CHAPTER - 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The studies on labour supply in empirical and theoretical labour economics literature do not give special emphasis on female labour supply. Female labour supply behaviour and its determinants is conveniently relegated to the secondary position under the pretext of invisibility of female labour force and unavailability of data. This causes major statistical deviations and lacunae in policy making as women constitute almost half the population and over time the number of female workers has been consistently on the rise (especially so in developed countries) thus representing a substantial part of the labour force.

Male labour supply is more responsive to the income effect than substitution effect, thus depicting a negative sloping labour supply curve whereas female labour supply is affected more by substitution effect than income effect, thus depicting a forward bending curve. For women leisure is not a perfect substitute for work as participation in unpaid work constitutes a huge chunk of the time supposedly considered to be devoted to leisure.

In the recent years research on female labour supply has been attended to by a number of researchers. Labour force participation represents the issue of labour supply, or the “decision” to either participate in paid labour market activities or to remain inactive (Chaudhary, Verick, 2014). Caste, class and gender hierarchies determine the factors affecting the “decisions” of women to participate in the labour market (Sen, Sen 1985). Empirical studies examining the employment situation in India (Ghose 2004, Masood and Ahmad 2009, Srivastava and Srivastava 2010, Shaw 2013) have noted that labour force participation rates (LFPR) and work force participation rates (WFPR) for females in India lags considerably behind the ‘norm’ for developing countries India has one of the lowest female labour force participation (FLFP) rates—measured as the share of women that are employed or seeking work as a share of the working-age female population — among emerging markets and developing countries. At around 33 percent at the national level in 2012, India’s FLFP rate is well below the global average of around 50 percent and East Asia average of around 63 percent (IMF, 2015). India’s gender gap in participation (between males and females) is the one of the widest among G-20 economies at 50 percent (Das et al., 2015). Furthermore, female labour force
participation has been on a declining trend in India, in contrast to most other regions, particularly since 2004/05.

Neo-classical microeconomic theory postulates that in the basic static labour supply model, labour markets are assumed to be competitive (which is not true in developing countries like India) (Mammen and Paxson, 2000) and labour supply decisions depend on the relative strength of the income and substitution effects. The expected wage of a woman worker is the opportunity cost of her time, once she is in paid employment. A higher wage has a substitution effect and also a countervailing income effect if it outweighs the substitution effect. On the other hand, increased unearned income (for example, by the spouse or through social transfers) will only exercise an income effect on women’s labour supply decisions, resulting in a potential withdrawal from the labour market (Mammen and Paxson, 2000).

Beyond the basic labour supply model, the ‘collective’ household models and the ‘unitary’ household models also explain the labour supply behaviour of households and its implications for women’s participation in economic activities. The ‘collective’ household labour supply model, is explicitly based on individual preferences and states that control over resources influences the bargaining within the household (Chiappori, 1992). This model implies that women’s increased control over household resources may increase their welfare by enhancing their bargaining power. But empirical evidence on ‘collective model’ in developing countries have hinted that women receive fewer productive resources within the households and therefore have less bargaining power (Mammen and Paxson, 2000). The standard ‘unitary’ model considers the household as the decision-making unit {the model assumes that there exists a single utility function for the household and it does not take into account the underlying preferences of the household members. Pooled household income plays a role in the decision-making process, while its distribution across household members does not matter (Becker, 1965)}.

Feminists have criticised this model for its treatment of the household as a homogeneous decision making unit, devoid of any power relations, authority and hierarchy. Its consideration of the household as an isolated unit, independent of social pressures, norms or values has been challenged. This concept is highly questionable in a country like India, where very few households are either homogeneous or independent (Sen and Sen, 1985). In rural India, it has been observed that an improvement in the household’s economic position in terms of access to land or income often leads to withdrawal of women from paid work.
outside the household farms or firms. The norms of the traditional caste hierarchy function towards restricting the mobility of women belonging to upper castes. The dimensions or factors affecting the decision and ability of women to engage in the labour market are mostly overlapping (Verick, 2014) like class, caste, gender and religion. Based on these, the thesis also delves into the literature on ‘Intersectionality’, explaining the overlap of gender, class, caste and religion in explaining female employment and the relations emerging thereof. The literature is being divided as follows:

i. Economic theories on determinants of female labour supply.
ii. Studies on women and work in India
iii. The problem of intersectionality between women’s work, caste, class, religion and other variables

2.2 Economic Theories on Determinants of Female Labour Supply

The theoretical basis for explaining female labour force participation can be compartmentalised into three main paradigms (a) Neo-classical, (b) Feminist or Radical, and (c) Marxian. The economic theory explaining labour supply is quite often gender-neutral, so analytical and empirical studies attempting to explain labour force participation earlier have, in general, failed to capture the diversity in women’s work. However, an attempt is made in this section to explain the theoretical formulations relating to female labour force participation.

