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## Gender Discrimination In Opportunistic Scenario With Respect To Rural India: Special Reference To Indian Labour Market

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### Abstract

As per the reports of international agencies like World Banks and IMF the situation of women empowerment in developing economies is not very good and the same stands true in case of India. To a certain extent the Industrial policy of 1991 had increased the need of increased worker in industrial and agricultural sector, but then again this increase was just a marginal increase as compared to vast population of the country. This disparity calls for a detailed research study and after acknowledging this need the researcher had tried to evaluate one domain of the issue i.e. gender disparity in employment. Study is based on secondary data and basic statistical tools were used to analyse the data.

**Keywords:** Gender Disparity, GEDI, Women Empowerment, India.

### Introduction

India is a developing country and in the last few decades the number of job/work opportunities had increased to a substantial level, in respect of the same level of wages and remuneration had also increased. Most of the development in this regard was identified since the announcement of New Industrial Policy, 1991 where many of the MNCs and other international agencies had targeted India for the development of their business and in this manner great number of job opportunities hit the Indian market. But still there is a certain gender based disparity prevailing in many parts of the country, this disparity actually lies in the distribution of work, basic employment and even distribution of wages. In most of the cases women were forced to less productive work as compared to men and also receive less wages for the same. As per many of the social researchers this disparity is the result of certain social and economic factors that influences the thought process of the people and also encourages the stereotyped behaviour against the women, **Rustagi (2005)** some of the factors can be listed as follows:

- Age
- Marital Status
- Pregnancy
- Motherhood
- Fertility

- Position as an asset
- Poverty and
- Skill/Training

Although in many parts of the country, there are certain jobs that are given specifically to women labours, like the profession of nurses (there are some percent of male nurses as well), some handicraft business, then in case of certain small scale industries, etc. as a matter of fact in urban areas of the country, male worker are being hired for such type of employment.

As per the reports of **World Bank (2015)** in early years of privatization there was only marginal increase in the employment for females and this was other than the agriculture based employment, then this was the time when the agencies identified that women can be engaged in a number of other employments apart from agriculture, at that time this scenario was common for many of the similar economies like Korea, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and even Thailand; but still the work participation of women was low in India as compared to these countries.

Then the five year plan of 2007-12 envisaged the motto of Inclusive growth and this was again modified in the next five year plan by the name of more inclusive growth, then main aim of this thought process was to remove discrimination on the basis of gender and generation of employment form women in the country so as to provide them equal status in job market. The 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan entailed:

“Declining female employment both in rural areas and in urban areas as indicated by the NSSO reports on employment and unemployment in India 2004-05 (NSS 61st round) and 2009-2010 (NSS 66th round). Women workers are most susceptible to loss of their jobs when global crisis arise”

