

WOMEN AND WORK

WORK PROFILE OF WOMEN

General Profile

11.1 Women constitute a significant part of the work-force in India. A profile of women in the work-force of the country, bringing out the gender differential is presented in **Table 11.1**. As can be seen from the table, women lag significantly behind men in terms of work participation, employment, etc. However, there are some positive trends. While there has been marginal improvement in annual rate of growth of female employment, the annual rate of growth of employment of educated women is substantially higher.

11.2 The work participation rate continues to be substantially less for females than for males. There has been some improvement in the work participation rate of females since 1971. Work participation rate for women, which was 7.18 and 9.74 percent in urban areas in 1971 and 1991 respectively went upto 11.55 in 2001. In the rural areas the female work participation rate has shown steady improvement since 1971 as compared to urban areas. It has risen from 15.92 in 1971 to 27.20 in 1991 and to 30.98 in 2001.

11.3 Majority of women workers are employed in rural areas. Amongst rural women workers, 87% are employed in agriculture as labourers and cultivators. Amongst women workers in urban areas, about 80% are employed in unorganized sectors like household industries, petty trades and services, buildings and construction, etc.

Table 11.1

WORK PARTICIPATION RATE IN INDIA (1971-1991)

Year	Total Rural Urban	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5
1971	Total Rural Urban	34.17 35.33 29.61	52.75 53.78 48.88	14.22 15.92 7.18
1981	Total Rural Urban	36.70 38.79 29.99	52.62 53.77 49.06	19.67 23.06 8.31
1991	Total Rural Urban	37.68 40.24 30.44	51.56 52.50 48.95	22.73 27.20 9.74
2001 (Provisional)	Total Rural Urban	39.26 41.97 32.23	51.93 52.36 50.85	25.68 30.98 11.55

Notes: 1.Excludes Assam where the 1981 Census could not be held and Jammu & Kashmir where the 1991 Census has not been held.

2. The 1971 Census figures include workers and non-workers with secondary work. The 1981 and 1991 Census figures include main workers and marginal workers.

Source: Registrar General of India.

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN ORGANISED SECTOR

11.4 The employment of women in the organized sector (both Public and Private Sectors) as on 31st March, 2001 was about 4949.3 thousand. This constitutes 17.8% of the total organized sector employment in the country. The overall proportion of women's employment to total employment registered a gain of 0.2% when compared with the corresponding proportion of women's employment in March, 2000.

11.5 Employment of women was highest in Southern Zone and lowest in Central Zone. The increase in employment in terms of percentage was highest in the Eastern Zone whereas the Central Zone recorded a negative growth of 0.18%.

11.6 The distribution of women employees in major industries reveals that community, social & personal services sector continued to absorb the majority of women employees being 2754.5 thousand. The lowest employment of women was noticed in Electricity, Gas & Water sectors.

11.7 In factory and plantation establishments women workers constituted, 10%, and 50% respectively of the total workers in 2000. In mine establishments women workers constituted, 6% of the total workers in 1999.

WOMEN'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND SKILLS

11.8 Women's access to employment is to a significant extent related to their access to education and skills. Women lag behind men in terms of access to education as reflected by the sex-wise enrolment figures for different stages of education. The participation of girls at all stages of education has been increasing steadily over time. However, the percentages are still below fifty percent at all levels of education including higher education.

11.9 The Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Education) has brought under implementation several programmes for providing special access to education at all levels for women. Objectives of these programmes are universalisation of elementary education, vocationalisation of post secondary education and modernization of polytechnic and higher technical education.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR WOMEN

11.10 The Women's Vocational Training programme, launched in 1974 under the Directorate General of Employment & Training, aims at increasing women's employability in wage/self-employment through skill training and development. A separate Women's Cell was formed for the purpose, which has now developed into the Women's Occupational Training Directorate. Under this Directorate in

the Central Sector, a number of Institutions have been set up in different parts of the country. These Institutes, which include 1 National and 10 Regional Vocational Training Institutes, organize regular skill/vocational training courses at basic, advanced and post advanced levels for women who possess of 10th or 12th standard education and qualify the specified eligibility conditions laid down for various courses. Besides the structured long-term courses, these Institutes also organize need-based short term/ad-hoc courses for general women groups - housewives, students, school drop-outs, etc. and refresher training programmes in Advanced skills/pedagogy for ITI instructors.