2.2.1 The neo-classical framework and its critiques

The neoclassical paradigm, with its focus on male full-time labour in the capitalist manufacturing sectors, paid no attention to female labour. So, at the outset, neo-classical economics had nothing to do with the issues of gender either in terms of conceptualisation or methodology. However, in response to the growing importance of women in the labour market, it extended the analysis to include women’s issues since the Seventies. (Gronau, 1977: Heckman and MaCurdy, 1980).

Household economics, an extension of neo-classical economics, initiated by economists such as Jacob Mincer (1962), Gary S. Becker (1965), G. C. Cain (1966), and R. Gronau (1977) tried to explain female labour force participation in terms of household characteristics. Mincer (1962) attempted to answer the question with the focus on the supply characteristics
of married women. He argued that the decision whether the wife should enter the paid labour force or not could involve not only the income and substitution effects of market work versus leisure but also the income and substitution effect of market versus unpaid house work. Cain (1966) tried to explain the difference in the labour force activity of white and non-white married women based on Mincer’s model using various sources of aggregate and disaggregate data. Becker (1965) and Bowen, Finegen (1969) elaborated the basic economic theory of the household. Their theory rests upon the assumption that the household is a consumer as well as decision-making unit. The decision-making process is aimed at maximising the well-being of the household which is constrained by time and financial constraints. Thus, the household faces the problem of allocating time between market work and leisure. Another study by Morgan, Serigaldin, and Bacrawldt (1975), which analysed the determinants of working wives, found that three variables which were overwhelmingly important were husband’s income, wife’s education, and wife’s age. Paukert (1982) reported that large-scale entry of women into labour force in the industrialised countries has been the result of non-economic – educational, demographic, and social – factors, as also economic factors such as monetisation of the household economy, rise in female wage, and rapid development of the service sector.

Several studies conducted in developed countries have identified the strong influence of household characteristics on the labour force participation of women. Treiman, Terrel (1975) and McClendon (1976) found that the mother’s educational and occupational characteristics were more powerful determinants of women’s occupational status than father’s. Smoke (1981) found that educational attainment increased women’s willingness to work, improved their employment opportunities, and raised their earning potential. Smoke’s (1981) study of five developing countries reported a curvilinear relationship between female education and employment. Presser and Baldwin (1980) found that the presence of young children affected the married women’s labour force participation adversely. Mason and Palan (1981) found that household’s economic structure was also a major determinant of female labour force participation. Lustig and Rendon (1979) found that high economic status of the household may promote wife’s employment partly as a result of egalitarian attitude and higher educational attainment of wives. A detailed survey of theoretical and empirical research on female labour supply is given in Killingsworth (1983) and Heckman, Killingsworth (1986).

By the late Seventies the adequacy of focussing on women in isolation, propagated by the
theory of “add women and stir”, which seemed to have become a dominant practice, began to be questioned. Many influential writings appeared in the Seventies on the distinction between biological sex and social gender (Edholm, et al. 1977, Rubin 1975). It came to be accepted that women and gender are not interchangeable concepts and doing research on women is quite different from doing research on gender. So, the difference of research on gender and on sexuality as well as its overlapping theme and method got recognised. Gender studies highlight the power structure where ‘power’ is a relational category and not a structural one. Hence, it talks about the ‘relationships’. Understanding women in relation with others is captured by gender studies which ‘women’s studies’ may not be able to.

The propagators of this school wanted to develop a theory of gender which was integrated into and informed by the general analysis of the world economy (Pearson, 1981). The new theoretical approach illustrates an innovative and systematic way of thinking about ‘gender’ using economic tools of analysis. The insights gained from the way gender works at the micro-economic level are in turn linked to macro-economic policy concerns. The theoretical underpinning for this framework is provided by the ‘sex-role theory’ (Connell, 1987) which treats households as systems in resource allocation (Sims Feldstein and Poats, 1989). Gender analysis is described as a diagnostic tool for planners to overcome inefficient resource allocation (Overholt et al, 1985). The inter-relationship among economics, gender, and household variables has only recently begun to receive the attention of researchers.

