than of biology. The sexual divisions of labour is supported and justified by a belief and value system which implies that gender roles are normal, natural, right and proper. One example is that boys are rewarded for their aggressive physical behaviour, whereas girls who are aggressive or “tomboyish”, i.e. climb trees (masculine character) are generally punished. Crying in a boy is frowned upon as being “sissy” or “being girlish” (feminine behaviour). Thus it is culture that creates inequality and not biology. Many researchers have criticized the biological theory of division of roles. Critiques of this perspective argue that biological determinism is insufficient to explain the subordination of women as it is based on simple brute strength. It would seem logical that as civilization progressed and physical strength became less important the position of women should have improved.
Whyte (1982) observed that biological subordination is not the result of a predetermined biological handicap. She says that child bearing is represented as an external handicap for females. But the child bearing as a disability is relatively a recent conception. It did not exist in the primitive society. Thus according to her, attributing inferior stand is a false proposition. It is true that we must view the fact of biology in the light of anthropological, economic, social, and psychological contexts. The enslavement of female and limitations of her various powers are extremely important facts. The body of woman is one of the essential elements but the body is not enough to define her.

Criticizing the biological approach, some researchers observe that it is an error to assume that female is by nature sedentary whereas the male is by nature active and superior. Such activity differences do not exist between males and females and to a large extent these would seem to be secondary differences and not primary ones. Evaluation of culture as superior to nature is the basic reason for devaluation of women. Women are universally defined as closer to nature because their bodies and physiological functions are more concerned with natural processes surrounding the reproduction of the species. Further, Women’s social role as mother is also seen as closer to nature. They are primarily responsible for the socialization of the young. Infants and young children are seen as ‘barely human’ (as one step away from nature) because their cultural base is small compared to adults. Women’s close relationship with young children further
associates them with nature. Since the mother’s role is linked with family, the family itself is regarded much closer to nature as compared to the activities and institutions outside the family. Thus activities such as politics, warfare and religion are seen as being away from nature and also as superior to domestic tasks. Finally, women’s psyche her psychological make-up is defined as closer to nature because women are concerned with childcare and primary socialization. They develop personal, intimate and particularistic relationships with others especially with their children. Following Levi Straus, it is the men who are engaged in creating social bonds. Men benefit more than women from these social bonds and thus the division of labour between the two sexes is a hierarchal one.

The fact is that traits such as aggressiveness, courage, independence, sexual activity, nationality, passivity and many others, which are considered either “masculine” or “feminine” are as lightly linked to sex as are the clothing and the manners that a society at given period assigns to either sex. Sir Henry Maine was one of the early theoreticians who wrote about the natural superiority of man over woman. His view is that the patriarchal systems of authority was the original and universal system of social organization. The family was the original unit and the eldest male parent held supreme authority in the household. From the family, such authority had been extended into clans, from clans into tribes and so men always had been the rulers. To conclude, anthropologists emphasize that culture
is the main determinant of unequal distribution of roles among men and women in work participation in any existing hum society.

A brief look at the various theoretical approaches on the issue of working women shows that the role of women is an effect of market. The neo-classical theorists see women’s behaviour and role as one of adjusting to the market forces, while the institutionalists show that women have hardly any choice because it is the market which decided the work a woman would do and thereby pays her a low wage by segregating her in the labour market. Radicals point out that the historical growth of capitalism has found different ways of exploiting women both in the family and in the market. Increase in the number of female headed households further shows how patriarchal capitalism, by giving women the illusion of liberation, actually exploits them. Thus, there is a “reciprocal relationship between economic development and the development of the household. Sources of modern economic cases can only be fully understood by historians. They examine the development of the household with particular reference to the role of women and their participation in the labour market.