11.11 Under the State Sector, a network of exclusive Women Industrial Training Institutes have been set up under the administrative control of the State Governments which provide basic skill training courses for women. At present there are 776 exclusive women training Institutes(WITI's) (224 W.I.T.I.s and 552 women wings in general/private ITIs) offering training to more than 47472 women.

TRAINING OF WOMEN IN INDIAN INSTITUTE OF WORKERS EDUCATION (IIWE)

11.12 The Indian Institute of Workers Education, Mumbai has established a separate cell on "Women and Child Labour" and evolved advanced training programmes for the women activists of Central Trade Union Organisations, who are involved in the upliftment and welfare of women and child labour in the country. The cell for advanced training programmes on the theme of women and child labour has prepared modular syllabus. From 1992-93 to September, 2003, 456 women activists were trained in the various training programmes conducted by the Women and Child Labour Cell of the Institute.

ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN JOB SEEKERS

11.13 The Employment Exchanges took special care to cater to the job needs of women registered with them. During January-December, 2002 they placed 25900 women in various employments.

SPECIAL CELL FOR WOMEN LABOUR

11.14 The Ministry of Labour had set up a Women Labour Cell in 1975. The intention was to focus attention on the condition of working women and bring about improvement therein. The Cell has the following functions:

- Formulation and coordination of policies and programmes for the female labour force within the frame work of national manpower and economic policies.
- Maintaining liaison with other Government agencies to secure effective implementation of the programmes in respect of women workers.
- Monitoring the implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act,1976.
- Setting up of an Advisory Committee under the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- Giving grants-in-aid to Non-Governmental Organisations/Voluntary Organisations to formulate and execute action oriented projects for women workers.

11.15 An important activity of the Cell is to convene the meeting of the Central Advisory Committee, which has been constituted under the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, and follow up the recommendations made by the Committee.

11.16 Another important activity of the Women Cell is to examine and process project proposals to carry out studies on matters affecting women workers and also to fund programmes aimed at improving their economic well being.

11.17 Several projects aimed at improving the working conditions of women and raising their economic level were processed by the Women Cell of the Ministry of Labour during 2001-2002.

11.18 The Cell has also processed and sanctioned other studies and action-oriented projects of far reaching significance. At present seven action oriented projects are under implementation.

BOX 11.1

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN – PROTECTIVE LEGAL PROVISIONS

Name of Enactment	Protective Provisions
The Bidi & Cigar workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.	Provision of crèches for the benefit of women workers in the industrial premises wherein more than fifty female employees are ordinarily employed.
The Plantation Labour Act, 1951.	Provision of crèches in every plantation wherein fifty or more women workers (including women workers employed by any contractor) are employed or where the number of children of women workers (including women workers employed by any contractor) is twenty or more. Women workers are provided time off for feeding children.
The Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970	Provision of crèches where twenty or more women are ordinarily employed as contract labour. Female contract labour to be employed by any contractor between between 6AM and 7PM-with the exception of mid-wives and nurses in hospitals and dispensaries.
The Inter State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment & Conditions of Service) Act, 1979	Provision of crèches for the benefit of women workers in establishments wherein twenty or more women are ordinarily employed as migrant workers and in which employment of migrant workers is likely to continue for three months or more.
The Factories Act, 1948	Provision of crèches in every factory wherein more than thirty women workers are ordinarily employed.
The Mines Act, 1952	Employment in mines below ground prohibited. Provision of separate toilets and washing facilities for women workers.