Neo-classical economists following Becker’s (1965) model of ‘new home economics’ failed to consider what husband versus wife may control or do within the household. Accordingly, they treat the household as a unitary entity, for which a single production function is sufficient. Thus, according to the neo-classical paradigm, it does not matter who works and who brings in the income. Feminist economists like Elson (1993) are less optimistic than neo-classical economists about the ability of the markets to provide gender equity. Whitehead (1990) attempts to fill the gap between the neo-classical models that treat the household as a single unit and other models that treat men and women within the household separately (Chiappori,1992). She challenges the view that economic separation between husbands and wives is total. The gender-efficiency approach advocated by Kabeer (1991) and Young (1993) highlights the importance of directing economic resources to women and the need for action-oriented political strategies to bring about women’s empowerment.

The general theory of choice in the neo-classical economics views the decision of a woman to
participate in the labour force as a choice between work and leisure which is influenced by changes in wage rate. A change in wage rate produces two effects on labour supply. The ‘substitution effect’, produces more work because it raises the cost of leisure relative to work. The other, called ‘income effect’ produces less work because it increases purchasing power. Generally for men as well as for single women, income effect was supposed to outweigh substitution effect. As work within home does not constitute their major activity, their choice was narrowed down to either market work or leisure. But this theory was criticised mainly for its limited application (Sweet, 1973). The theory, for instance, was unable to explain the labour force participation of married women for whom domestic work is an important variable in the choice structure. Thus, it was emphasised that analysis of female labour force participation should take place within the context of the family or household.

Applying the concept of income and substitution effect, Mincer (1962) and Cain (1966) proposed a theory of labour supply that applies particularly to married women. Within the context of the family, a rise in income has different effects on its members. For wives, housework is a major responsibility and thus an important substitute for time. Thus, in their case, substitution effect could be larger than for other adults. On the whole, female labour supply increases when the substitution effect is much greater than the income effect. Becker (1965), Bowen, Finegan (1969) and Berk, Berk (1983) later elaborated on this basic theory of choice. All these theories rest upon the assumption that the household is a consuming as well as decision-making unit. In this household model, known as ‘new household economics’, there are three categories of consumables: market goods, (goods and services purchased for a price) home goods (goods and services produced and consumed at home), and leisure (time not spent in market or home work). In a collective decision-making process aimed at maximising the well-being of the household, they face two constraints, time and financial resources. Participation of women in the labour force thus becomes an outcome of decision-making of the family regarding income and leisure.

2.2.2 Labour market discrimination

In formal economic terms ‘Discrimination’ is when members of a minority are treated differently (less favourably) than members of a majority group with identical productive characteristics. The question is, then, whether this is also seen in the labour market. Discrimination in the labour market can occur in many forms: differential treatment on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity or age (Haagsma, 2015).
The general definition for labour market discrimination used by economists is: “a situation in which persons who provide labour market services and who are equally productive in physical or material sense are treated unequally in a way that is related to an observable characteristic such as race, ethnicity or gender” (Altonji and Blank, 1999). Equally materially productive implies ‘capable of producing the same number and quality of output using same inputs’. Treated unequally implies ‘arriving at a systematically different outcome as a result of the actions of external agents’. There are large differences in the labour market outcomes of men and women. These differences concern work force participation, employment, wage, education and occupation. While there is a broad agreement on the size of these observed differences, there are at least two polar hypotheses on their proximate causes, the first of which states that there is no discrimination and the observed variation in economic outcomes across worker groups (male and female) is due to their inherent differences in material productivity. This hypothesis also attributes the differences in outcome to voluntary choices and preferences. The second hypothesis states that the variation in outcomes is a result of discrimination.

Different types of discrimination are possible at several points over the course of a worker’s lifetime. They are; (a) Pre-Market discrimination: This is the discrimination faced before the worker enters the labour force and it can affect the worker via low parent health and education, impoverished neighbourhoods and unequal schooling systems. Women are very vulnerable to this kind of discrimination. (b) Market discrimination: This may manifest itself through prejudice, imperfect competition and legislation, which may in turn result in two major types of discrimination, viz. (i) Earnings discrimination: The earnings of equally materially productive workers depend on their group affiliations. (ii) Occupational discrimination: Impediments hinder certain groups of equally materially productive workers from entering particular occupations. The effects of pre market and market discrimination are intertwined. Becker (1957) was the first to suggest that discrimination could adversely affect minority workers through prejudice by employers, co-workers and consumers.