Female Participation - Demand and Supply Factors

The Supply Dimension

While one can visualize differential behaviour of women in the labour market according to their class position, one aspect shared by all sections of
women is the sole responsibility for all domestic work regardless of the load of her outside commitments or her contribution to the family’s income. The strain of this double burden implies that they have little time to spare to acquire new skills and are willing to accept inferior jobs at low wages closer to their homes. Another feature of female employment is that the decision regarding work is taken according to the needs of the family and not on the terms of their employment. Thus in poor households the entry of women into the labour force is used as a household strategy of survival.

Agricultural labour households form the lowest rungs of the rural class hierarchy and constitute a very vulnerable section of the population. Real wage earnings of these households fluctuated with the vagaries of the monsoon. The actual occupational structure observed at any point in time is the result of the interplay of supply and demand characteristics of labour. It is difficult to delineate these interacting forces since both are determined by the prevailing historical-structural context which varies from region to region. The limited occupational mobility of women is brought out by the fact that in most cases the present status of female workers is matched with the types of jobs they are available for. Occupational mobility is further restricted by the burden of domestic chores and social barriers on their physical mobility.
Demand Dimension

The entry of women into labour market may be used as a household strategy to increase net incomes by the relatively better-endowed households or to maintain households’ real incomes by the poor households. In the event of an increasing demand for labour in agriculture and rising agricultural wages the former type of households use women family workers on their own farms during the busy season. This helps to speed up the agricultural operation and save on wage expenditure. Women from these households are also brought into family farm work when the male members take up more remunerative agricultural or non-agricultural wage employment.

An increasing specialization of female labour in certain agricultural operations in particular crops would imply an increase in the demand for female labour. Moreover, there has been an increase in female employment in non-agricultural activities in rural areas, leading to slight shift in the structure of the work force. This partly reflects increase in the demand for female labour in non-agriculture putting pressure on the supply of female labour to agriculture. Both these factors help to prop up the wages in the agricultural sector through competition for labour.

Overall, a balance appears to be maintained between the total demand and supply of female labour so that real wages are maintained and even increased
slightly. The answer to the phenomenon of stability of real wages in agriculture perhaps lies in the fact that the supply of female labour has not risen more than the demand. If the supply of female has been increasing, the demand is also increasing which helps to hold up real wages in the agricultural sector.

2.2 Review of Literature

It is only recently that issues pertaining to women’s economic contribution, spatial and temporal variations in their participation rates, the effects of development on their economic opportunities etc are attracting overwhelming attention by social scientists. Earlier writings on women centred around their social position and their importance in being mothers and house keepers. Their economic role was considered as either marginal or subsidiary. The most celebrated writing on women, however came from J.S.Mills\(^1\) famous book on the ‘Subjection of Women” in which he noted the importance of earning for the overall dignity of women. Hence, in this section, an attempt has been made to review the earlier studies relating to women’s work participation.

2.2.1 Status of Women

According to the study Levitan, Quinn and Staines\(^2\) (1971) full time working women in the United States are concentrated in jobs with lower pay and lower prestige than men. Women are paid less than men in spite of comparable work and qualifications. Women are paid low often, at a level below subsistence needs and few women of any class had expectations of anything letter.

Premilla Kapur\(^3\) in another study (1974) finds out the reasons for women’s work. She says that women work not because of economic necessity but because they want to have economic independence, individual status or intellectual realisation of some of their sociological needs.

A study of Inter State differences by Leela Gulati\(^4\) focused on the relationship between the economic and demographic factors and female work participation. The study does not by any means exhaust all the economic and demographic factors to which female work participation could possibly be related and a more diaggregate approach at a district or taluk level could be tried.

---


Micro level studies at the village level present highly contrasting scenario across regions or even within the same region. Most of these studies emphasise the importance of socio-cultural factors such as caste and other taboos and/or negative influence of landholding or income. The survey of villages in Bihar and Gujarat revealed that female participation in economic activity outside home is negatively activated with their responsibility within home.

In Sharaya Mhatre’s study (1978) of women in banking a sample of 165 individuals, from seven nationalised banks were drawn. The study has concluded that very few women are in senior position in banks and most of them are unmarried. The management has favoured women employees because they act as a check on the union secretary and are tactful with clients.

