CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Women’s education plays a pivotal role in empowering the society as well as the economy. It is already been proved that by reducing the gender inequality in education and employment, national income of the countries will go up by a minimum of 30 per cent. However, gender inequalities exist not only in the developing countries, but also in the developed countries, at least in the sphere of employment and income. The degree of educational inequalities is quite severe in some of the developing countries, including India, though over the years, gender gap is on the decline. In this background, this chapter reviews some of the important studies which have dealt with women’s education and employment in order to trace the research gap.

THEORY OF HUMAN CAPITAL

Much of the research on educational development and labour is dominated by human capital theory. For example, Psacharopoulos has found a positive correlation between human capital formation and increased wages using macro data and mathematical models to test economic theory (Psacharopoulos, 1985). In another example, Duflo used cost-benefit analysis to analyze the effectiveness of Indonesia’s largest school construction program between 1973 and 1978. Its impact was: “each primary school constructed per
1,000 children led to an average increase of 0.12 to 0.19 years of education, as well as a 1.5 to 2.7 percent increase in wages” (Duflo, 2001). Duflo also concluded that the program “affected children likely belong to the poorest segment of the population, because they were prevented from attending school by the lack of infrastructure.

On the other hand, they took advantage of the opportunity once it arose” (Fersterer and Ebmer, 1999). These early studies based on human capital theory demonstrated the economic value to beneficiaries of the establishment of schools and construction of educational infrastructure. On the other hand, it is also clear that building educational facilities does not guarantee benefits for poor households. Many poor families are closely tied to local values, customs, traditions and the local economic context. Parents may not recognize the value of schooling, or understand the necessity of education, especially when they are uneducated and living impoverished lives.

Many education researchers from Bangladesh also tend to focus on educational development. For example, gender studies in Bangladesh focus entirely on advocating equal educational opportunities for women (Schultz, 1994). However, micro-level empirical studies especially in rural Bangladesh could make a significant contribution to understanding gender disparities in education. Moreover, in much of the educational research, cultural, religious, regional, and patriarchal issues have been overlooked. Often studies focus on illiteracy, school access and drop-out rates among women in Bangladesh.
However, these studies have utilized only an education framework or human rights approach.

**WOMEN’S EDUCATION IN INDIA**

In India, the female education has its roots in the British Regime. In 1854, the East India Company acknowledged women’s education and employment. Initially, this education was limited only to primary school level education and only the richer section of the society enjoyed this facility. Thus as it was confined only for a small section of people in society, so the literacy rate for women increased from 0.2 per cent in 1882 to 6 per cent only in 1947. It is very unfortunate to say that for centuries higher education for women has been neglected. In 1958, the Government of India appointed a National Committee for the Education of Women. The Committee submitted report in favour of women education. The Government accepted most of the recommendations. There is a possibility of revolutionary change in India’s higher education system and this is women participation. In some elite institutions one can find that the number of female students is more than male students and there is a possibility to increase this trend (Ramachandran, 1998).

It is true that number of males is outnumbered in comparison with female. One of the reasons for this is rampant sex selection and cultural factors. It is common feature that from the time of birth girls are discriminated in subtle and crude ways. But, in spite of this, it is a great advancement that the
presence of women in colleges and universities are growing. Since independence, there had been a phenomenal growth in the number of women students’ enrolment in higher education. On the eve of the independence, women enrolment was less than 10 per cent of the total enrolment, but in 2010-11, women enrolment increased up to 41.5 per cent (Nath, 2014).

NECESSITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

Women education has two aspects - individual aspect and social aspect. It is education which increases women’s abilities to deal with the problems of her life, her family, her society and nation. Education increases confidence in a woman. An educated woman can easily understand the demerits of early marriage and high birth rate. They have the attitude of gender parity among their children right from health care, nutrition, education and even career. The fruits of education are enjoyed not only by the woman concerned, but it passes to her family in later life. In a word, over all development of a society depends on the development of its total members. But, if half of its members lag behind, it will create hindrance to the development (Ramachandran, 1988).