Neo-classical theory views occupational segmentation in the labour market as an extension of the biological division of labour. Owing to their early entry into the labour market, men have greater access to specialised skills. Marginal differences in the initial skill levels are compounded and result in the segregation of women and assigning to them of non-specialised and unskilled jobs. Using the neo-classical framework a few hypotheses have come up to
explain labour market discrimination. They are (a) **Overcrowding Hypothesis** which states that women over crowd in unskilled jobs leading to low wages and poor working conditions. It is the prejudice of employers which deny women access to skilled jobs, resulting in such overcrowding and consequent pull down of their wage levels, (b) **Human Capital Hypothesis** which argues that difference in wages and segregation in work is largely due to differences in the human capital content of male and female work reflected in differences in productivity. The theory assumes that as women’s prior commitment is to the home and because of long hours of work at home, women are usually seen as less committed to work outside home and hence are less paid than men and (c) **Co-operative Conflict Hypothesis** where families are visualised as centres of conflicts and co-operation. Due to the low deal that women have in the sexual division of labour within the household, they have weak outcomes both within the household and at the work place. This results in their overcrowding in jobs in which payments are low and working conditions poor.

Another important development is the theory of segmented labour market. The theory of patriarchy is central in the theory of segmentation also. Patriarchy is of two types, private and public. Women are oppressed at home either by husband or father; religion and state subordinate women and perpetuate male dominance (Walby 1988). Three factors are prominent in the theory of segmentation. They are (i) the male dominance and male strategies leading to the exclusion of women from employment (Goldberg 1973, 1993), (ii) the restructuring of jobs with accumulation of capital and change in the organisational forms of production and management control (Hartmann 1979) and (iii) the restructuring of sexual division of labour based on the pre-existing notions of feminity and masculinity (Becker 1965).

**2.2. 3 The feminist framework**

The past forty years have witnessed the emergence of a paradigm in economics commonly referred to as ‘feminist economics’. The feminist framework strongly rooted in the theory of patriarchy came up in response to the strong wave of feminism in the Sixties in the western world. Gender is the primary category of analysis used by feminist economists as the individual is the primary category used by neo-classical economists and class is the one used by classical/Marxian economists. The central idea behind this approach is that the position of women in the labour market is governed by patriarchy, or rather, male dominance. It was successful not only in exposing the male bias of the existing theories, but in bringing out the
primacy of the gender relations as well. Consequently, the feminist framework using the theory of patriarchy became central to the study of women and labour market in sociology, economics, and political economy models. By adding a gender dimension to the existing models, this approach resulted in evolving a dual system theory, one dealing with the labour market and the other dealing with the position of women in it. It assumed that patriarchy and the resultant male dominance were the products of capitalism with one conditioning the other. Feminist economists have criticised the rational choice models based on the assumption of the autonomous individual and have argued for a more inclusive conception of human behaviour which recognises the social construction of gender identity for men as well as for women (Cagatay et al. 1995, Ferber and Nelson 1993). The framework dealing with women’s oppression in the labour considers domestic labour and sexual division of labour as being inter-related. It mentions that women are exploited by men in the labour market as an extension of their oppression at home. This is similar to the exploitation of labour by capitalists, according to the Marxian framework.

“The development of feminist theory has laid the basis for the task of transforming economics and engendering theory and policy. At the same time, feminist analysis has shifted from its main concentration on microeconomics to the discussion of macroeconomics. Two areas in which progress toward engendering economic analysis has been made since the late 1970s are:

(a) The visibility of women's work and its inclusion in labour force and national accounting statistics, and

(b) Macroeconomic issues, with focus on the area of gender and development and of structural adjustment policies, with particular reference to alternative models to the orthodox structural adjustment packages.” (Beneria 1995).

2.2.4 Marxian framework

The classical Marxian paradigm is largely gender-neutral with its emphasis on class relations in the capitalist mode of production. Women’s economic status is seen as a direct result of the capitalist family structure. In the Marxist perspective gender issues form part of class conflicts.
The idea of the ‘reserve army of labour’ elaborated by Engels (1845) was later adopted by many authors within the socialist-feminist framework (Beechey 1977 & 1982, Anthias 1980). According to the Marxian interpretation, the reserve army of labour is the result of capitalist development caused by replacement of labour by machines. The disadvantaged position of women in the labour market identifies them with the reserve army of labour; being the most volatile fraction of the labour market, they are increasingly thrown out of employment as capitalist development proceeds. Marxists have distinguished three forms of the reserve army of labour: floating (who are unemployed recently), latent (who are not employed previously), and stagnant (who are unemployed for a long time). But the increased participation of women in the labour market during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries has laid bare the inconsistency in the theory.