Maternity Benefit Act, 1961	<p>Maternity benefits to be provided on completion of 80 days working.</p> <p>Not required to work during six weeks immediately following the day of delivery or miscarriage. No work of arduous nature, long hours of standing likely to interfere with pregnancy/normal development of foetus or which may cause miscarriage or is likely to affect health to be given for a period of six months immediately preceding the period of one week before delivery. On medical certificate, advance maternity benefit to be allowed.</p> <p>Rs.250.00 as Medical bonus to be given when no prenatal confinement and post natal care is provided free of charge</p>
Equal Remuneration Act, 1976	<p>Payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers for same or similar nature of work protected under the Act.</p> <p>No discrimination is permissible in recruitment and service conditions except where employment of women is prohibited or restricted by or under any law.</p>
Employee's State Insurance (General) Regulation, 1950	<p>Claim for maternity benefit becomes due on the date medical certificate is issued for miscarriage, sickness arising out of pregnancy, confinement or premature birth of child.</p> <p>Claim for maternity benefit becomes due on (General Regulation 1950) the date medical certificate is issued for miscarriage, sickness arising out of pregnancy, confinement or premature birth of child.</p>
Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976	Appointment of women member in the Advisory and Central Advisory Committee is mandatory under the Acts at Sl.Nos.10-13.
Iron Ore Mines, Manganese Ore Mines and Chrome Ore Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1976.	- do -
Lime Stone and Dolomite Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1972	- do -
Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1946.	- do -
The Building and Other Construction Workers(Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996.	<p>Representation of a women member on Building and other Construction Worker Welfare Boards.</p> <p>Provisions for maternity benefit to female beneficiaries of the Welfare Fund.</p> <p>Provision for crèches where more than 50 female construction workers are ordinarily employed.</p>
Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946.	Provision regarding safeguards against sexual harassment of women workers at their work places.

EQUAL REMUNERATION

11.19 The Government of India ratified the ILO Convention No. 100 of 1951 relating to equal remuneration for men and women, in the year 1958. To give effect to the Constitutional provisions and also to ensure the enforcement of ILO Convention No.100, the Equal Remuneration Ordinance was promulgated in the year 1975. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, subsequently replaced the above Ordinance.

11.20 States/Union Territories have appointed competent authorities under the Equal Remuneration Act,1976 and have also set up Advisory Committees under the Act. The Ministry and the Central Advisory Committee regularly monitor the situation regarding enforcement of the provisions of Equal Remuneration Act. The special cell calls for annual returns from the State Governments in order to monitor implementation of the Act. In most cases the response from the State Governments has not been encouraging. The State Governments/Union Territories are being advised from time to time to ensure more rigorous enforcement of the Act so as to improve the conditions of women workers.

11.21 Following social welfare organizations have been recognized under the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 for the purpose of filing complaints in courts against employers for violation of the provisions of the Act:

- **The Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi**
- **The Self Employed Women's Association, Ahmedabad**
- **The Working Women's Forum (India), Chennai**
- **The Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi**

CHILD CARE CENTRES

11.22 Statutory provisions have been made in certain Labour laws for organizing child care centers for the benefit of women workers. The Factories Act, 1948, the Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act,1966 and the Building and other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act,1996 provide for establishment of crèches for the benefit of women workers. The Plantation Labour Act, 1951 provides that the women workers be provided time-off for feeding children.

SUPREME COURT GUIDELINES ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN WORKERS:

11.23 The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, in the case of writ petition No.666-70 of 1992 filed by Vishaka & Ors.Vs State of Rajasthan & Ors. laid down certain guidelines for prevention of sexual harassment of women employees at their work places. Number of initiatives have been taken to give effect to the guidelines. All Central Ministries/Departments, State Govts./U.Ts, and CPSUs have been informed of the provisions contained in the judgment. They have been asked to implement the guidelines laid down in the said judgment. The Conduct Rule applicable to the officers of the Central Government and the All India Services have since been amended to give effect to the guidelines. To make the guidelines applicable to employees in the Private Sector, the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 has been amended.

FUTURE STRATEGY

11.24 In the context of economic liberalization, the quality of women's employment will depend upon several factors. Chief amongst these are access to education and skill development training. In both these areas women continue to lag behind men. The solution lies in creating conditions and opportunities, which are conducive for women to work in increasingly productive and remunerative sectors of the economy with freedom. The issues requiring priority attention in the coming years are:

- ✓ **Creating and strengthening an accurate and authentic data-base on women workers in all sectors of employment, covering both organised and unorganized sectors. This could be used as a tool of planning for both legislative as well as administrative intervention by the Government to protect and safeguard the interests of women workers in different fields of work and under different fields of work and under different conditions of employment.**

 - ✓ **Technological changes tend to displace women more than men primarily on account of lack of education, orientation, training and skill development programmes. Such programmes for women workers, therefore, need to be given high priority with a view to enabling women workers to improve their productivity and access to quality employment and also to enable them to take up new jobs involving technological changes.**

 - ✓ **Carrying out research studies on problems of women workers, their employability and the extent of their displacement on account of technological and various other changes.**
-