K.P. Singh (1979) in ‘Status of Women and Population Growth in India’, tried to find out the factors responsible for the rapid growth of population. The study supported the hypothesis that the higher the status of women the lower the fertility and vice versa. He feels that the social status of women is considered to be one of the factors that are related to fertility and population growth.


Jamal A. Badawi\textsuperscript{7} in his study stated that the family, society and ultimately the whole of mankind is treated by Islam on an ethical basis. Differentiation in sex is neither a credit for a drawback for the sexes. Therefore, when we talk about status of women in Islam it should not lead us to think that Islam has no specific guidelines, limitations, responsibilities and obligations for men. What makes one valuable and respectable in the eyes of Allah, the Creator of mankind and the universe, is neither one’s prosperity, position, intelligence, physical strength nor beauty, but only one’s Allah – consciousness and awareness (taqwa). However, since in the Western culture and in cultures influenced by it, there exists a disparity between men and women there is more need for stating Islam’s position on important issued in a clear way

Lalitha Devi’s\textsuperscript{8} (1982) “Status and Employment of Women in India” examined the role of white collar employment in contributing to higher status among women. The author explains that the employment has given women an opportunity to shoulder responsibility, play new roles, react with new people, face new situations etc. The effective performance of these new roles exploded the myth of female inferiority. They participate in socially meaningful and prestigious programmes.

Marine S. Shaul\(^9\) (1982) while making an international assessment on the status of women in local governments comments that there is no country in the world today where women have equal status with men in all of the major areas of life. Few women have held important positions but often, the women who have held national offices are from upper class families with a history of political participation or are highly educated or single. In most developing countries, low level of education has led to women not being aware of their rights.

In Lalitha Devis\(^10\) study (1988) of both employed and unemployed women it is believed that participation in the activities of voluntary organisation increases the status of women. Her study further showed that 23 per cent of the employed women played a very active role in their organisations while only 5 per cent of the unemployed took such an active role in the organisational activities.

The study conducted at the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) by Zachariah et.al\(^11\) (1994), focussed on the demographic changes in Kerala in the 1980’s and their determinants. Three districts Ernakulam, Palakkadu and Malappuram were selected for the study. According to the authors, one of the most intriguing mortality differentials is with respect to work status of parents.

Children of working mothers tend to have higher mortality rates than non-working mothers. The infant mortality rates for working and non working mothers are 54 and 29 respectively for the period 1980-89. The probable reason cited are: the shorter duration of breast feeding and the lesser amount of time the mother spends with the child. The joint effect of working status of the father and mother on infant and neo-natal mortality shows that infant mortality rates are higher among children where both father and mother are working. This may be due to the negative effect of mother’s absence.

Krishnaji\textsuperscript{12} (1995) has analysed the impact of female work status on child survival with 1981 census data and found that in all the states working mothers experience a greater child loss than non-working mothers. He arrived at the conclusion that in India work among women can be closely identified with poverty and this identification of poverty of a lasting kind with working mothers results in poor nutrition and health care among their children.

2.2.2 Role of Education

In a different study by Indira Devi\textsuperscript{13} (1987) to identify the changes emerging from education and employment of women in family, a sample size of 160 couples of Visakapattanam was taken. The major finding was that women’s education and employment had helped to change the role performance, decision making and behaviour patterns, for egalitarian relations.

Alagh N. Sharma and Seema Singh\textsuperscript{14} (1993) offer a detailed study of the issues relating to female migration in India. With education, the number of job-seekers among women tends to increase considerably and at a rate much faster than among their male counterparts.