Women education in India has also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country. Education is the milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. The growth of women’s education in rural areas is very slow. This obviously means that still large
womenfolk of the country are illiterate, weak, backward and exploited (Kumar and Sangeetha, 2015).\(^9\)

Women empowerment can only be achieved through the provision of adequate and functional education to the women folk. This is crucial because no matter how rich or vast a nation is, without an effective, efficient, adequate and functional education for all its citizens education which is relevant to its immediate needs, goals and objectives, such a nation would find it difficult to stand on its own. The brand of education being advocated is that type of education in which is embedded the spirit of self realization and all that are needed for the country’s overall development like mass literacy, economic empowerment etc (Bhuimali, 2004).\(^{10}\)

The need for women education is also informed by the fact that purposeful occupational achievement and satisfaction is ensured by deep self-awareness and understanding which can only be achieved through the provision of effective and functional education and guidance and counselling. This is likely to guarantee women empowerment with its root based on women struggle to improve their status. The empowerment suggested is such that it entails the process of challenging power relations and of gaining wider control over source of power. This, however, cannot be achieved without the provision of reasonable access to formal and functional education to the women folk. This is based on the premise that education has been adjudged to be a viable instrument of change in the positive direction (Ghose, 2002).\(^{11}\)
Provision of formal and functional education is needed for the women folk, because:

- It would empower them to know and ask for their rights to education, health, shelter, food, clothing etc.
- It would empower them to fight against every form of discrimination against their folk, assert themselves about their right to equal treatment with their men counterpart as bonafide citizens of this nation.
- It would enable the women take decisions and accept responsibilities for taking such decisions concerning themselves (Hossain and Kabeer, 2004).
- It would give economic power to the women and thereby enable them to contribute their might to the economic growth of the nation.
- It would empower the women scientifically through exposure to science and technological education for the challenges of the present age of information technology breakthrough which is unfolding worldwide.
- It would help women to reduce maternal and infant mortality through improved nutrition, improved child rearing practice, health care and prevention against killer diseases.
- It would avail women with the opportunity of participating keenly in the world of sophisticated politics and governance as enlightened citizens (Mukherjee, 2007).
Women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population. Gender discrimination still persists in India and lot more needs to be done in the field of women's education (Parikh and Gupta, 2001).  

**Barriers and Problems against Women Education**

In spite of certain outstanding examples of individual achievements, and a definite improvement in their general condition over the years, it remains true that Indian women still constitute a large body of underprivileged citizens. Women do not form a homogenous group in class or caste terms. Nevertheless, they face distinctive problems that call for special attention. The Backward Classes Commission set up by the Government of India in 1953 classified women of India as a backward group requiring special attention. The Ministry of Education clubs girls with Scheduled Castes and Tribes as the three most backward groups in education (Sharmila and Dhas, 2010).  

The educational, economic, political and social backwardness of women makes them the largest group hindering the process of social change. It is inevitable that when this ‘backward’ group has the major responsibility of bringing up future generations, the advancement of society cannot be rapid or
take any significant form of development. In the report of the committee appointed by the National Council for Women’s Education, it was emphatically stated that what was needed to convert the equality of women from de jure to de facto status was widespread education for girls and women and a re-education of men and women to accept new and scientific attitudes towards each other and to themselves (Kandpal et al, 2012).\(^{16}\)

A changing society and a developing economy cannot make any headway if education, which is one of the important agents affecting the norms of morality and culture, remains in the hands of traditionalists who subscribe to a fragmented view of the country’s and the world’s heritage. The differences between the positions of men and women in the society will not lessen; leave alone disappear, as long as there are differences between the education levels of men and women. Inadequate education or no education is the most important factor contributing to the backwardness, especially women. The low literacy among women brings down the national literacy. This gap which exists between the literacy rates of the two sexes also exists between the enrolment of girls and boys at all levels of education. Right from the primary school to the university, the number of girl students is considerably lower than boys (Malhotra et al, 2013).\(^{17}\)

It is unfortunately true that children are sent to school not according to their intelligence or aptitude, but according to their sex. The reasons for not sending girls to school are both economic and social. In rural areas, girls are
required to help in household work. The resources of the rural poor are so limited that they do not have anything to spare for children’s education. If resources are available, it is the boy who is sent to school first (Rahman and Rao, 2004).\textsuperscript{18}