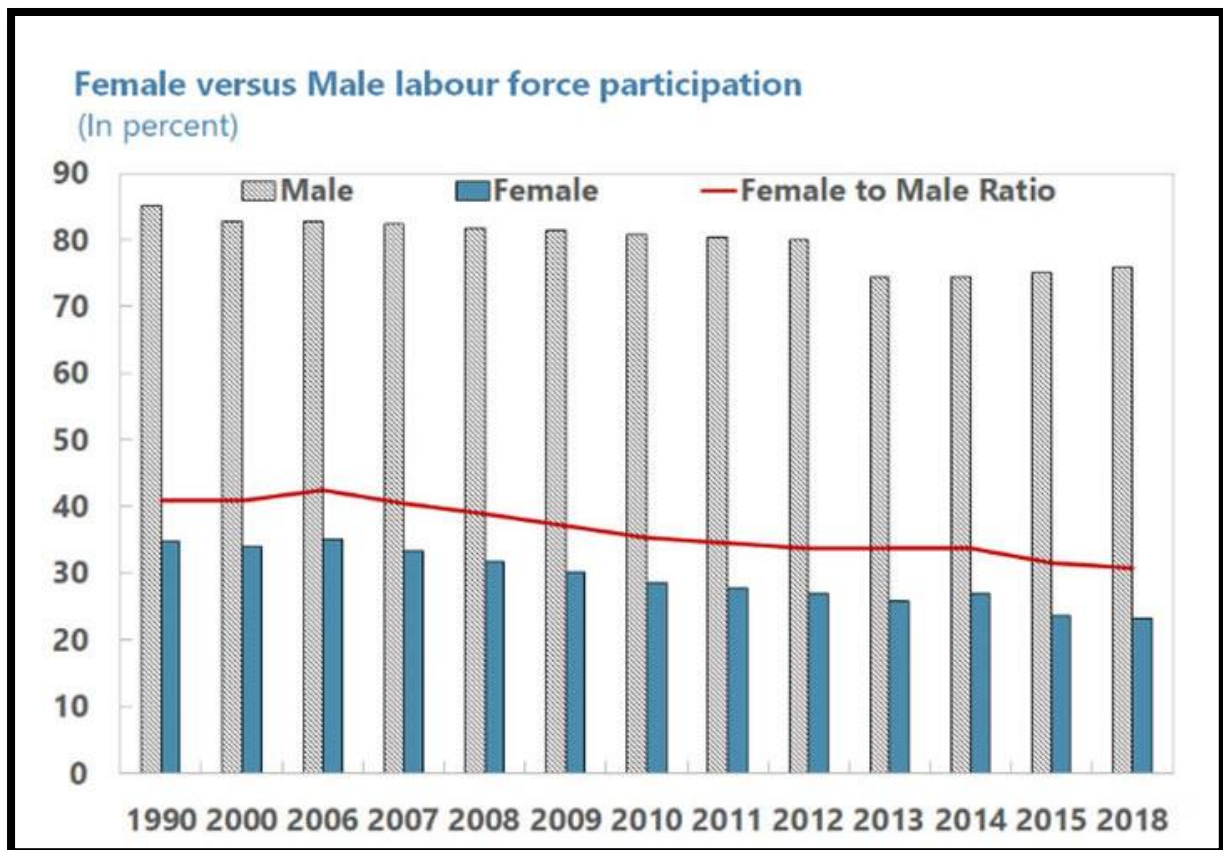
**GOI (2013)**

Meanwhile a number of thinker and researchers related to women empowerment like **Agarwal (2012); Unni et al (2010) and Young et al (2014)** stated that if the women are de-valuationed in core job market then it will become difficult form to bargain on other fronts of life and their life may become more miserable. They also stated that the required skills and training is not reaching to the female workers (as stated in 13<sup>th</sup> five year plan) and this calls for promoting the respective program of women empowerment in terms of skill development and training so that more women get attracted and learn a number of skills and grab job in the employment market of the country.

By the time when 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan was in progress, the respective government was in the process of increasing the education and literacy level of women in rural and semi-urban areas of the country; there were a number of apprehension experienced in this regard like considering female as the care taker of the house, no freedom from household activities and responsibilities of children, dependence on male head of the family, and similar issues like that. Then on the other hand, increasing poverty (time of recession)

and declining GDP also called for more working hand and generate income for the country. Hence it became necessary for the agencies of recognize the potential of female workers and include them in the mainstream job market. To a certain level the above given system became a success but only in the rural and semi-urban areas but still the professional inequality for opportunities still prevailed in the economy and this was not good for the overall development of the country.

According to **IMF (Purva Khera)** almost 24% of the work force in India is constituted by the female workers, they called it as Female Labour Force Participation of (FLFP), then PLES (Periodic Labour Force Survey) states that this percentage of participation is lowest as compared to other developing economies of the country. Then the same report states that the maximum number of women entrepreneurs in the country is about 10% and in the same sense 98% of this is being controlled by men in one or the other manner. From the data of 500 entrepreneurs it was estimated that more than 85% of the same are being controlled by men and the number of hired workers is minimum in them.