2.2.5 The U-hypothesis

Studies that explore the relationship between women’s labour force participation and economic growth are few and far between. The results from these studies do not always present a uniform picture which is partly attributed to data constraints and econometric issues surrounding reverse causality, wherein growth and women’s economic activity do not share a one-way relationship (Lahoti and Swaminathan 2013). Economic development and women’s labour force participation show a U-shaped relationship, as per the study of Goldin (1994). Female labour force participation declines initially with economic development, and then plateaus before rising again giving it the U shape. This reflects the structural shifts in the economy, changing influence of income and substitution effects, and an increase in education levels of women in the population (Goldin 1994). In a low-income, agriculture dominated economy women are active participants in the labour force through their roles as contributing family workers on family farms or enterprises. There is no monetary remuneration for this work, but it is recognized as being part of the labour force. This phase of economic development also coincides with relatively high fertility rates and low educational levels for women. Economic growth is usually accompanied by a changing sector composition wherein there is a greater emphasis on industrialization while agriculture starts losing its supremacy, which has the effect of lowering women’s participation in the labour market. Agriculture related activities are easier to combine with other household duties that women are responsible for. Further, the jobs available during the early stages of industrialisation are not attractive to women largely because of the social norms (stigma) against their participation in
blue-collar activities. Household incomes increase with economic growth and women tend to drop out of the labour force as they are not needed to contribute monetarily to the household. As the economy grows, several changes take place that once again encourage women’s labour force participation. Their educational levels improve leading to more and improved employment opportunities, fertility rate drops reducing the burden of child-rearing on women and new socially acceptable service sector jobs open up for women. With increasing wage levels, the substitution effect dominates the income effect.

2.3 Empirical Studies

Extensive research on the issue of female labour force participation is available for developed countries, but that is not the case for developing countries. Macro-level data indicate, the past four decades have seen an upsurge in female labour force participation all over the world, both in developed countries as well as developing countries. Several factors have been responsible for this. On the demand side, a general rise in the demand for labour consequent upon expansion of output and a rise in the education of women are two important factors. With the increasing share of services in GNP, demand for labour in typical female occupations like clerical and service jobs has been growing very fast. Increase in women’s education leading to their acquiring greater skills has also led to an increase in female labour force participation. On the supply side, rising wages for women, changes in family composition and lower male earnings have also contributed to pushing up female labour force participation.

During the period 1975-1993, in most of the European countries, the share of women in the labour force registered a significant increase. In Italy it rose from 27 to 36.7 percent; in France from 37.8 percent to 45 percent and in United Kingdom from 38.3 percent to 43.7 percent. During 1970 to 1990, the increase was from 37 percent to 45 percent in the US and from 32 percent to 45 percent in Canada (Lakshmy Devi, 2002).

Globally, women’s participation in the labour force has remained relatively stable in the two decades from 1990 to 2010, at approximately 52% (ILO, 2014). Participation of women varies considerably across developing countries and emerging economies, a lot more than men. Gender gaps in labour force participation persist almost among all ages in South Asia (UN, 2010). A number of countries in South Asia display puzzling trends in the participation rates of women, with India being most notable for its falling rates in recent years.
A large number of empirical studies based on the historical experiences of developed countries and other multiple country studies document the existence of a U-shaped relationship between female labour force participation and economic development. The first generation articles used cross sectional data across countries to test this relationship (Goldin 1994, Mammen and Paxson 2000, Pampel and Tanaka 1986, Schultz 1991, Cagatay and Ozler 1995). Tansel (2002) studied this relationship within provinces in Turkey across three time periods whose results support the U shaped hypothesis. Two separate studies using panel methods once again found evidence supporting the U shaped pattern of women’s LFPR within a country (Tam 2011, Luci 2009). In a recent comprehensive review of the literature, Gaddis and Klasen (2012) note several shortcomings with the panel data applications as well as the empirical specifications used to test this relationship (Lahoti and Swaminathan 2013).