Parents also do not see the value of educating especially a daughter who would get married and remain a housewife. Since they cannot see any direct relationship between education and economic betterment, they have very little motivation to send their children to school. It is still not being realized that there is definite connection between education, good motherhood and efficient house management. The management of millions of households and the upbringing of millions of children is thus in the hands of illiterate women (Thomas, 1990).\textsuperscript{19}

People can be motivated to have their children educated only if educational system is directly linked with economic and social development. The plight of women, in terms of education is further compounded by the negative attitude of parents toward female education. Some parents are usually reluctant to send their girl child for formal education especially to higher levels like their male counterpart (Kantor, 2003).\textsuperscript{20}

Another problem closely related to this is the reluctance to acquire western education and misunderstanding on the part of the girls themselves about the values of the acquisition of formal education. In education, equity means equal access to good schooling. Restricted access to education by
women in this country is profoundly rooted in history, religion, culture, the
psychology of self, law, political institution and social attitudes which interact in
several ways to limit women’s access to formal education when compared with
their male counterparts (Kandpal and Baylis, 2015).\textsuperscript{21}

It has been observed that Indian women are lagging behind their
counterparts in some developed and developing nations due to the late start in
educating them. This is caused by the traditions and culture which are hostile
to women. This tradition reduces them to kitchen manageresses and producers
of babies. Thus, their education ideally, is expected to end in kitchen a
condition which ironically is detested by many parents thereby discouraging
their investment in girl-child education (Janssens, 2010).\textsuperscript{22}

Other problems against women education include the familiar problems
like lack of funds, inadequate facilities, inadequate manpower, sexual
harassment, conflicting societal role expectations, government policies and
lack of political will power to implement the entire educational programme. The
inferiority complex observable in Indian women can be attributed to the
influence of environmental manipulation (Dyson and Moore, 1983).\textsuperscript{23}

Through the traditional socialization process of the typical society,
women are made to accept negative self-fulfilling prophecy, stereotyping and
stigmatization that they are members of a weaker sex. At present, the forces
which combine to hamper women education and development in India could be
viewed broadly to include denial of access to education, early marriage,
confinement to solitary living, subjugation by culture to accept choices forced on them, discrimination and harassment at work, political disenfranchisement from elective and political appointment and exposure to cruel mourning rites upon the death of their husband (Anderson and Eswaran, 2009).24

Women constitute almost half of the population of the world. Education for women is the best way to improve the health, nutrition and economic status of a household that constitute a micro unit of a nation economy. There has been a sincere effort to improve the education attainment of women by both government and voluntary organizations. The changes in the policies and infrastructural supports on primary, secondary and higher education reflect the initiatives of the Government of India towards women education. It is noted that there had been significant progress in the performance of women education revealed from female literacy levels and its change over time (Lahoti and Swaminathan, 2013).25

It was also observed that the gaps between rural and urban female literacy rates are narrowing down. It was observed that rural poverty acts as a push factor for women’s education rather than as an obstacle to women’s education. The significant influence of urbanization on women’s education implied that urbanization had been playing a beneficial role in the attainment of women’s education in India (Bedi, 2008).26

Verma opines that the drop-out rate had a negative effect on women’s education. It revealed that that reduction of girl’s drop-out rates is necessary for
achieving women’s education. The initiatives of the Government through investment and infrastructure in developing education in India were examined. With regard to facilities in schools, it had improved significantly, but a lot more need to be done. Thus, there have been concerted efforts to encourage girls to attend schools, which would lead to higher literacy in future, though there are several infrastructural barriers to women education in India (Verma, 2009).^{27}

Nadia and Haas provide a multidisciplinary review of research aimed at explaining the substantial differences in women's employment trajectories that still exist within and across countries. This research emphasizes the economic and normative rationalities in women's employment decisions and work that focuses more on the structural constraints to women's employment. It discusses recent research developments—conceptual and methodological advances—and based on the identification of central research gaps and methodological challenges, it indicates avenues for future research. Finally, it casts a critical view on the 'explanatory power' of contemporary research on women's employment and discusses appropriate research designs for the evaluation of policy effects on women's employment (Nadia and Haas, 2015).^{28}

World Bank (2015)^{29} notes that by many measures, 2015 marks a watershed year in the international community’s efforts to advance gender equality. In September, with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, UN Member States committed to a renewed and more ambitious
framework for development. This agenda, with a deadline of 2030, emphasizes inclusion not just as an end in and of itself but as critical to development effectiveness. At the centre of this agenda is the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. In addition to governments, the private sector is increasingly committed to reducing gaps between men and women not just because it is the right thing to do, but because it makes business sense.