Purva Khera, IMF (2018)

As can be seen from the above diagram it is visible that although the population of men has not increased much in the country but then again the work participation of women has declined in the recent past. To a certain extent some formal constraints are there:

- Minimum access to formal sources of finance
- Less awareness

- Social restrictions at certain levels
- Ownership rights of business
- Arrangement of capital

This present study had tried to understand and evaluate the gender discrimination in job market or opportunities, this will be judged on the basis of disparity in women employment and even unemployment. The researcher had considered the data for the period of 2005 to 2015 and the respective indicators of the same were, employment in various sectors, Disparity Indexes, earnings, etc. other than this workforce participation will also be considered.

### **Literature Review**

**Khandaker et al (2013)** stated that the disparity in gender can be viewed in the system of bringing up the children and especially in case of children below the 10 years of age. This study was conducted in Bangladesh and the respondents of the study were the members of Expenditure survey conducted in 2010. Findings of the study stated that the selected households use to spend less on the health care of female child and this is way less than the male child. Some obvious reasons for the same were social and cultural norms of the society, some of the religious beliefs, economic and family setting, self-created discrimination between male and female children.

**Asadullah et al (2015)** made an attempt to assess the various aspects related to gaps in male and female children on the basis of religion, Hindi and Muslims were considered for the study. Test component was the school participation of children from the selected religion and that too from two genders. This study was the work of secondary data and facts were taken from the National Statistics Survey of 2011. The findings of the study stated that during the study period the gap between the above given components had widened up i.e. in the early years the gender gap on the basis of religion was less and the same gradually increased in the later years. Also the Muslim female children were going to school in great numbers, but gradually the gap started to increase. This has caused on the overall school participation to decline at all levels. The researcher also stated that there is a need of further research in this regards and also there is a need to find ways and means to increase this participation.

**Singh et al (2015)** this study was based on the situation of women labours in the rural areas of Punjab. The motive of the study was to find the gaps in opportunity generation for women in the region. The period of the study was 2014-15. Findings of the study stated that in most of the cases the female were not able to get the work on regular basis, also the women who were working on regular basis were facing issues like increased family responsibilities, serious health issues, domestic violence and even some issues are the workplace. The researcher suggested that there is a need to educate the women in the region and also to provide skill training to them so that they can become independent on

work fronts and get work on regular basis. Development of household industry was the other major suggestion of the researcher.

**Bhagas (2016)** this study was based on the participation of women in politics and the motive of the study was to evaluate the role of women in Panchayats. The findings of the study stated that the women are facing a number of issues on the political fronts and were in the dire need of help in this regard. Some of the reasons for these issues were like lack of proper literacy and education, suppression at the social and family level, lack of basic infrastructure at the village level and even in some of the cases it was identified that the respective seat was declared as female seat and it was the need of male politician to grab the same. The researcher suggests that this scenario should change and women should be brought forward at all levels, even in politics and for this proper infrastructure, education, literacy, acceptance, etc. are required.

### **Objective**

The main objective of this present study was to measure the gender disparity in terms of employment opportunities and also to find the gap in work force participation of the two genders.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Data**

This present study is based on secondary data, the researcher had kept the track of time period i.e. from 2005 to 2015. Most of the data were taken from the official government records as furnished in the report and publication. To a certain extent the researcher had also used the 'self-acknowledgement' to prepare the data for further analysis.

#### **Time Period**

As the stipulated time was short so the researcher has considered the data related to discrimination and disparity on the basis of gender and the period of the study was 2005 to 2015.