Studies by the Tamil Nadu Muslim Graduates association\textsuperscript{15} over the last few years revealed that an increase of 10 per cent in the female literacy rate reduces the total fertility rate by less than half child per woman and about 2.3 children per woman with 80 per cent female literacy. The analysis of data for 15 major states covering 96 per cent of the country shows that female literacy and


\textsuperscript{15} Documentation on Women and Children, July-December, 1998, p.23.
education are inversely related to the birth rates, death rates and infant mortality rates. Literacy in India means completion of the primary stage of education and therefore the anticipated results have not been achieved. Better results were seen in women who have completed at least the secondary education (Documentation on Women and Children, 1998).

2.2.3 Women Earnings and their Contribution to the Family

Prabhai Rai\(^{16}\) (1975) has studied the Chicken Embroidery industry of Lucknow. It was estimated that about 45000 workers were engaged in chicken embroidery industry. About 97 per cent of the workers were women. The study also revealed that the women in this industry supplemented their family income by this work. A large number of them were deserted women and widows.

Singh\(^{17}\) (1980) reported that in a study of self-employed women in the settlement colonies of Delhi, a very small proportion of women was considered primary earners although 81 per cent of them stated that they worked to provide basic support to their families. The author points out the dependency assumption that a woman cannot be a primary earner as long as there is an adult male in the


\(^{17}\)K.P. Singh, Status of Women and Population, Growth In India, Munishiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1980.
household. All household surveys underestimate the economic contribution of women to the household.

An exploratory research was conducted by Joshi\(^{18}\) (1988) to evaluate the impact of women’s employment on work processes, organisational policies and practices. The apparent differences in work values of men and women were found out by ‘t’-test. It was observed that though women had longer years of work experience, they were earning less than men by doing non-technical jobs.

Desai and Jain\(^ {19}\) (1994) in their study on rural south India noted that with the supposed conflict between children’s need for care and mother’s need for income, the role of domestic labour of women tend to be ignored. In addition to the domestic activities like cooking, cleaning etc. women spend considerable time making cow-dung cakes and collecting firewood etc which are rarely considered as economic activity. Although they are likely highly productive they are called “marginal economic activity” or “expenditure saving activity”.


2.2.4 Women Participation Rate

Ramachandran\textsuperscript{20} (1964) on the basis of a survey in Bombay found that a higher proportion of women who were in the labour force were non-collegiate and were from households where the head of the family was past middle age and where the per capita income was low. He further emphasised that the work participation rate of educated women was already low and more than 70 per cent of the educated women were non-workers in 1961. If the overall trend towards falling work participation rate of women continues the percentage of employed women from the educated sections could get still lower.

Kamala Nath\textsuperscript{21} (1970) examines the geographical differences in work participation ratio among women in different states and districts. It is found in industry-wise analysis of female-male ratio that women are represented in household sector of each industry and their number is small in modern organised sectors. Moreover, it is found that work participation of urban women is lower than that of rural women and that of literate women significantly lower than that of illiterate.


Patel and Dho Lakia\textsuperscript{22} (1978) examined the effect of certain development variables like income, marital status, child rearing, and caste on female participation rates and concluded that female participation rates tend to have a ‘U’-shape curve with respect to income and that married women tend to have a higher participation rate than those not burdened with a family responsibility. Lastly socio-cultural factors have a significant bearing on the levels of female participation rate.

A study on the decline of women’s participation in the workforce of the textile industry in Bombay by Mishra\textsuperscript{23} (1986) revealed that industrialisation has discriminated heavily against women. Decline of women workers occurred through a policy of not recruiting women employees. The main issue was not that of equal pay but of equal opportunities for employment.

Chandhury\textsuperscript{24} (1987) concluded that the increasing work participation of women had not been able to improve their lot and their share of developmental gains has remained much below what their contribution could justify. In the


process of technological advancement, female workers have been displaced in many spheres. The energy and time consuming hard work coupled with calorie deficit in their food intake not only whittles down the working capacity of women but also heavily tells upon the upbringing of children and leads to increased child mortality. The study further revealed that the technology displacement of women labour on the one hand and lower wages rate to them on ground of productivity on the other, should be prevented through proper training to equip them to efficiently deal with developed techniques of production. There should be a proper estimate of the contribution of women workforce to economic development in the domestic sphere as well as in the peasant farming in order to give them a larger degree of economic security and sense of self respect in the male dominated society.

