



Women and Work-How India Fared in 2022

Originally published by: Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (IWWAGE)

Introduction

In the light of India's presidency at the G20 summit of 2023, IWWAGE in its report "Women and Work: How India fared in 2022" situates women's work against the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the post-COVID economy. The report covers trends across available data sources on scheme performances, policy changes, and political announcements, and concludes by suggesting a roadmap for enablers of women-led development for the future.

Key Highlights

1. Fewer women have returned to the workplace. **The unemployment rate among rural females increased by 1.6% while that among rural males decreased by 1.2%.** In urban India alone women's employment was reduced by 22.1% in 2021 compared to 2019, as reported by Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) and Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA).
2. **Working women are prone to 'female guilt'** worrying about failing at their perceived 'fair share' of household duties and not being able to fulfil their traditional roles to the fullest. This has been linked to **more incidents of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) with nearly 47% of women** in paid employment justifying IPV, as reported by National Family Health Survey (NFHS-V)
3. **Female Labor Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) for women and girls above 15 is 32.5%** whereas the Labor Force Participation Rate for males in the same age group is 77%
4. *State-specific findings by Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS 2017-2021):*
 - a. Punjab: Female Work Participation Rate (FWPR) has doubled in rural areas (9.9% to 17.9%) between 2017-18 and 2020-21, whereas in urban areas, there is a slight improvement of only 3%.
 - b. Telangana: WPR of rural women increased from 25.9% in 2017-18 to 45.1% in 2020-21, while those of urban women moved up only by 3.8%.
 - c. Kerala: WPR increased by 9% for rural women and by only 4.8% for urban women
 - d. Assam: WPR for rural women saw increase of 9.8%, while urban areas saw improvement by only 2.3%
 - e. Chhattisgarh: urban FWPR is ~26.5% lower than rural FWPR in 2020-21.
5. Between October 2021 to October 2022, the **monthly share of women's registration for formal labor force jobs has constantly remained lower than 28%** despite the extent of job losses during

the pandemic being higher for women, as reported by Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). This indicates that the jobs recovered in the year have not been evenly distributed.

6. Within informal sector, certain sectors like **apparel and domestic household work continue to be highly feminised**, as per gender-disaggregated data available on the e-Shram card portal.
7. **Women owning MSMEs are mostly confined to the micro-enterprise category**, making them invisible from the perspective of policy-making and programming. As per survey report by Delhi Skills & Entrepreneurship University, nearly 77% women cited supplementing their family income as their main reason for starting their own business, while only 11% saw it to gain economic independence.
8. The report also identifies "**key enablers**" to help correct the participation of women in workforce in India, including improving physical infrastructure and childcare, strengthening skilling modules, improved digital access, women-friendly workplace infrastructure, and reducing 'time poverty' for women to create a conducive ecosystem

Read More: https://iwwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/IWWAGE_Trends_Report_2023.pdf

Author: Aarushi Shekhar, PILOT at Pratham.