2.4 Studies on Gender and Work in India

Quite a large number of studies relating to women and work in India have emerged during the past few decades. But most of the studies available are based on macro-level data drawn either from the Census or National Sample Survey. Very few studies have attempted to explain female labour force participation through economic theories of the household. Studies during the late Seventies were made mainly in response to the report of the ‘Committee on the Status of Women in India’ (1975). Studies by Bardhan (1979), and Parthasarathy and Rao (1980) fall in this category. Sinha (1961) attributed technological change as the reason for declining female employment in some industries and services. Parthasarathy and Rao (1981) also give a comprehensive picture of women in the Indian labour force. Other studies such as the ones by Reddy (1977) and Paul (1982) also discuss reasons for declining female labour force participation in India. Duvvury (1988) explains the trends in work participation of women in India during the period 1961-1981.

Horton (1996) points out that while in most Asian countries women move to regular jobs, in the case of India, they move to the less advantageous status of casual employees. Moreover, compared to countries like South Korea, Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand, women’s work participation in India is marked by relatively low and stagnant rates. A number of empirical papers have examined the low and declining female labour force participation in India (Ghose 2004, Masood and Ahmad 2009, Srivastava and Srivastava 2010, Chowdhury 2011, Shaw 2013, Rangarajan et al. 2014). Many Indian writers have argued that economic development had an adverse impact on female work, pushing women to the grades of inferior casual workers. Many others including Banerjee (1996, 1997) have also argued that there has been a continuous and steady casualization of female workforce in India. Manifestation of this trend is in the fact that female labour force participation in rural areas tends to increase during periods of distress (droughts or decline in growth rates of agricultural output, depressed wages and so on), and recede again when the economy improves (Himanshu 2011, Bhalotra and Umaña-Aponte 2012). In fact, the spurt in employment growth during 1999-00 to 2004-05 can be partially attributed to the crisis in the agricultural sector which forced the normally non-working population (women, elderly and children) to enter the labour market to supplement household income (Abraham 2009).

The declining labour force participation rates among women with rising household economic status is also consistent with women’s labour supply acting as an insurance mechanism for households. Attanasio et al. (2005) present a conceptual framework where heightened uncertainty over future earnings increases women’s labour force participation, particularly when the household does not have savings or access to credit. Deshpande (1997) points out to the declining trend in the number of female workers in the organised sector.

Studies by Varghese (1993), Parthasarathy and Nirmala (1997) and Visaria (1995) come to the conclusion that there has taken place large-scale feminisation of agricultural work during recent years. Issues relating to conceptual and empirical invisibility of women’s work and other related issues like paid/unpaid work, domestic work, and problems of measurement of women’s work were the main focus in the writings of Sen (1983), Duvvury and Isaac (1989), Mukherjee (1996) and Suryanarayanan (1998). These studies also criticised the characterisation of women’s work as supplementary by the existing data systems. A recent
study by the Economics department of OECD (April 2015) has described key employment trends in India by gender and identified the potential determinants of female labour force participation. Given the large regional differences in India the analysis is also conducted by region and between rural and urban areas. The rural-urban dichotomy has been given a new dimension in the form of rural-urban gradation (Chatterjee et al. 2014 World Bank) and the effect on female labour force participation has been studied. One of the most highlighted and debated aspects of recent changes with regard to female employment is the issue of feminisation of labour, which reached its peak with an unexpected jump in female work participation in the 61st Round of NSS employment and unemployment data for the period 2004-05. Later rounds however, showed a reversal with female participation rates falling drastically (Neetha 2013).

Many studies have emphasised the importance of education in models of female labour supply (Eckstein and Lifshitz 2011, Eckstein and Wolpin 1999, Mammen and Paxson 2000). Sen (1996) argues that independent income-earning opportunities reduce the economic dependence of women on men. Dreze (1997) concludes that higher levels of female labour force participation are likely to have important effects on social institutions. He points out that at the household level, the link between adult female labour force participation and girls’ schooling tends to be negative. But Jayachandran (1997) indeed found a positive link between adult female labour force participation and girls’ schooling. Neff et al. (2012) have examined the sharp fall in labour force participation rate of women in rural India between the period 2004-05 to 2009-10. Their findings suggest that the decline could potentially be due to the ‘income effect’ and partly due to the ‘education effect’. This study is exploratory in nature and is a bi-variate analysis. Bhalla and Kaur (2011) found out that the education level of the spouse has a larger negative effect (each extra year of male education causes a drop in female labour force participation by 1 percentage point) than the positive effect on participation of increasing female education. Klasen and Pieters (2012) examine the drivers of female labour force participation in urban India in the backdrop of increasing rates of growth of the economy from the period 1987 to 2004. They find that at lower levels of education, female labour force participation is driven by necessity rather than economic opportunities.
2.5 The Problem of Intersectionality between Women’s Work, Caste, Class, Religion and Other Variables