Gender equality is also central to the World Bank Group’s own goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity in a sustainable manner. No society can develop sustainably without transforming the distribution of opportunities, resources and choices for males and females so that they have equal power to shape their own lives and contribute to their families, communities, and countries. Promoting gender equality is smart development policy (UNESCO, 2005).30

Governments around the world place considerable emphasis on investments in human capital through the provision of schooling. And this focus carries through to international agencies such as the World Bank, which also emphasizes the provision of schooling. The underlying message is that human capital is important for individuals and for nations. At the same time, human capital—identified as the stock of productive skills of an individual—is an abstract concept. Both researchers and policy makers must transform the
concept into practical terms that can be studied and translated into policy (Pritchett, 2006).\textsuperscript{31}

Evidence also suggests that educational quality is directly related to school attainment in developing countries. In Brazil, a country plagued by high rates of grade repetition and ultimate school dropouts, Harbison and Hanushek (1992)\textsuperscript{32} showed that higher cognitive skills in primary school lead to lower repetition rates. Further, Hanushek, Lavy, and Hitomi (2008)\textsuperscript{33} found that lower-quality education, measured by lower value-added to cognitive achievement, lead to higher dropout rates in Egyptian primary schools. Thus, as found for developed countries, the full economic impact of higher educational quality comes in part through greater school attainment.

Over the past 10 years, empirical growth research has demonstrated that consideration of the quality of education, measured by the cognitive skills learned, dramatically alters the assessment of the role of education in the process of economic development (Behrman et al, 2008).\textsuperscript{34} When using the data from the international student achievement tests through 1991 to build a measure of education quality, Hanushek and Kimko (2000)\textsuperscript{35} found a statistically and economically significant positive effect of the quality of education on economic growth in 1960–1990 that dwarfs the association between quantity of education and growth.

Kingdon and Söderbom note that the fact that returns to education and to cognitive skills are substantially larger for women than men presents the
cheering scenario that education can be a path to gender equality in the labor market. It also suggests that there are really strong economic incentives for investment in girls’ schooling, which ought to lead to gender equality in education or, if anything, to pro-female gender gaps in education, rather than what we actually observe—large pro-male gaps. This raises a puzzle as to why women have low levels of education when the economic incentives for educating them are so much stronger than for educating men (Kingdon and Söderbom, 2007).36

Tembon and Fort indicate that there is a suggestion in recent times that education is beginning to influence occupational outcomes of women from 8 years onward (rather than from 10 years onward, as in 1999) and to have a larger (steeper) impact on their chances of employment, even though wage employment continues as the only acceptable occupation for women (Tembon and Fort, 2008).37

Gender disparities and inequalities in education are determined by a range of social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors—both internal and external to the education sector. Education policies naturally tend to focus solely on aspects of gender inequality related to the education system and thus do not address important causes of gender disparities. Local laws and customs, for example, may discriminate against female students who get pregnant and affect whether or not they complete school after giving birth. The solution to gender inequality in education thus goes beyond the confines of the
education sector, stretching to the legal and health systems, as well as to agriculture and infrastructure (World Bank, 2006).  

Without a deliberate, sustained, and structured policy to prioritize the allocation of resources to marginalized groups within national and state budgets, programs aimed at improving the education of disadvantaged groups will have reduced chances of succeeding. Gender budgeting in countries such as Australia and South Africa is but one example of deliberate, sustained policy prioritization (Cohen and Soto, 2007).  

To scale up the provision of education to all children, particularly those from disadvantaged groups (for example, the disabled, orphans, the poor, and indigenous and minority populations), governments must develop and adopt inclusive education policies and implementation strategies that ensure equal opportunities for all learners, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment, or background (Easterly, 2002).  

To open the doors of education to all, governments and other education stakeholders have to maximize positive links between formal and non-formal education. Opportunities for positive collaboration can be explored when both formal and non-formal education models are perceived as parts of one learning system that serves the educational needs of society (Jamison et al, 2007).  

Specifically, governments need to build schools or provide school places within culturally acceptable distances from home that offer culturally appropriate safety measures (for example, boundary walls) as well as sanitary
and water facilities. This will require changes in practice. For example, one-room or two-room schools should be encouraged in some contexts (such as low population density areas) as the best strategy for making school places available to girls. Bigger schools are often situated at greater distances from home and tend to work against the promotion of girls’ education (Jolliffe, 2014).42

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

A woman’s ability to climb the corporate ladder and to earn wages on par with male counterparts along the way is still a work in progress. Women earn as little as 77 cents for every dollar that men do, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Although there are different interpretations of this “pay gap”, there is nevertheless general empirical evidence that gender wage discrimination continues across all segments of the American economy. Even when they make it to the corner office, women’s compensation doesn’t match that of male executives. Women still have relatively few seats on corporate boards — just 14 per cent in recent years — and ran about a dozen of the Fortune 500 companies as of 2010 (Chaudhary and Verick, 2014).43

Some academic research continues to focus on structural barriers, while other scholarship has shifted to examining possible solutions. One possible way to address the pay gap is empowering more women to bargain for higher salaries. It is an issue that has received substantial attention in the academic world, but the empirical findings suggest that gender itself is not always a
consistent predictor of negotiating behaviour. Gender effects on negotiation are contingent on situational factors that make gender more or less relevant, salient, and influential” (Mujahid, et al, 2015).

Gender issues in the workplace also play out in subtle and often overlooked ways. Women tend to be interrupted more often than men, and these dynamics play out across meetings and boardrooms. Women are also less likely to be plugged into robust professional networks, which can stymie budding female scientists and experienced administrators alike. It may also be that networking strategies that have proven effective for male leaders may not be as useful for women (Manning and Petrongolo, 2008).

Caring for others remains primarily a female responsibility. While the percentage of women in the workforce has risen from 43.3 per cent in 1970 to 58.6 per cent in 2010 in the US, women continue to also work as the primary caretakers of children, ill or disabled family members or aging parents. According to a 2009 report from the National Alliance for Caregiving, between 59 per cent and 75 per cent of those caring for at least one ill or disabled relative are women (Razavi and Staab, 2010).

The more progressive a state’s institutional environment, the smaller will be the gender gap in earnings. The pay gap for women workers in states with large public social-service sectors is larger than that for those in states with small public social-service sectors (Kingdon and Unni, 2001). Women working in progressive state institutional environments are more likely to be
employed in managerial occupations and less likely to be channelled into female-typed occupations. State governments usually provide jobs for social services such as health, welfare and education, and these positions attract more female employees than male employees. However, the consequences of these employment patterns are not beneficial for female employees in that occupations in these sectors pay less than do other sectors of the labour market (Ryu, 2010).48

Mahpara and Sheikh analyze the low female work participation rate in Pakistan due to the religious, traditional, cultural values, the colonial ideology and the evolution of social institution that restrain women entry into the labour market. In order to explore the objectives, the study develops the classification of male and female age groups into three main categories, and analyze with the help of descriptive and mean methodology. The findings of this paper show that the women are suffering from market discrimination and hence are pushed to separate low-paid and low-status jobs. Majority of women are employed in the unorganized sectors (Mahpara and Sheikh, 2011).49

Mostly, women are concentrated in sector known for low level of productivity, less income stability and low security of employment due to their dual role at home and workplace. Organized services sector is mostly government services, and provides employment to a small proportion of women. The rate of unemployment among women is consistently higher than that of men, both in rural and urban areas (Kurian, 2015).50
Globally, gender gaps in the economic indicators of unemployment and employment trended towards convergence in the period 2002 to 2007, but with reversals coinciding with the period of the crisis from 2008 to 2012 in many regions. The gender gap in labour force participation, examined over a longer period of the last two decades, shows convergence in the 1990s, but little to no convergence in the 2000s, with increasing gaps in some regions like South Asia and Central and Eastern Europe. Demographic and behavioural change appears to have added to the impact of the crisis, to reverse convergence in regions harder hit by the crisis, such as the advanced economies and Central and Eastern Europe (International Labour Organisation, 2012).\textsuperscript{51}

Economic indicators of job quality, such as gender gaps in vulnerability and occupational segregation show significant gaps for 2012. An indicator for sectoral segregation could be observed over a long run period of two decades, and showed women crowding into services sectors, in both developed and developing countries. It is noted that reducing gender gaps can significantly improve economic growth and per capita incomes. Remedial policy then has to address the reversals in convergence. And it has to address the complex set of economic, demographic and behavioural factors leading to the increase in gender-based gaps in the labour market (Şahin et al, 2010).\textsuperscript{52}

From 2002 to 2007, the gender gap in unemployment which was constant at around 0.5 constant pre crisis, increased with crisis, with the female unemployment rate higher at 5.8 per cent, compared to male unemployment at
5.3 per cent (with 72 million women unemployed compared to their global employment of 1.2 billion in 2007 and 98 million men unemployed compared to their global employment of 1.8 billion). The crisis raised this gender gap to 0.7 percentage points for 2012 (destroying 13 million jobs for women), with projections showing no significant reduction in unemployment expected even by 2017 (Sarfati and Ghellab, 2012).\textsuperscript{53}

Analysis of regional trends shows that, over 2002 to 2007, women had higher unemployment rates than men in Africa, South and South-East Asia, and Latin America, while in East Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and more recently the advanced economies, there were negative gender gaps in unemployment rates (male unemployment rates higher than female rates). In this pre-crisis period, there was moderate convergence in the regions in which women’s unemployment rates exceeded the corresponding male rates. For the regions with the negative gender gaps, the range was small, between 0.5 and 1 percentage points. The crisis appears to have worsened gender gaps in unemployment across all regions, regardless of whether they were on the front lines of the crisis like the advanced economies, or a degree removed like Asia and Africa. The pre-crisis convergence in gender gaps reversed as a result of the crisis in South Asia, South East Asia, and Africa. In advanced economies and Central and Eastern Europe, the crisis moved their negative gender gaps towards zero. The gender gaps, positive and large in the Middle East and Latin
America and the Caribbean, and negative in East Asia remained unaffected by the crisis (Seguino, 2009).54

Three regions increased their gender gaps in employment-to-population ratios, South Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and marginally East Asia. South Asia is a particular enigma, with consistently negative employment growth rates for women over many of the crisis years, raising its already massive gender gap in the employment-to-population ratio from 45.9 to 48.1 percentage points. Since South Asia was not the primary region affected by the crisis, the explanation for its reversal in the employment gender gaps comes from gender gaps in the broadest base of the labour market pyramid, labour force participation rates (World Bank, 2012).55

The labour force participation rate is influenced by changes in both employment and unemployment. It reflects demographic and behavioural change, indicating very importantly, increase or decrease of different age groups’ participation in the labour market. The gender gap in the labour force participation rate decreased globally in the 1990s from 27.9 to 26.1 percentage points, with men’s rates falling faster than women’s, in all regions. However, in the last decade, between 2002 and 2012, this gap remained constant, with both men’s and women’s participation rates falling equally (Djanaeva, 2010).56

Three broad reasons cited for the fall in participation rates are, most importantly education for younger age cohorts, aging, and a “discouraged worker” effect. Reversals occurred principally in East Asia, South Asia and
Central and Eastern Europe Significant reversal in three regions accounts for the global halt in convergence in the participation gaps. The largest reversal was in South Asia, where the gender gap in participation increased by 2 percentage points due to a decline in women’s participation by 4 percentage points in the last decade. In East Asia and Central and Eastern Europe, the participation gap increased by 0.6 and 1.6 percentage points, respectively, based on declines in women’s participation of 2.6 percentage points (East Asia) and based on a larger increase in male participation rates (2.7 percentage points) compared to the female rate (1.1 points) (Central and Eastern Europe) (Elsby, et al, 2015).

Decomposition by age cohort shows that young female participation rates fell in all regions but adult female participation rates fell only in South Asia and East Asia, by 3.7 to 1.9 percentage points. Higher education levels increased adult female participation but longer education spells reduced participation for young women (Cho and Newhouse, 2011).

The labour force participation gap for women was driven by two contrasting developments. As women have become more and more educated, in particular in developing countries, their participation rates tended to increase thus allowing them to reap the full benefits of their higher productivity and capacity to generate income. At the same time, the higher education levels for adult women came at the expense of longer stays in the education system for younger female cohorts. This tended to decrease the labour force participation
rates for young women, which – depending on the relative size of the youth cohort – even decreased the overall female participation rates in some regions (Briskin and Muller, 2011).59

Women also suffer from a difference in the quality of employment in comparison to men. Vulnerable employment, which comprises contributing family workers and own account workers (as opposed to wage and salaried workers), is more widespread for women than for men. In 2012, there was a global gender gap of 2.3 percentage points, with a larger share of women in vulnerable employment (50.4 per cent of employed women, compared to 48.1 per cent of men). Regional vulnerability gaps varied, with North Africa at 24 percentage points, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa at 15 points, and the Asian regions lying between zero and 10 percentage points. Only in the advanced economies, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean, were a smaller share of women in vulnerable employment as compared to men (Bayard, et al, 2014).60

Women are more limited in their choices for employment across sectors. This sectoral segregation increased over time, with women moving out of agriculture in developing economies and out of industry in developed economies, and into services. In 2012, at the global level, a third of women were employed in agriculture, near half in services, and a sixth in industry. Women’s industrial share only slightly rose over the last two decades as most women are moving out of agriculture and directly into services. In advanced
economies, women’s employment in industry halved, crowding more than 85 per cent of them into services, primarily in education and health. In most developing economies, women moved out of agriculture, and into services, with the exception of East Asia, where women’s employment in industry rose to a quarter (International Labour Organisation, 2012).  

Occupational segregation has been pervasive over time, with some evidence of a decline in the gap in the previous decade, and a stalling in this convergence in the past decade. For a sample of both advanced and developing countries, men were over-represented in crafts, trades, plant and machine operations, and managerial and legislative occupations. In contrast women were over-represented in mid-skill occupations, like clerks, service workers, and shop and sales workers. The initial impact of the crisis, in the advanced economies, seemed to have affected men in trade-dependent sectors more than women in health and education. Conversely women were strongly hit in developing economies, in tradable sectors (Rustagi, 2010).  

A review of crisis policy responses based on an ILO/World Bank Policy Inventory database showed that 39 out of the 55 low and middle income countries and 17 out of 22 high income countries sampled had adopted new measures to address their large gender gaps in employment and participation. The provisions ranged from legislative revision on discrimination, equality and sexual harassment, to changes in systems for taxation, electoral parity, and parity in employment. In general, crisis related gender policy measures varied
by countries’ income levels. Some high income countries opted for more child care support, yet others cut it. Low and middle-income countries targeted unemployed women. Countries that were able to offer labour market policies to unemployed women on a large scale already had programs in place, as in the case of Chile’s targeting of unskilled female heads of households, South Africa’s women’s quota in its expansion of its public works program, Turkey’s subsidy for employed women, and India’s National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (International Labour Organisation and World Bank, 2013).63

Women continue to face many barriers to enter labour markets. These barriers not only hold back women, they also hold back economic growth and development in countries with large gender gaps. Given the complexity of the movement in gender gaps in the labour market and the complex set of factors accounting for convergence and divergence, policy recommendations can only be country-specific and must integrate economic, sociological and cultural factors (Kabeer, 2012).64

To improve the working conditions of women, the specific policy measures include the need to expand social protection measures to reduce women’s vulnerability, the need to invest in their skills and education, and policies to promote access to employment across the spectrum of sectors and occupations. There are also some policy guidelines focussed on creating the
right conditions to help households reduce the gender bias in their work decisions:

- a) Reducing the burden of house work through better infrastructure – principally electricity, water, sanitation, mobility and school access;
- b) Reducing the burden of unpaid care work through provision of care services – child care (and in some demographic contexts, care for elderly) being especially correlated to women’s participation in the labour force;
- c) Balancing the gender division of paid and unpaid work – mainly being programs to increase fathers’ share of parenting;
- d) Changing the costs and benefits of gender specialisation – principally taxes and transfers to encourage dual earner families;
- e) Compensating for unequal employment opportunities based on gender – principally compensating for the adverse impact of career breaks through paid leave and right of return to post; and
- f) Public campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes, and for proper implementation of legislation against discrimination (Panda, 2013).

WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT CONDITION IN INDIA

Since the 1980s, there has been a near consistent decline in the workforce participation rate of women. It is noted that there is a sluggish growth in employment and a steep fall in female labour force participation between 2004–05 and 2009–10. There is a return to stronger employment growth but a
continuation in the decline of women working in rural areas. Overall, the unemployment rate has remained relatively stable. The transformation of the labour market, nonetheless, progresses with a fall in the share of workers in agriculture and a rise in the share of workers in regular/salaried employment. In this context, understanding the gender dimensions of employment trends in India is critical (Hirway, 2014).^66

Despite strong growth in the 2000s, labour force participation of women, therefore, remained low in India, though there is considerable variation between urban and rural areas. Besides, wide gender differences in participation rate also persisted. Longer-term trends suggest that female labour force participation declined from approximately 40 per cent in the 1990s to 29.4 per cent in 2004–05. There was no overall reversal in the female labour force participation rate, which is estimated to be 22.5 per cent (for all ages), a further slump from the 23.3 per cent reported in 2009–10 (Gaddis and Klasen, 2014).^67

Mazumdar and Neetha submit that although most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for in official statistics. Women’s role in reproduction and in a range of activities within households, such as caring for the young and old, cooking and other household chores, do not find recognition in the system of national accounts or other economic statistics. This is a potential reason for
the reportedly low labour force participation rates of women (Mazumdar and Neetha, 2011).\(^{68}\)

Another issue is whether the decision of women to be engaged in domestic duties is entirely voluntary. In this regard, of the total women usually engaged in domestic duties, 34 per cent in rural areas and about 28 per cent in urban areas reported their willingness to accept work if the work was made available at their household premises. Tailoring was the most preferred work in both rural and urban areas. Among the women who were willing to accept work at their household premises, about 95 per cent in both rural and urban areas preferred work on a regular basis. About 74 per cent in rural areas and about 70 per cent in urban areas preferred “part-time” work on a regular basis, while 21 per cent in rural areas and 25 per cent in urban areas wanted regular “full-time” work. According to the latest data, the total workforce in India increased by 13.9 million – from 459 million in 2009–10 to 472.9 million in 2011–12. In comparison, the increase in employment from 2004–05 to 2009–10 was just 1.1 million (Thomas, 2014).\(^{69}\)

The NSS trends indicate that urban areas have dominated employment growth in India, with rural areas remaining relatively stagnant. According to the usual principal and subsidiary status definition, 101.8 million women in rural areas and 27.3 million in urban areas were in the workforce in 2011–12. Women workers in rural India registered a significant decline from 2004–05, whereas reverse trends are traceable in the case of urban India. From 2004–
05 to 2009–10, the number of women workers dropped by 21.3 million, of which 19.5 million were in rural areas (Subbarao and Raney, 2014).  

Based on International Labour Organisation (ILO’s) research, explanations include increasing educational enrolment, improvement in earnings of male workers that discourages women’s economic participation, and the lack of employment opportunities at certain levels of skills and qualifications discouraging women to seek work (International Labour Organization, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Review of the studies which have dealt with the issues of gender gap in education, employment and income conditions of women in developed countries and also in developing countries indicates the fact that such gender disparity is not an isolated issue nor it pertains only to the developing countries. The studies have shown the extent of gender disparity in employment conditions and also the difficulty that the women face in balancing their home – work balance. It is also to be noted that not many attempts have been made to examine the link between educational level of the female population and its role on the nature and pattern of their employment and income, particularly in India, during the post-liberalization period. Moreover, the studies have not conclusively established the role of educational discrepancy in the differences in employment conditions and income between the male and female workers. Since, education plays the most crucial role in reducing the existing gender
disparity, it is all the more important to examine the role of educational attainment in the extent of employment diversification among women. The present study makes an attempt to fill this void with the help of primary data.
REFERENCES


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