

## OCCUPATIONAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PUNJAB

**Kanchan**

Asstt. Professor in the Department of Economics, S.G.G.S Khalsa College Mahilpur

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### **ABSTRACT**

Women's occupational participation in Punjab has historically been low, with a significantly concentration in agriculture, especially in unskilled, low productivity job, although there is evidence of a recent increase in rural female participation rates. The participation rate is a part of active portion of economy's labour force. The participation rate refers to the number of people who are either employed or actively looking for job. The number of people who are no longer actively looking for work would not be included in the participation rate. During the period of recession many workers get discouraged and they stop looking for employment, as a result of which the participation rate comes down. The participation of women in the workforce is the main indicator of a nation's market dynamics. Many developing countries, including India, face many challenges in obtaining the good and accurate workforce market data, which complicates workforce employment planning. Empowering women through employment is necessary for reducing inequality and enhancing their status. This requires providing opportunities for women to enhance their capabilities, skills through literacy and employment. In India, workplaces have traditionally been male dominated and women have less share of the workforce. India ranks low in female workforce participation compared to other nations. The contribution of women to their households is never ending. The increasing participation of women in the workforce, the multiple roles of many women as mothers, wives and paid workers helped in assessing the employment and occupational structure of the economy. Women work participation rate in the state as a whole has been significantly lower than that of men. Increase in work participation rate is more in rural than in urban areas.

In recent years women status in Punjab presents a complex picture with both progress and challenges, featured by improving education but low labor force participation. While female enrollment in STEM and higher education is increasing. There are positive trends in women's education in every field like medical, law, scientist etc. with high literacy rate. Female students also constitute a significantly portion of university and research institution of government sectors.

**Keywords:** Women, Workforce, Punjab

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:**

This paper is based on a preliminary examination of female occupational participation in Punjab. The northern state of Punjab is primarily populated by farmers. It has a population of 3.11 crores and a land area of 50362 square kilometer. In 2020-21, the workforce participation in rural Punjab was 17.9 percent which is lower than the national average by 9.2 percentage points. In the urban region, it was 15.4 percent which is marginally lower by 1.6 percentage points than national figures. In rural region female workforce participation has doubled from

9.9 to 17.9 percent between 2017-18 and 2020-21. on the second side in urban areas, it is 3 percentage points from 12.3 to 15.4 percent in the 2017-18 and 2020 -21.

#### Distribution of Women Workers by status of Employment:

As per the usual status, regular employment is available to most in the urban region whereas, in the rural region, women are primarily self-employed across the reference period which is consistent with national trends.

The number of women in rural employment has decreased from 64.1 to 54.2 percent in the urban region. The rural region is also declining from 30.9 to 20.8 percent 2017-18 and 2020-21.

The number of self employed women is increasing across both regions. In the rural region, it jumped from 47.7 to 49.4 per cent while in the urban region it rose from 30.3 to 36.8 per cent between 2017-18 and 2020-21. on the other hand in the rural areas it has decreased from 26 to 20 per cent between 2018-19 and 2020-21.

#### Distribution of Women Workers by Occupation Types:

In rural Punjab, 35.2 per cent women are involved in skilled agriculture and fishery work. Around 32.6 per cent women are engaged in elementary occupations.

In urban Punjab, the distribution is different with 26.1 per cent women engaged in elementary occupations and 23.1 per cent women are professionals.

Across both regions, less than 10 per cent women are working as clerks, registrators, and technicians.

#### Regular Employment:

The number of women employed as regular has been decreasing over reference period across both urban and rural areas because of not good working conditions. PLFS 2020-21 shows that, in the rural areas 90.5 per cent women do not have a written job contract, 85.6 per cent have no social security benefits and 68.8 per cent women are not eligible for paid leave, on the other hand in urban areas 77.2 per cent women do not have a written job contract, 62 per cent no security benefits and 61.7 per cent not eligible for paid leave.

#### MGNREGS:(Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme)

Around 77.4 per cent rural women are engaged in non public work and 17.1 per cent in public work and 5.3 per cent women involved in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). The number of women person days MGNREGS has been significantly lower than in other Indian states. In 2021-22, women person days dropped to 199.7 lakhs from 2020-21. Currently, 15.4 per cent lakh women from rural Punjab are registered under MGNREGS , of which 60.8 per cent are active members.

In the last ,the majority of rural women in Punjab are self employed, the number of regular salaried female workers is declining in both rural and urban locations due to unsafe working

conditions. The number of causal workers is expanding in rural and urban regions, with a minuscule fraction in MGNREGS due to lack of knowledge. However, Punjab has undertaken certain encouraging steps in increasing female workforce participation rate and decreasing the gender gap.

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