Two strands of literature have been referred to for the purpose of the thesis, viz. works which have dealt with ‘the determinants of female labour force participation in India’ and works which have dealt with ‘the overlap of gender, caste, class, religion etc. in female employment’. There is a large literature on gender disparities in India that examines the phenomena of the declining sex ratio, educational disparities, differential labour market outcomes between men and women, health outcomes for women and so forth. The caste system has been widely researched by all of the social sciences. Quantification of the intersection between caste and gender has been attempted by Deshpande (2007). Caste is important because of the increasing heterogeneity of the agricultural labour class in the rural areas. The lack of specific attention is not a limitation of only studies on women but it is a general problem with much of the literature on agrarian relations in India. Integration of these three elements of class, caste and gender, has been attempted by Duvvury (1989). The need to develop and apply a more ‘intersectional’ approach to gender analysis, which pays careful attention to the differences and relationships between women (as well as between women and men and men and men) within particular social and geo-political contexts has been highlighted by the International labour Organisation (ILO working paper 2008). Analysis of how different groups of women are situated differently within and are affected differently by local and international socio-economic and political power relations, structures and processes is gaining ground in ILO literature.

Gender is a stratifier of social life comparable to other stratifiers such as class, race and ethnicity. ‘Intersectionality’ refers to the interaction between gender, race, social practices, institutional arrangements, cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power (Davis 2008). Originally coined by Kimberle´ Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality has since been heralded as the most important contribution that women’s studies has made so far (McCall, 2005). Scholars suggest that intersectionality

(i) is a theory,
(ii) is a concept or heuristic device and
(iii) a reading strategy for doing feminist analysis.
Literature on the concept of intersectionality and how it works to determine individual and group identities, systems of power and processes of interaction and change exists (Dhamoon, 2008) but its use remains limited within studies of work and employment relations. Such an attempt has been made in this thesis.

A growing body of literature (Schultz and Mullings 2005, Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003) has found that gender and economic class, race, ethnicity, caste and other social inequalities often work together and interact with each other. These intersections can have important effects which may not be uniform but depend on contexts and settings (Iyer et al. 2008). Empirical evidence of how these interactions operate and what they imply for both theory and practice is yet very difficult to come by. Hence, it’s still not clear as to how gender affects class inequalities or how gender relations are modified by class, caste, race, ethnicity interactions or how such intersections influence employment inequalities. Their implications on policy design are therefore not perceivable as yet. These gaps in research reflect the limitations in the techniques used to study intersectionality. This is especially true for India where work on intersectionality and its effects on female employment are very difficult to come across.

There are three different approaches to studying intersectionality. These are:

(a) Anticategorical complexity: This approach is based on the "methodology that deconstructs analytical categories" (McCall 2005).

(b) Intercategorical complexity: This approach begins by addressing the fact that inequality exists within society, and then uses this as a basis for discussion of intersectionality. Accordingly, "the concern is with the nature of the relationships among social groups and, importantly, how they are changing". Proponents of this methodology use existing categorical distinctions to demonstrate inequality across multiple dimensions and measure its change over time.

(c) Intracategorical complexity: This approach provides a midpoint between the anticategorical and intercategorical approaches. To reconcile these contrasting views, intracategorical complexity focuses on people who cross the boundaries of constructed categories in an effort to understand the complexity and intersectionality of human interactions.
They serve to represent the broad spectrum of current methodologies that are used to better understand and apply the intersectionality theory\(^7\). The study and analysis in the thesis is influenced by the ‘intercategorical complexity’.

2.6 Conclusion

The contribution of intersectionality has been obscured (McBride et al. 2014), especially so in issues relating to women and work. The thesis makes use of the concept of intersectionality to analyse how the different dimensions of social inequality interact and how these interactions affect the gender relations in employment. This requires going beyond unidimensional analysis based on only class or gender or caste or religious identity as determinants of female work participation. A point to be reiterated while concluding this chapter is that, the intention is to make use of intersectionality to understand how the concept can be applied to the analysis of work and employment.

\(^7\) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality