

Schemes to Promote Women Participation in Various Professions

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ABSTRACT

India is witnessing a rapid transition from women-driven development to women-led development with the vision of a New India where women are equal partners in rapid and sustainable national development. India is currently one of only 15 countries in the world to have a female head of state. Globally, India has the highest number of elected female representatives in local governments. India has 10 per cent more female pilots than the global average. According to the International Society of Women Airline Pilots, globally about 5 per cent of pilots are women. In India, the share of female pilots is much higher at over 15 per cent. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) of girls in primary and secondary education is almost double that of boys. The percentage of girls in primary and secondary education is much higher at over 15 per cent. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) of girls in primary and secondary education is almost equal to that of boys. The presence of girls/women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is 43 per cent, one of the highest in the world. One of the key indicators to measure healthy gender balance in society is the 'Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)'. The latest report of Health Management Information System (HMIS) of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) shows that SRB is showing improving trends and has increased from 918 to 933 at national level with a net change of 15 points during 2014-15 to 2022-23 (Provisional). Several initiatives taken by the government have contributed to the improvement in gender ratio including a focused approach to change the societal outlook towards girls from patriarchal mindset wherein girls are considered a burden to a valued member of the family and society. The 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme has played a key role in changing this mindset. The number of women participating in major decisions at home is increasing. The National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS 5) says that today 88.7 per cent women participate in major household decisions, compared to 84 per cent five years ago. Whereas five years ago it was 84 percent.

Keywords: Women Development, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Family Welfare, Women Participation.

Introduction

Recently, the Executive Director of the Reserve Bank has said that low labour force participation among women is a hindrance to financial inclusion efforts and broader economic growth. According to the Economic Survey 2023-24, the female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) in India is 37% as of 2022, compared to the global average of 47.8%. Though this has increased from 23.3% in the year 2017-18, 37.5% of it is employed as "unpaid helpers in household enterprises. These women are not paid for the work they do. It is noteworthy that in the year 1955, the female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) was recorded at 24.1 percent, which increased to 33 percent in the year 1972. The FLFPR has seen a steady decline since 1972 and reached its lowest level of 23.3% in 2017.

Reasons for Low Economic Participation of Women in India

- **Educational Inequalities:** According to a World Bank report, the female literacy rate in India stands at 77% as against the male literacy rate of 84.7%. In fact, low educational levels limit women's access to better job opportunities.
- **Cultural Norms And Social Barriers:** Deeply held cultural norms and societal expectations often limit women's roles to domestic responsibilities. A 2022 World Bank report says social norms discourage women from participating in the workforce, especially in rural areas.

- **Lack of safe and affordable childcare:** The absence of affordable childcare facilities impacts women's ability to work. *A study conducted by McKinsey in the year 2021 found that lack of supportive policies and arrangements for working mothers is one of the factors responsible for low participation of women in the labour force.

Gender Pay Disparity In India

Women face huge pay disparity compared to men. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in the year 2022, Indian women earned about 30% less than men for the same work. Comparatively low wages are a major factor discouraging women's participation in the workforce.

Quality of Employment and Limited Opportunities

Women's employment is often concentrated in low-paid, informal sector jobs, where career advancement is not likely to be of much interest.

- **Workplace Discrimination and Harassment:** Discrimination And lack of a safe working environment is a major reason for the low participation rate. 80% of working women in India face sexual harassment at the workplace during their career.
- **The Glass Ceiling Effect:** It's a great way to protect those invisible Refers to the barriers that prevent women from reaching the top positions in their careers.

GDP

According to the McKinsey Global Institute report, reducing the gender gap in labour force participation and productivity could add \$700 billion to India's gross domestic product (GDP) by 2025, boosting the country's annual GDP growth by 1.4 percentage points. India's economic productivity is low.

The female labour force participation rate reflects the inefficient use of human capital, which impacts overall economic productivity.

- **Income inequality:** the gender pay gap and Low participation rates increase income inequality between men and women, impacting overall economic equality.

Consumer Expenditure

A significant portion is controlled by women. Gender income equality can significantly increase consumption rates, thereby boosting economic growth.

Some Efforts are being made by the Government

- **Prime Minister's Mudra Scheme (PMMY-2015):** The scheme provides micro-financing to women entrepreneurs to help them start or expand their small businesses.
- **Stand Up India Scheme (2016):** The programme provides financial assistance and loans to women entrepreneurs from SC/ST communities to set up greenfield enterprises.
- **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP- 2018):** Launched by NITI Aayog, this platform provides a comprehensive ecosystem for women entrepreneurs.

This includes providing women with mentoring, networking opportunities and resources to support their business ventures.

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (Mahatma Gandhi NREGA):** This Act guarantees 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to rural households, with a significant portion of the benefit going to women.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme:** While focusing directly on improving the welfare and education of girls, the scheme indirectly supports women's economic participation by promoting greater educational attainment and skill development.
- **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana:** It was launched under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign. It provides financial assistance for the education and welfare of girls, promoting long-term empowerment by ensuring access to education and skill development. Economic

Deen Dayal Skill Development Program

Various programmes under the Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) provide tailored training and skill development to women to improve their employability and economic participation.

Vishaka Guidelines

It is a set of procedural guidelines for use in India in sexual harassment cases, promulgated by the Supreme Court of India in 1997 to provide protection to women from sexual harassment at the workplace.

These guidelines have been given legal recognition through the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

Conclusion

- **Expanding Access to Finance:** Loan Application By simplifying procedures and offering lower interest rates, women can be encouraged to manage and grow businesses.

Apart from this, access to credit for women can also be improved through financial literacy programmes.

- **Skill Development and Training:** There should be a focus on vocational training and education programmes in line with current market needs, including digital skills and entrepreneurship training, to better prepare women for diverse economic opportunities.

Emphasis on gender-sensitive policies Compliance with policies that address gender-specific barriers in the workplace, such as equal pay, maternity benefits and safe working conditions, must be ensured to create a more inclusive work environment.

Promoting Women Entrepreneurship Women entrepreneurs can be supported by providing targeted subsidies, mentorship programmes and networking opportunities, as well as by reducing bureaucratic barriers and providing incubation support.

Strong legal protection Strong enforcement of laws relating to women's rights at workplace and protection from discrimination and harassment must be ensured.

Public-private collaboration Collaboration between government, businesses and NGOs should be encouraged to develop and implement initiatives that promote women's economic participation.

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