According to the study of Malthier and Rogers\textsuperscript{25} (1987) in Britain, although female entry into some occupations such as the professions has been quite rapid, the over all employment distribution has only been marginally affected by these changes. Most women work in occupation that has been traditionally female dominated, and, as relatively few men have entered these occupations, sex inequalities in occupational distribution remains substantial.

Yoshie Ota\textsuperscript{26} (1999), President of Japan Institute of Workers Evolution has presented a paper on the title “Women in the Labour Force in Japan, Challenges and Opportunities for the New Millennium”. She has highlighted the challenges faced by the working women of Japan where 39.6 per cent of the total working population constitute female employees. A significant number of women choose not to participate in the work force. Almost 40 per cent of the female University graduates have never entered the job market. Even working women choose to take advantage of flexible and less demanding part-time jobs.

The paper of Muchlberger U\textsuperscript{27} (2000) shows a theoretical connection between labour economics and sociology within an institutional approach, coupled with a gender order perspective and provides a useful framework for analysis. He concludes that the determinants of women’s labour market behaviour are interrelated with a whole set of social and economic institutions which form a specific employment system.


By using the 1991 Census of Canada, Robert Carson and Peter Sheldon\textsuperscript{28} (2000) have estimated the labour market participation rates of female residents at Alberta. It was found that marital status was an insignificant determinant of labour market participation whereas the presence of children had a powerful influence on participation besides age, years of education and income of other members.

Angela\textsuperscript{29} (2001) has explained the factors influencing the labour force decisions either part time or full time. She has also studied the relationship between motherhood ideology and maternal labour force participation.

2.2.5 Working Condition

Based on 1969 working conditions, Cohen\textsuperscript{30} (1971) studied the wage differential between males and females working full time, full year and calculated an annual difference of $5000. Adjusting the differences in pay for the working age group between 22 and 64 for self-employed persons with unstable jobs and hours of work and also taking into account the fringe benefits, absenteeism, seniority, education and unionization, Cohen found these differences to be $2500


or 51 per cent of the original difference. He attributed this large difference to the concentration of women in lower paying jobs.

A study was undertaken (1986) by the department of historical studies in the Mother Theresa University in Kodaikanal. This study aims to find out the life style and working conditions of women. It has revealed a lot of interesting details. The women workers require a great deal of physical strength and energy. A critical account of the structural changes in the employment of women, presents the changing structure and rise in the working population. It was 175 million in 1971 and in 1981, it had increased to 220 million. There is a revolutionary character in the changing rate of growth of women employed.

2.2.6. Women Discrimination

According to Banerjee (1985) women’s economic position was worsening because their role in the traditional economy slowly became redundant while their gains in the modern sector remained negligible. In a study about garment industry, it was found that home-based production system provided cheap labour to the industry. The natural skills of women were on sale at cheap


rates in home-based work and the availability of large number of women contributed to the low wages among them.

Jeyalakshmi\(^{33}\) (1986) is of the opinion that the women’s participation in the work force is deceptive as they underpresent the number of women actually engaged in productive work and underestimate the value of their work. Besides this, their economic contribution as labour at home is not recognized as it lacks monetary or market value.

Banerjee Nirmala’s\(^{34}\) (1989) study of Bengal showed that women were pushed out by men when they needed jobs. Even in tea industry where women were considered essential, they lost their jobs in times of depression in favour of men. Computer technology has replaced the routine work of women.

According to the survey of the 46.58\% per cent of women who reported facing harassment and discrimination at work, a majority said they faced mental harassment caused by acts such as writing, ogling, winking, passing of lewd


remarks, reciting of obscene ballads or songs, abusing, lambasting and sexual gestures (Documentation on Women and Children, 1988).\textsuperscript{35}

A study by Mehta\textsuperscript{36} (1989) was to examine the extent of differences in employment and earning opportunities among similarly educated men and women. The study revealed that there exists inequalities in employment opportunities and earnings among men and women despite similar levels of education.