#### **Sources of Data**

The main sources of data were as follows:

- Website of NSS and NSO
- Reports of world banks and IMF published on internet
- Article from magazines and newspapers
- Research papers from the journals of national and international repute
- Other official published and unpublished sources

#### **Tools of analysis**

- The basic tools used were Mean, standard deviation, percentage, etc. and MS-Excel was used to assess the data.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1: Details of Working Population in India (in Lakhs)**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2015 (Estimated)</b>
Total Workers	4025	4817	5110
Main Workers	3132	3624	3832
Marginal Workers	893	1193	1274
Total Male Workers	2755	3318	3478
Total Female Workers	1270	1499	1604
Rural Workers	3107	3485	3565
Rural Male Workers	1992	2267	2408
Rural Female Workers	1114	1218	1391
Urban Workers	918	1331	1572
Urban Male Workers	763	1051	1202
Urban Female Workers	156	280	360
<b>Workers as Percentage of Total Population</b>			
Total Workers	39.10	39.80	40.22
Main Workers	30.50	29.94	28.76
Marginal Workers	8.70	9.85	10.41
Total Male Workers	51.93	53.30	54.73
Total Female Workers	25.68	25.50	25.32
Gender Gap of Total Workers	26.25	27.80	28.21
Rural Workers	41.70	41.80	42.02
Rural Male Workers	52.36	53.0	54.10
Rural Female Workers	30.98	30.0	29.76
Gender Gap of Rural Workers	21.38	23.00	24.45
Urban Workers	32.3	35.30	37.09
Urban Male Workers	50.85	53.80	55.42
Urban Female Workers	11.55	5.40	6.53
Gender Gap of Urban Workers	39.30	48.4	50.44

Source: Census of India 2001, 2011 and estimation of 2015.

Calculated by Author

As can be from the above given table 1 that the number of total workers had increased in the country, as in 2001 the number was 4025 lacs. and the same increased to 4817 lacs. in 2011 and the estimation of 2015 states the value to 5110 lacs. Then on the other hand there was a slow increase in the number of rural female worker and apparent increase in the number of marginal workers. As far as the urban female workers are concerned, the same had increased to a substantial level. Then looking at the percentage increase of worker participation data in the next part of table 1 it is clear that there is gradual increase in the total workers, main workers, marginal worker and even total male workers but the percentage of total female workers had decreased to 25.32% in 2015 from 25.68% in 2011. Then the same had happened with total rural female workers where the decline came down to 29.76% in 2015 from 30.98% in 2011. Then on the other hand the gender gap had also increased to 28.21% in 2015 from 26.25% in 2011. Gender gap of rural workers had gradually increased from 26.25% in 2001 to 24.45% in 2015 and the same had happened with gender gap of urban workers.

### Employment stature in Government Sector - India

**Table 2: Employment in Central and State Government (Values in Millions)**

Year	Male	Female	Total	Male % to total)	Female (% to total)
<b>Central Government</b>					
2001	3.00	0.26	3.26	92.02	7.98
2011	2.22	0.24	2.46	90.24	9.76
2015 (E)	2.73	0.27	2.53	91.30	8.70
<b>State Government</b>					
2001	6.01	1.41	7.42	81.00	19.00
2011	5.56	1.65	7.21	77.12	22.88
2015 (E)	6.20	1.72	7.31	80.55	9.45

Source: Directorate General of Employment and Training, Ministry of Labour.

Data of 2015 is taken on provisional basis and estimated according to published reports.

(E) Estimated.

The data given in table 2 is related to the status of employment in central and state government department. The data shows and in general from 2011 to 2015 there is gradual increase in the number of male and female workers but then again from 2001 to 2011 there was a steep decline in the number of worker, this was due to increase of opportunities in private sector, support to start-ups and even liberal views to the emerging entrepreneurs at the level of MSME. But then again people started to apply for the government jobs in 2015 and the respective percentage had increased. Here it is important to mention that some of the perks and facilities were discarded by the central and state government in order to balance the expenditure like pension scheme, etc. and

this was one of the reasons for the declining interest of people in government jobs. It is observed that the share of government sector in the total employment in the country is very low. In order to measure the share of women with respect to employment in the public sector, an attempt has been made to further disaggregate the analysis on the basis of women employment in central, state government and local bodies. Although women employment has increased in government sector during the last four decades, but still it is far from equitable as majority of government jobs are still occupied by males.

### Gender Employment Disparity Index (GEDI) 2011-2015 {2015 estimated}

**Table 3: Gender Employment Disparity Index (GEDI), India**

States	2001		2011		% Change in 2015 over 2011
	GEDI	Rank	GEDI	Rank	
Andhra Pradesh	3.7845	20	3.2356	21	-14.50
Assam	10.6305	7	5.3147	18	-50.00
Bihar	18.0936	1	13.5172	2	-25.29
Chhattisgarh	11.4410	6	11.5224	3	0.71
Delhi	7.0209	16	6.9497	14	-1.01
Goa	3.2639	21	3.8295	20	17.33
Gujarat	9.5489	9	7.6978	11	-19.39
Haryana	7.8176	12	8.3313	7	6.57
Himachal Pradesh	7.2252	15	5.9101	16	-18.20
Jammu & Kashmir	7.3073	14	7.0081	13	-4.09
Jharkhand	N/A	-	9.2558	6	-
Karnataka	2.4276	23	2.1367	24	-11.98
Kerala	2.1164	24	1.7029	26	-19.54
Madhya Pradesh	8.3554	11	7.7053	10	-7.78
Maharashtra	4.8976	17	4.1947	19	-14.35
Manipur	4.5196	19	3.0013	23	-33.59
Meghalaya	8.5887	10	6.2301	15	-27.46
Nagaland	4.6220	18	3.0414	22	-34.20
Orissa	10.2298	8	5.6775	17	-44.50
Punjab	12.1387	5	8.1422	9	-32.92
Rajasthan	N/A	-	11.3276	4	-
Tamil Nadu	2.5436	22	1.9755	25	-22.33



Tripura	7.3730	13	8.1617	8	10.70
Uttar Pradesh	13.3041	4	7.1933	12	-45.93
Uttarakhand	14.4441	3	9.3306	5	-35.40
West Bengal	16.3549	2	15.1766	1	-7.20
<b>India</b>	<b>4.4517</b>		<b>3.7042</b>		-16.79

Source: Parul (2016), Doctoral Thesis submitted the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

As can be seen in the above given table 3 the Gender Employment Disparity Index was lowest in Kerala and at the second level the GEDI is lowest in Karnataka. Some other states with less GEDI were Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Goa. Then on the other hand highest level of GEDI was found in West Bengal, Bihar, U.P. and even in Jharkhand. As a matter of fact this disparity can be sensed in a way that in respective states where the GEDI is high, the level of literacy and education opportunities for women is less and even overall literacy is low, even the policies of state government do not indicate the empowerment of women at economic and financial level. In such states the social norms did not support the supremacy of females in different spheres of life.

### Conclusion

In a developing economy like India, there are a number of reasons for the generation of any kind of disparity and when it comes to gender disparity at the level of work participation and job opportunities, number of factors are responsible for the same and specially the fingers are pointed on the policies and procedures of state/central government. In India, states like Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, etc. are having the supportive environment for literacy, education, empowerment, etc. but then again in many of the Indian states social norms are not supportive enough to encourage women to go out of the house and become financially independent. The policies and plans made by the central government are equally operational in all the states but then again, to a certain extent, social norms use to adhere the functionality of the same. In such a scenario the researcher would like to suggest that the policies of the government should be multilevel and the strategic implementation of the same should be checked and verified on legal grounds, this will support the female beneficiaries and will also empowerment them at all levels. Some changes are required to be made on the workplace, in terms of infrastructure, facilities and amenities; also the system should be supportive enough to engage females for the longer period of time. Then the corporate and related sectors should frame comparative policies to meet the needs of females and also to develop them. Last but not the least, legal framework related to social and cultural strictness should be dealt with maximum strength.

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