



India's Missing Working Women

Originally published: SSRN (2020)

Introduction

The report focuses on the participation of women in the workforce and the reasons behind the visible decline in their participation. A recent research paper which is based on data analysis of Periodic Labour Force Surveys conducted by NSSO and Economic Outlook Database of CMIE spanning over five decades (1970-2018) highlights that women's labour force and workforce participation rates have secularly declined to their lowest levels since independence with women's average wage remaining below that of men. The study also brings to light the post-covid prospects of women participation in workforce.



Key Highlights

- Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) is the proportion of women who are working or are looking for work. This rate has fluctuated over the years to reach its lowest in 2017-18 as 17.5% - **lowest in the history of Independent India.**
- The difference between the proportion of men and women in the labour force has remained at about 40 percentage point over the period of study, with major percentage of women opting for casual labour.
- Average female wage for casual work in rural areas have stood at almost 66% of the male wage while in urban areas, it has shown increase but only to reach 63% of the male wage. Lower gender wage gap was witnessed among regular workers, with increase in rural areas from 59% to 64% and in urban areas, standing at about 79%.
- According to the study, there are many reasons that back these results, which include pay-cut during restarting of career with motherhood, mothers receiving fewer callbacks to applications, women choosing unskilled/helper roles with lower wages, increasing automation in industries, improvement in family's income.
- During Covid-19 induced lockdown, while the absolute fall in male employment was greater, the proportionate fall for women was higher.

Read more: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3788855

Author: Anviti Awasthi, PILOT at Pratham