Shoma Chatterjee\textsuperscript{37} (1990) in the article entitled “Women in Management an uphill Task” has observed that in the patriarchal set up, all organisations in the private and public sector have been conditioned to accept only men in position of authority. But once women have entered the scene, the barriers are slowly breaking down by virtue of sheer grit, industry and their desire to prove their own worth in a male dominated world. Once the initial burden of proving their credibility and their commitment to the job has been established without doubt, the path is comparatively clear and the discrimination on grounds of being a woman begins to diminish visibly.

\textsuperscript{35}Documentation on Women and Children, July-December 1988, p.19.


\textsuperscript{37}Shoma Chatterjee (1990); “Women in Management: An Uphill Task”, \textit{The Economic Times}, June 13, p.8.
The study conducted by Bhanumathi Vasudevan\textsuperscript{38} (1992) covering all the Indian officers of the central government organisation threw up some rather disturbing findings, mainly that women were discriminated against in recruitment, advertising, in selection procedure, in work allocation, in career advancement and in personal ways, by other colleagues. Further, the findings revealed discriminatory attitudes at all levels of staff from drivers to executives.

Nearly 50 per cent of working women surveyed in a recent study complained of gender discrimination and physical and mental harassment. The study (1997) carried out for the National Commission for Women (NCW) covered some 1200 women across India in the urban and rural areas and at various levels in the organised and unorganised sectors.

\textbf{2.27 Dual Role}

Kala Rani\textsuperscript{39} (1976) studied educated married working women and discussed the dual role of working women. Most working women in her sample took up jobs to make use of their high or professional education which in turn afforded them a high standard of living. The study also attempts to find out the husband’s attitude towards respondent’s work. The study proves the hypothesis


\textsuperscript{39}Kalarani, (1976), \textit{Role Conflict in Working Women}, Chetana Publications, New Delhi.
wrong that the working women’s husbands do not help in household chores. The author suggested part-time employment for women that would suit a large number of housewives keen to fulfill professional interests and provide useful social contacts.

J.M. Unwalla’s (1977) “A Study of Women Executives at Work and at Home” undertaken for her Ph.D in 1977 has probed into the phenomenon of the working women and listed its implications at work and house. She finds that women choose to work to prove themselves and attain social ascendancy. The study attempts to know the attitude of superiors towards working women. It shows that men in general accept a female boss just as well as they would a male boss.

A sociological study of women in the police force has been done by Amarjit Mahajan (1982) who has concentrated his attention on the motivational factors behind women entering the police force. He has examined the problem from the historical perspective and has also paid attention to the role factor.

---

A study conducted by Hazel D’ Lima\(^{42}\) (1983) titled “Women in Local Government in Maharashtra” deals with the role of women in local bodies namely Zillaparishad and Panchayat Samiti. The study traces the social emergence of women in the country, socio-economic, political background of women members in the Panchyat Samitis and Zillaparishads.

Radha Devi and Ravindran\(^{43}\) (1985) concluded that the burden of household duties might not always create a barrier to the employment of women. Women may participate in work outside home and would toil at home either because of their needs or the pressure from their husbands. What really matters in the context of increased work participation of women, is employment opportunities and not relief from household activities as such.

Nahid Sarikhani\(^{44}\) in his study stated that Muslim women’s work participation in India based on population census in 2001. In this study has been used of descriptive research. Results have indicated that Muslim constitutes 13.4 per cent of India’s population. Indeed, India has the second largest Muslim population in the world. Sex ratio among Muslim population at national level is


936. Illiterate rate of Muslim women is high and they have not been able to take full advantage in society. There also exists a wide gap between the works participation rate of males and females. In additional, a significant part of Muslim women are recorded as unskilled work sources in the country.