

DISCUSSION PAPER

THE INDIAN LABOUR MARKET: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE



No. 8, February 2016

GOVINDAN RAVEENDRAN

FOR PROGRESS OF THE WORLD'S WOMEN 2015-2016

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SUMMARY

The paper is based on a study commissioned by UN Women in 2014 to analyse women's work in India. It provides an in-depth analysis of trends in labour outcomes of women in India based on unit level datasets of employment-unemployment surveys undertaken in 1999–2000, 2004–2005 and 2011–2012. The paper brings out the gender differentials that exist in the employment status of women and men despite the existence of legal and policy framework for the empowerment of women in the country. The labour force participation rates (LFPRs) of women are not only less than half those of men but also

declined in 2011–2012. Age, marital status, presence of children, socio-religious status, area of residence, level of education and relative affluence of households are some of the determinants of labour force participation of women and men in India. There has never been a steady state for women's employment; peak employment comes later in life, so any possible gains in increased wages are short-lived. The deprivation of women in terms of quality of work is three times that of men, and wage rates of women are significantly lower. There has also been a decline in real wages of regular informal workers since 1999–2000.

RÉSUMÉ

Le document est fondé sur une étude commandée par ONU Femmes en 2014 dans le but d'analyser le travail des femmes en Inde. Il fournit une analyse approfondie des tendances du marché du travail pour les femmes en Inde fondée sur des ensembles de données unitaires obtenus à partir d'enquêtes menées sur l'emploi et le chômage en 1999–2000, 2004–2005 et 2011–2012. Le document met en évidence les différences entre les sexes en ce qui concerne l'emploi, et ce en dépit de l'existence d'un cadre juridique et politique favorisant l'autonomisation des femmes dans le pays. Les taux d'activité des femmes sont non seulement inférieurs à ceux des hommes (moins de la moitié), mais ils ont également diminué en 2011–2012.

L'âge, la situation matrimoniale, la présence d'enfants, le statut socioreligieux, la région de résidence, le niveau d'éducation et la richesse relative des ménages sont certains des déterminants du taux d'activité des femmes et des hommes en Inde. La situation relative à l'emploi des femmes n'a jamais été stable ; le pic de l'emploi survient plus tard dans la vie, et donc les gains possibles suite à une augmentation de salaire sont de courte durée. Les privations des femmes à propos de la qualité du travail sont trois fois plus prononcées que celles des hommes, et les niveaux de salaire féminins sont nettement inférieurs. De plus, les salaires réels des travailleurs informels réguliers ont baissé depuis 1999–2000.

RESUMEN

El artículo está basado en un estudio encargado por ONU Mujeres en 2014 con el fin de conocer la situación laboral de las mujeres en la India. Ofrece un análisis exhaustivo de las tendencias observadas en los resultados de las mujeres en términos de empleo en dicho

país, con base en conjuntos de datos extraídos de las encuestas de empleo y desempleo realizadas en 1999–2000, 2004–2005 y 2011–2012. El artículo pone de relieve las diferencias de género que existen entre la situación de los hombres y las mujeres en el mundo

del trabajo, a pesar de la existencia de un marco jurídico y normativo que fomenta el empoderamiento de las mujeres en el país. Las tasas de actividad de las mujeres no solo equivalen a la mitad de las masculinas, sino que además descendieron en el período 2011–2012. Edad, estado civil, presencia de hijas e hijos, condición social y religiosa, zona de residencia, nivel educativo y riqueza relativa de los hogares constituyen algunos de los factores que determinan la

participación de mujeres y hombres en el mercado laboral de la India. El empleo de la mujer jamás ha llegado a estabilizarse; el pico de empleo llega en una fase tardía de la vida, por lo que cualquier incremento salarial es efímero. Los índices de precariedad de las mujeres triplican los de los hombres, y los salarios de aquellas son significativamente menores. Además, desde 1999–2000 se observa una reducción de los salarios reales de las trabajadoras del sector informal.

1.

INTRODUCTION

Gender inequalities in respect of education and employment curtail the productive capabilities of women and hence impede the process of development of nations. This is particularly the case in developing countries such as India, where women are subjected to a number of restrictive social norms and ethos despite the principle of gender equality being enshrined in the Constitution. The Constitution also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women, which has led to several laws, policies and development plans/ programmes being put in place specifically for the advancement of women in different spheres.

There has been a shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development since the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974–1978). A National Perspective Plan for Women (1998–2000) was launched to give direction for the all-round development of women in the country. A National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution provided for the reservation of seats in local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women and laid a strong foundation for their participation in decision-making at the local level.

The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997–2002) adopted the concept of a Women Component Plan (WCP) as an important strategy and directed both the Central and State Governments to ensure that “not less than 30 per cent of the funds or benefits are earmarked for women”. This paved the way for gender-responsive budgeting. The Central Government also announced the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women in 2001, which was declared the Year of Women's Empowerment so as to bring women into the mainstream of development.

During the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002–2007), the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) adopted 'budgeting for gender equity' as a mission statement, and the Ministry of Finance initiated the process of creating 'Gender Budgeting Cells' in all ministries and departments as an institutional mechanism for ensuring the flow of earmarked plan funds for the social and economic empowerment of women.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007–2012) envisaged a five-fold agenda for gender equity as part of its focus on inclusive growth. This included economic, social

and political empowerment, strengthening of mechanisms for effective implementation of women-related legislation and augmenting delivery mechanisms for gender mainstreaming. The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) was set up on International Women's Day in 2010 with the objective of strengthening the overall processes that promote the all-round development of women.

The Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017), which was intended to achieve faster, sustainable and more inclusive growth, envisaged engendering of development planning and making it more children centric. The ending of gender-based inequalities, discrimination and violence was made an overriding priority.

In spite of constitutional provisions and a multitude of developmental efforts, however, the labour force participation rates (LFPRs) of women in India are not only low but have been declining systematically over the years. This has serious implications for the nation's development agenda and thus needs immediate attention. An attempt is made in this paper to provide an in-depth analysis of the trends in women's LFPRs based on unit level data sets of employment-unemployment surveys undertaken by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in 1999–2000, 2004–2005 and 2011–2012. Based on a study commissioned by UN Women in 2014, it analyses issues including legal and policy framework relating to the empowerment of women in India, changes in population structure over the years, major determinants of labour force participation, differentials in activity statuses of women and men, variations in industrial and occupational profiles, quality of employment and wage rates.

2.

CHANGES IN POPULATION STRUCTURE

The population of India is estimated to be 1,210.2 million as per census 2011 as against 1,028.7 million in 2001 and 846.3 million in 1991. There has thus been a definite deceleration in the annual rate of population growth from 2.0 per cent in the decade of 1991 to 2001 to 1.6 per cent between 2001 and 2011.

The sex ratio, estimated as the number of females per 1,000 males, improved from 927 in 1991 to 933 in 2001 and 940 in 2011 (Figure 2-1). The positive change in the sex ratios since 1991 is due to many factors including improvements in the education of women, falling fertility rates and better health outcomes.

The population of India is also in the process of ageing. NSSO surveys show that the percentage below the age of 15 decreased from 35.7 per cent in 1999–

2000 to 33.6 per cent in 2004–2005 and then to 29.9 per cent in 2011–2012 (Table 2-1). There has also been a steady decline in the crucial demographic parameter of the birth rate due to improvements in educational attainments of women, an increase in the age at marriage, social awareness and incentives for family planning. At the same time, longevity increased due to better health facilities, improved socio-economic conditions and higher levels of education. The present population structure is due to the combined effect of all these factors.

FIGURE 2-1
Number of females per thousand males, 1991, 2001 and 2011

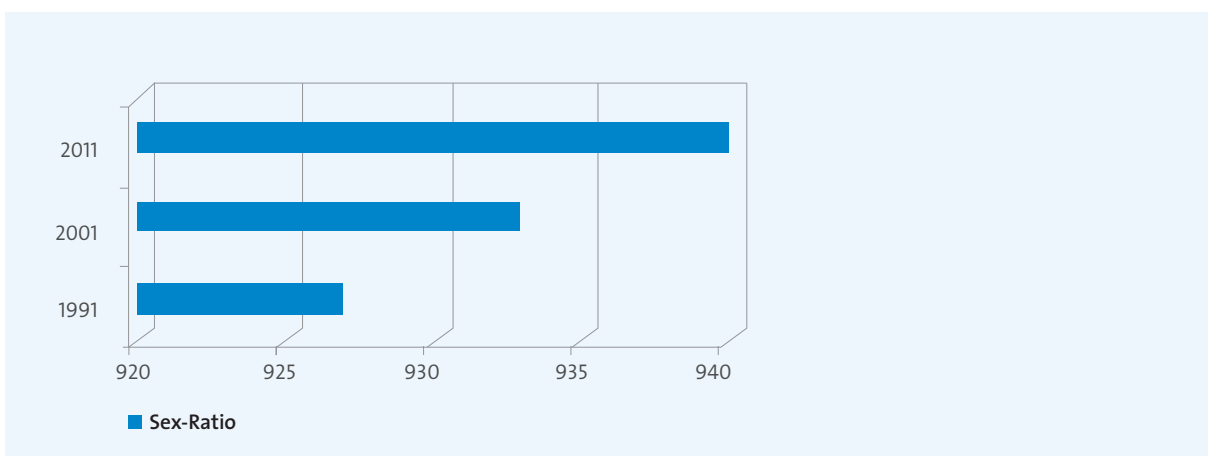


TABLE 2-1
Percentage distribution of population by age group

Sex	Age group	1999–2000	2004–2005	2011–2012
Men	0–14	36.4	34.3	30.8
	15–54	54.2	55.8	57.9
	55+	9.5	9.9	11.3
Women	0–14	35.0	32.8	28.9
	15–54	54.9	56.6	59.1
	55+	10.1	10.6	12.0
Person	0–14	35.7	33.6	29.9
	15–54	54.5	56.2	58.5
	55+	9.8	10.2	11.6

3.

CHILD LABOUR

Employment of children up to the age of 14 is prohibited under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986. In view of the Act and better social awareness, there has been a significant drop in the participation of children in the labour force over the years.

While the number of male children in the labour force decreased from 5.5 million in 1999–2000 to 2.4 million in 2011–2012, the number of female children decreased from 4.6 million to 1.6 million during the same period. There was also a decrease in average number of days of

work per week in the case of female children (Table 3-1). As the extent of child labour has declined substantially, and at present does not constitute a significant share of the labour force, the rest of the analysis in this paper is confined to the adult population aged 15 and above.

TABLE 3-1
Labour and work force participation of children up to age 14

Characteristic	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Population (million)	188.9	169.6	358.5	194.3	172.0	366.2	194.5	172.3	366.9
Labour force (million)	5.5	4.6	10.1	4.7	3.9	8.5	2.4	1.6	4.0
Employed (million)	5.4	4.5	9.9	4.4	3.8	8.2	2.2	1.5	3.7
LFPR (%)	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.2	2.3	1.2	0.9	1.1
Work Participation Rate(%)	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.3	2.2	2.2	1.1	0.9	1.0
Person days per week (million)	14.4	8.9	23.3	9.5	5.7	15.2	6.1	2.2	8.3
Weekly work days per person (No)	2.7	2.0	2.3	2.2	1.5	1.8	2.8	1.5	2.3

4.

GENDER DIFFERENTIALS IN THE ACTIVITY STATUS OF THE ADULT POPULATION

The adult population is generally categorised into those within or outside the labour force. Those within the labour force include all those engaged in economic activities or workers¹ and those seeking/available for work or unemployed. Those outside the labour force are grouped into three major categories: (i) those attending educational institutions (students); (ii) those engaged in domestic duties in their own homes; and (iii) other non-working categories such as pensioners, renters, remittance recipients, those engaged in unsanctioned activities (e.g., begging, prostitution) and those unable to work (e.g., too young, too old, disabled).

The distribution of population by broad activity status brings out clearly that the percentage of employed women was less than half that of men in all three periods (Table 4-1). It also went down by

about 7.5 percentage points between 1999–2000 and 2011–2012, while the decrease was only 3.3 percentage points in the case of men.

TABLE 4-1
Distribution of adult population by broad activity status

Years	Category	Number of persons in millions (and percentages)		
		Men	Women	Persons
1999–2000	Employed	268.6 (81.3)	117.8 (37.4)	386.5 (59.9)
	Unemployed	7.1 (2.1)	2.2 (0.7)	9.3 (1.4)
	Out of labour force	55.0 (16.6)	194.8 (61.9)	249.8 (38.7)
	Total	330.7 (100)	314.9 (100)	645.6 (100)
2004–2005	Employed	304.4 (81.9)	143.1 (40.7)	447.5 (61.9)
	Unemployed	6.9 (1.9)	3.9 (1.1)	10.8 (1.5)
	Out of labour force	60.3 (16.2)	204.8 (58.2)	265.1 (36.6)
	Total	371.5 (100)	351.8 (100)	723.4 (100)
2011–2012	Employed	341.0 (78.0)	126.8 (29.9)	467.7 (54.3)
	Unemployed	7.3 (1.7)	3.1 (0.7)	10.5 (1.2)
	Out of labour force	88.9 (20.3)	293.9 (69.4)	382.8 (44.5)
	Total	437.2 (100)	423.8 (100)	861.0 (100)

¹ The distinction between 'employment' and 'work', as per the recommendations of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2013, is not considered in this paper as these recommendations are yet to be implemented in India.

The traditional Indian perception that men are ‘bread-winners’ and women are ‘homemakers’ is one of the major reasons for the low level of participation of women in the labour force. There are also a number of other reasons – including supply and demand mismatch in the labour market, restrictive social norms, rigid labour market conditions and structural changes in the economy – that push women away from work.

People who are not employed during the major part of the period since their entry into the labour market during the last 365 days are classified as unemployed. The percentage of these people among those in the labour force is defined as the unemployment rate. The overall unemployment rate remained static at 2.4 per cent in both 1999–2000 and 2004–2005 and marginally declined to 2.2 per cent during 2011–2012 primarily because of a reduction in the LFPRs of both women and men in the 15–24 age group. While the overall unemployment rate of women was lower at 1.8 per cent in 1999–2000, as against 2.6 per cent for men, it was 2.4 per cent in 2011–2012 as against 2.1 per cent for men. This implies that women have relatively fewer employment opportunities compared to men. As might be expected, the highest rate of unemployment is in the youngest age group of 15–24 for both women and men as they are fresh entrants to the labour force and there is a waiting period to get a suitable job.

Looking at social groups, ‘Muslims’ and ‘Others’ have comparatively higher unemployment rates, particularly in the case of women. This may be because

women and men belonging to these groups tend to wait for a job of their choice instead of taking up any job.

Educated women with graduate and above qualifications are the worst affected in terms of unemployment. Their unemployment rate was as high as 14.6 per cent in 2011–2012 as against 5.8 per cent for similarly qualified men. Even among those with secondary or higher secondary levels of education, the unemployment rates of women are significantly higher than men’s. This implies women with moderate and higher levels of education are not easily able to find jobs consistent with their qualifications.

An analysis of those outside the labour force reveals that almost 80 per cent of women are confined to their homes with domestic duties of looking after the needs of other members of the household (Table 4-2). On the other hand, most of the men outside the labour force are attending educational institutions pursuing various studies. The percentage of students among men increased from 57.1 per cent in 1999–2000 to 66.3 per cent in 2011–2012, an increase of 9.2 percentage points. Thus the reduction in the LFPR of men by 3.6 percentage points is more than compensated by the increase in the student population. Women outside the labour force, however, are not so fortunate. Women students constituted only 9.5 per cent in 1999–2000, which increased to just 14.0 per cent by 2011–2012. The increase of 4.5 percentage points is much less than the 7.5 percentage point reduction in women’s LFPRs.

TABLE 4-2
Percentage distribution of women and men outside the labour force by specific activity status

Activity status	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Student	57.1	9.5	59.3	11.1	66.3	14.0
Domestic duties	2.4	79.7	2.6	78.7	2.1	77.5
Pensioners	8.6	1.1	12.0	1.8	13.1	2.2
Others	31.9	9.7	26.1	8.4	17.5	6.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

The above situation is despite substantial increases in the enrolment rates of women and men aged 15–24 in educational institutions during the latter half of the decade, primarily due to the rapid expansion of school facilities under the major elementary education programme of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (Education for All) since 2000–2001² and the re-vamping of the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE)³ into a cooked Mid-Day Meal Scheme in 2001. The 2009 Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, known as The Right to Education (RTE) Act,⁴ specified the duties and responsibilities of Government, local authorities and parents in providing free and compulsory education to all children. The parental/ community attitude against educating girls has also started changing in recent times due to concerted efforts by the Government to promote the education of girl child.

As might be expected, the largest percentage of women in domestic duties was in the 25–34 age group in all three periods as most of them were married with small children. There was an increase of 12.5 percentage points in the share of such women between 2004–2005 and 2011–2012. The only age group that saw a decrease in the percentage of women in domestic duties was 15–24 years, as more women in this age group attended educational institutions.

² Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a flagship programme of the Government for achieving universal elementary education. It was launched as per the mandate given by The Constitution (Eighty Sixth Amendment) Act 2002, which made free and compulsory education of all children aged 6–14 years a fundamental right. The programme envisages opening of new schools and alternate schooling facilities, construction of schools and additional classrooms, toilets and drinking water facilities, provisioning for teachers, periodic teacher training, academic resource support and text books.

³ The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was launched on 15 August 1995 as a centrally sponsored scheme in 2,408 blocks of the country to provide free lunch to students up to class V of

The Muslim community is the social group in which the largest percentage of women remained at home to attend to domestic duties: over 63 per cent in all three periods. This is consistent with the finding that the lowest LFPR of women is also among this community.

By education, the lowest percentage of women with the activity status of attending to domestic duties was among illiterates in all three periods. However, the highest percentage was among those with below primary or primary levels of education. It seems that women with no education are pushed into the labour force due to economic compulsions while those with low levels of education are constrained by social inhibitions against labour force participation, particularly outside their homes. A comparatively low percentage of women with secondary/ higher secondary and higher levels of education were in the category of attending to domestic duties as they seek to enter the labour market. Nevertheless, more than 50 per cent of women had this activity status at all levels of education in 2011–2012.

By decile group, women in the lowest two deciles have the lowest percentages of those attending to domestic duties, while the percentages of such women are comparatively larger in higher decile groups. This indicates that women in the lowest deciles are compelled to enter the labour force more often than others.

government, government-aided and local body-run schools. In 1997–1998, the scheme was extended to all the blocks of the country. In 2007, it was modified to cover classes VI to VIII in 3,479 educationally backward blocks and its name was changed to mid-day meal (MDM) in schools. The scheme is aimed at giving a boost to universalization of primary education by mitigating classroom hunger and improving the nutritional status of primary school children.

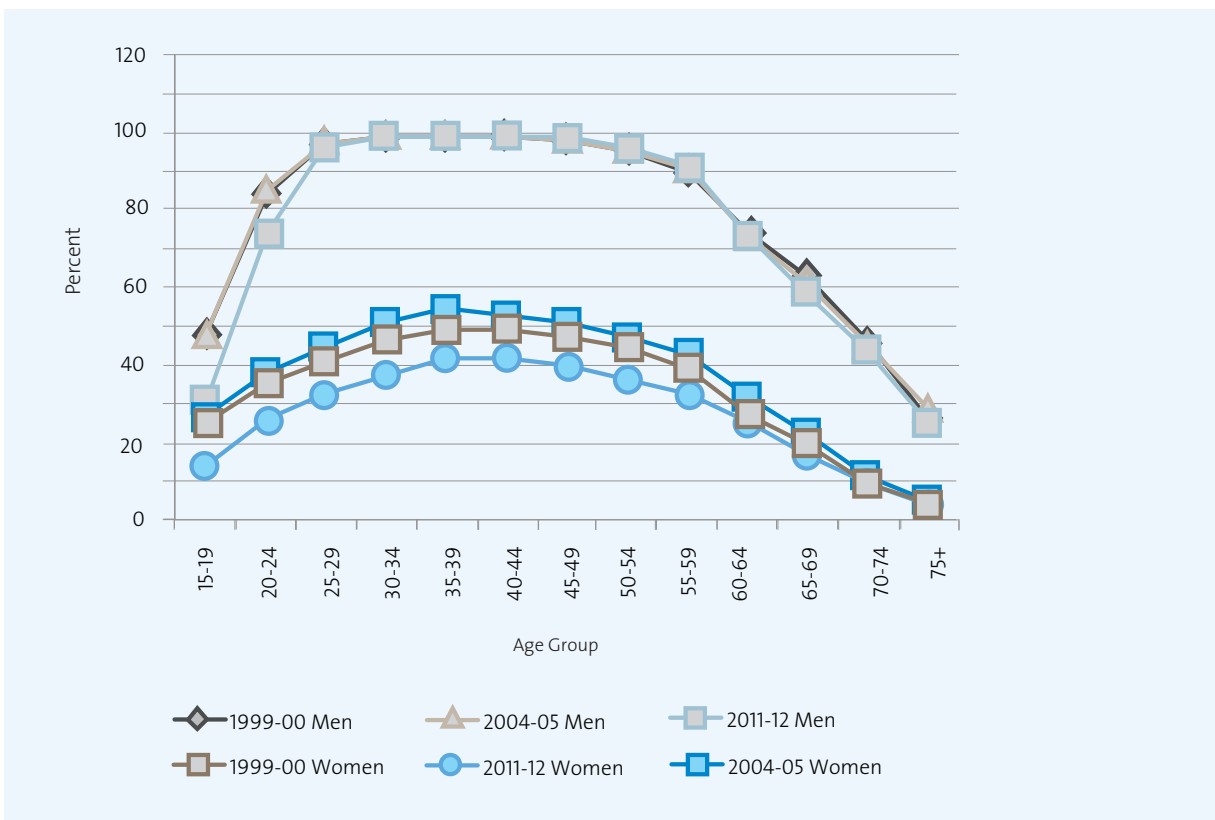
⁴ The Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 provides for the right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school and puts the responsibility of ensuring compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education of every child on the Government.

5.

AGE-SPECIFIC LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES OF ADULTS

The age-specific LFPRs of women and men depict consistently different patterns. While those of men sharply rise and attain a level above 90 per cent by the age of 25, the LFPRs of women never attain more than 55 per cent in any of the periods. Further, the LFPRs of men remain at 97–98 per cent between the ages 28–50, while in the case of women they drop immediately after reaching their maximum in the 35–44 age group. Thus, there is never a steady state for women’s employment; peak employment comes later in life, so any possible gains in increased wages are short-lived.

FIGURE 5-1
Labour force participation rates by age and gender



LFPRs of women are also consistently and significantly lower than those of men at all ages. The pattern is similar in all the three years of study (Figure 5-1). Though the LFPRs of women reached a peak of about 55 per cent in 2004–2005, they were below 50 per cent in both the other periods. The participation rates of women of all ages were higher in 2004–2005 and declined considerably in 2011–2012. Such a phenomenon is, however, not visible in the case of men as the graphs for all three years almost coincide except in the lowest two age groups. The decline in women's LFPRs in 2011–2012—despite a considerable increase in the working age population, better health outcomes and significant growth of the economy over the years—is an issue still evoking considerable discussion among policy makers and academicians in India.

The decline in the LFPRs of women in 2011–2012 is attributed by official documents (Planning Commission 2011: 9–10) as well as by scholars (e.g., Chandrasekhar and Ghosh 2011; Choudhury 2011; and Rangarajan et al. 2011) to an increase in the enrolment of young people in education. Yet, all agree that the increase in this category did not fully match the decline in the labour force. Choudhury (2011) proposed that “the decline in the LFPR of women, irrespective of age, might be because of a decline in overall employment opportunities” and that “social orthodoxy may have played a role in pushing out women rather than men from labour force” (2011: 24). However, Rangarajan, then Chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, offered the following explanation:

“There is a high probability that some low paying jobs in the unorganised sector do not have takers as the option to study, improve skills and employability is now available. Large numbers of women are withdrawing from the labour force to attend to domestic duties. This may be a result of improved incomes and a similar phenomenon as above may be at work impacting the workforce numbers.” (Rangarajan et al. 2011: 70)

Kannan and Raveendran (2012: 77–80) pointed out that only 27 per cent of the decline in the labour force participation of women was due to the increase in their attendance rate in educational institutions. The other contributing factors, as per their analysis, were: (i) diminishing self-employment opportunities for men, leading to a greater number of women losing their status as unpaid family labour; (ii) loss of employment as casual labour in agriculture, which pushed them back into the households; and (iii) men moving from household agriculture and manufacturing to casual labour in construction.

At the same time, however, it needs to be noted that the decision process for participation or otherwise of women is highly complex and influenced by a number of personal, social, economic and environment factors. These include their age, life cycle events, education, location of residence, social status, living standard, employment of men in the family, social constraints, mobility, labour market conditions, wage rates, etc.

6.

DETERMINANTS OF LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND GENDER DIFFERENTIALS

Although there are a number of factors that determine the labour force participation of women and men and the differentials among them, the influence of some specific factors such as age, marital status, social background, education, per capita consumption expenditure level, etc. can be analysed based on the data sets used for this paper.

6.1

Age profile

As already shown, there is a consistent pattern in the LFPRs of women and men by age groups and the differences between them across the survey years. The greatest difference between the LFPRs of women and men is in the 25–34 age group (Table 6-1). At this age, the participation rate of men attains the maximum

while women are largely engaged in childbearing and child rearing. The next greatest difference is in the 45–54 age group, when women are often engaged in looking after old parents and grandchildren and start withdrawing from the labour force.

TABLE 6-1

Labour force participation rates of women and men by age group

Age group	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference
15–24	64.1	29.9	34.2	64.8	32.5	32.4	50.3	20.0	30.3
25–34	97.7	43.7	54.0	98.0	47.7	50.3	97.3	34.9	62.4
35–44	98.6	49.0	49.6	98.7	54.0	44.7	98.9	41.4	57.5
45–54	96.6	46.2	50.4	97.0	49.1	47.9	97.5	38.6	58.9
55 plus	67.1	24.1	43.0	67.2	27.4	39.9	67.1	21.6	45.4
Total	83.4	38.1	45.2	83.8	41.8	42.0	79.7	30.7	49.0

6.2

Marital status

Marriage is one of the most crucial life cycle events and has a significant impact on labour force participation, particularly on women. In order to assess the real impact of marriage and to exclude the impact of age and attendance in educational institutions, the LFPRs were computed for those in the 25–44 age group 25 to 44. Currently married men cannot afford to remain outside the labour force and thus they have LFPRs of about 99 per cent in all the three years (Table 6-2). Unmarried men have the lowest LFPRs of about 91 per cent as over 57 percent of those

outside the labour force are still students and about 25 percent are disabled. In the case of women, the pattern is reversed with currently married women having the lowest participation rates as a good percentage of them tend to be homemakers instead of in the labour market. Widowed/ divorced women, however, are compelled to get into the labour force for their survival and thus have the highest rates of LFPRs. The decline in the LFPRs of women between 1999–2000 and 2011–2012 was the highest among currently married women.

TABLE 6-2

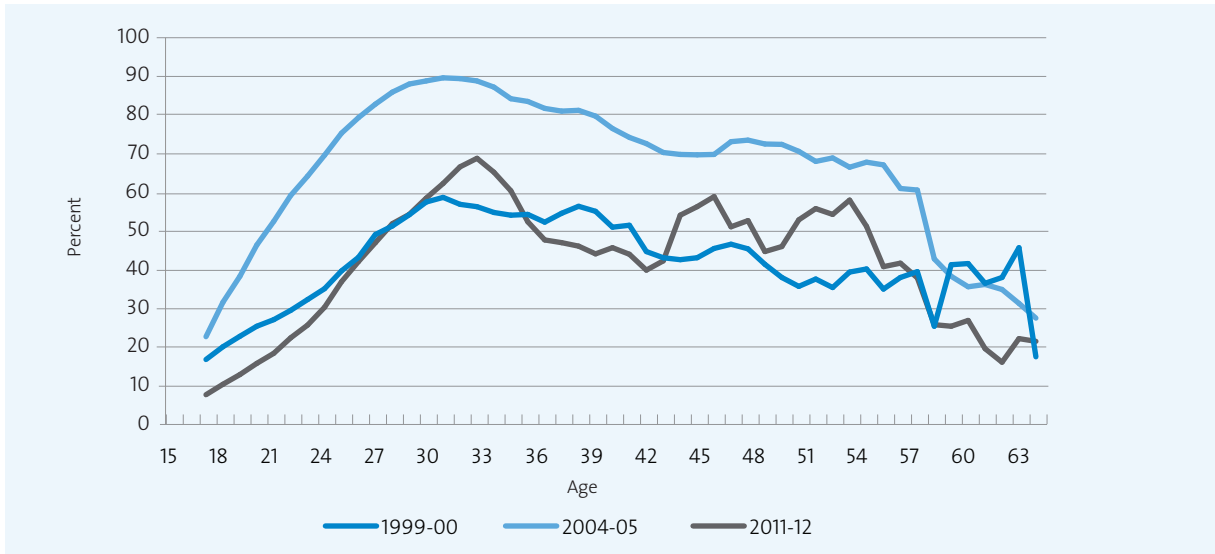
Labour force participation rates of women and men aged 25 to 44 by marital status

Marital status	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Never married	91.7	53.9	92.1	62.0	91.4	54.8
Currently married	98.9	44.4	99.2	48.8	99.1	35.9
Widowed	96.2	72.5	97.8	77.7	97.3	76.1
Divorced/ separated	93.4	73.5	94.9	77.5	94.1	70.6
Total	98.1	46.0	98.3	50.6	98.1	37.9

Average LFPRs of women by marital status indicated in the above table, however, do not reveal the dynamic nature of this participation. There are significant variations in the pattern of women's LFPRs due to changes in age and marital status. Women below the age of 15 are mostly neither married nor employed. However, as they cross that age, there seems to be an increasing

effort to be in both the employment market and marriage market to secure some level of security in life. As a result, the LFPRs of never married women increase steadily with age (Figure 6-1). They drop suddenly after the age of about 29 with some fluctuations after the age of about 40. The population of never married women becomes very small by the age of 30.

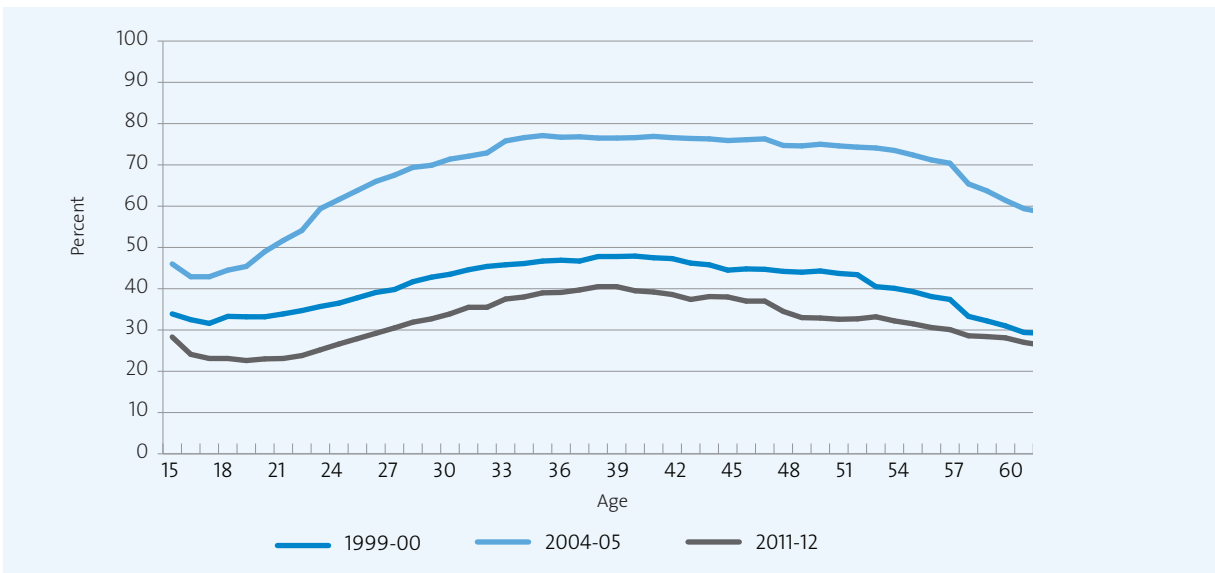
FIGURE 6-1
Labour force participation rates of never married women by age



The percentage of currently married women is less than 5 per cent till the age of 17 but starts rising rapidly thereafter. By the age of 30, about 94.8 per cent of women are currently married while 2.6 per cent of them are either widows or divorced/ separated. The LFPRs of currently married women rise gradually from the age of 15 and reach a maximum around the age of 38 (Figure 6-2). Thereafter, they decline gradually to the initial level. Considering that the average age at marriage

of women is about 20 years, the participation rates of women increase continuously over a period of about 18 years as more and more women join the labour force with increasing years of married life. The participation rates of this group during 2004–2005 were well above those during the other two periods, and the lowest rates were recorded in 2011–2012. The gap between 1999–2000 and 2011–2012 was maintained through all ages except towards the end of the age spectrum.

FIGURE 6-2
Labour force participation rates of currently married women by age



6.3

Households with small children

The participation rates of women and men belonging to households with small children up to the age of three move in opposite directions with increasing number of children. While the LFPRs of men in households with small children are relatively high,

the participation rates of women in such households are fairly low. Women from households not having small children are more likely to be in the labour force than those from households with small children (Table 6-3).

TABLE 6-3

Labour force participation rates of women and men by number of children in the household

Number of children up to the age of 3	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
0	80.3	38.9	80.9	43.0	76.7	31.5
1	89.5	37.3	89.7	39.5	88.6	28.0
2	89.9	36.2	91.6	39.4	90.7	28.3
3	88.8	34.1	90.0	37.1	88.7	27.6
4+	90.3	29.5	89.2	36.0	88.7	31.4
Total	83.4	38.1	83.8	41.8	79.7	30.7

The LFPRs of women and men belonging to households with small children also vary with the age of the youngest child and the age group of the adults. The decline in the LFPRs of women due to the existence of small children in the household is the largest in the case of women aged 25–34 if the age of the youngest child is three years or below (Table 6-4). The difference in participation rates of women in that age group between those from households not having small children up to the age of three and households with such children was as high as 10.1 percentage points in 2011–2012 as against 10.5 in 2004–2005 and 5.9 in 1999–2000. However, in the case of men in the same

age group, the LFPRs were higher by over 2.2 percentage points for households with children up to the age of three in both 2004–2005 and 2011–2012.

If the youngest child in the household is aged 4–9 years, the decrease in the LFPRs of women aged 25–34 are reduced. It was 4.4 percentage points in 2011–2012 as against 4.7 per cent in 2004–2005 and 3.0 per cent in 1999–2000. In the case of men, the increase in LFPRs got further increased to 3.2 percentage points in 2011–2012.

TABLE 6-4

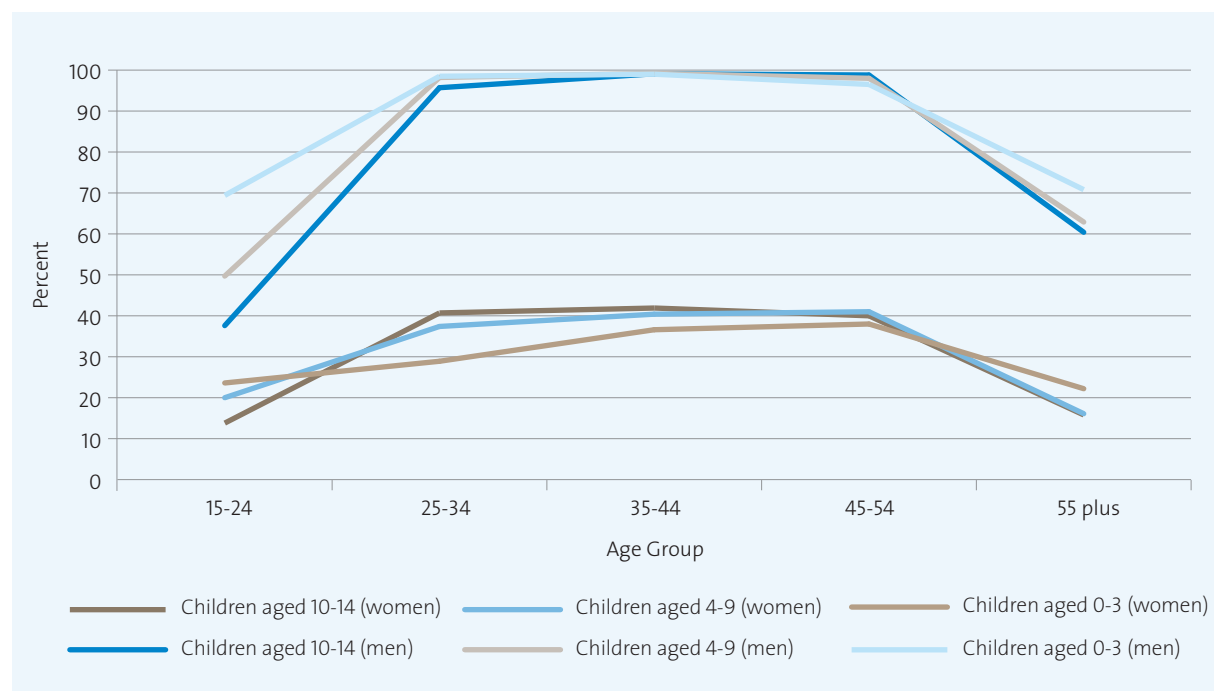
Labour force participation rates of women and men by sex, age and presence of children in the household

Sex	Age group	Presence of children in the household	LFPRs		
			1999–2000	2004–2005	2011–2012
Female	25–54	No children of 3 years of age or younger	47.7	52.6	40.2
		With children aged 0–3	43.0	45.2	31.8
	25–34	No children of 3 years of age or younger	46.7	52.8	39.0
		With children aged 0–3	40.8	42.3	28.9
Male	25–54	No children of 3 years of age or younger	97.4	97.6	97.8
		With children aged 0–3	98.3	98.7	98.4
	25–34	No children of 3 years of age or younger	96.6	96.8	96.3
		With children aged 0–3	98.6	99.0	98.5
Female	25–54	No children of 9 years of age or younger	47.8	52.5	41.1
		With children where youngest is aged 4–9	47.5	52.8	38.8
	25–34	No children of 9 years of age or younger	48.7	56.0	41.8
		With children where youngest is aged 4–9	45.8	51.2	37.4
Male	25–54	No children of 9 years of age or younger	96.6	97.0	97.3
		With children where youngest is aged 4–9	98.5	98.5	98.7
	25–34	No children of 9 years of age or younger	95.2	95.8	95.0
		With children where youngest is aged 4–9	98.4	98.3	98.2
Female	25–54	No children of 14 years of age or younger	47.8	51.1	40.9
		With children where youngest is aged 10–14	47.9	54.4	41.4
	25–34	No children of 14 years of age or younger	48.8	54.2	42.8
		With children where youngest is aged 10–14	48.6	58.0	40.7
Male	25–54	No children of 14 years of age or younger	95.8	96.3	96.4
		With children where youngest is aged 10–14	97.9	98.3	98.7
	25–34	No children of 14 years of age or younger	95.2	95.6	95.0
		With children where youngest is aged 10–14	95.1	97.0	95.7

When the age of the youngest child reaches 10–14 years, the decline in the LFPRs of women in the 25–34 age group gets further reduced. It was 2.1 percentage points in 2011–2012, although there was an increase of 3.8 percentage points in the year 2004–2005. Similarly, the increase in the LFPRs of men gets reduced as the age of the youngest child in the household increases. The increase was only 0.8 percentage points in the year 2011–2012 as against 1.4 per cent in 2004–2005.

The LFPRs of women belonging to households with children up to the age of three is lowest in all the age groups from 25–54 as compared to women from households with children aged 4–9 and 10–14 (Figure 6-3). In the case of men, the difference is almost negligible in the 25–34 to 45–54 age groups.

FIGURE 6-3
LFPRs of women and men in households with small children by age group and age of the youngest child, 2011–2012



6.4 Socio-religious groups

Three distinct social groups have been accorded special status in the Constitution. These are (i) Scheduled Tribes (STs), (ii) Scheduled Castes (SCs) and (iii) Other Backward Communities (OBCs). The classification is based on socio-economic conditions. The population is also divided into a large number of religious groups including Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Muslims, Sikhs, etc. For the purpose of analysis in this paper, the above social groups and religious groups have been combined into five socio-religious groups: (i) STs; (ii) SCs; (iii) OBCs, except those belonging to Muslim communities; (iv) Muslims, except those in the categories of STs and SCs; and (v) Others (those who have not been accorded any special status).

The labour force participation behaviour of each of these groups is distinctively different. The STs across

the country consistently have the highest level of labour force participation for both women and men (Table 6-5). They are mostly settled in less developed, remote and hilly areas and need to till the soil for their livelihood. It is thus a part of their survival strategy. The difference between the LFPRs of women and men is also the least among the STs. Nevertheless, there was a substantial reduction in the LFPRs of ST women in 2011–2012 consistent with other socio-religious groups except Muslims, in whose case the LFPRs of women are consistently low in all the three periods. SCs and OBCs have similar participation rates, although the former are slightly higher. The difference between participation rates of men and women ranged between 38.6 and 46.4 percentage points in the case of SCs while it varied between 38.7 and 47.6 percentage points in the case of OBCs.

TABLE 6-5

Labour force participation rates of women and men by socio-religious group

Year	Sex	ST	SC	OBC	Muslim	Other	Total
1999–2000	Men	87.5	85.2	84.8	84.5	79.2	83.4
	Women	62.8	45.9	42.1	22.8	27.8	38.1
2004–2005	Men	88.0	85.7	84.7	84.4	79.6	83.8
	Women	65.7	47.1	46.0	25.0	32.2	41.8
2011–2012	Men	84.0	81.1	80.0	81.4	75.7	79.7
	Women	50.2	34.7	32.4	20.2	23.6	30.7

Although Muslim men have LFPRs comparable to those of OBCs, Muslim women have the lowest participation rates largely due to restrictive social norms. Those belonging to communities without

any special status have comparatively lower LFPRs for both women and men. There is thus a clear gradation in labour force participation of women among different socio-religious groups.

6.5

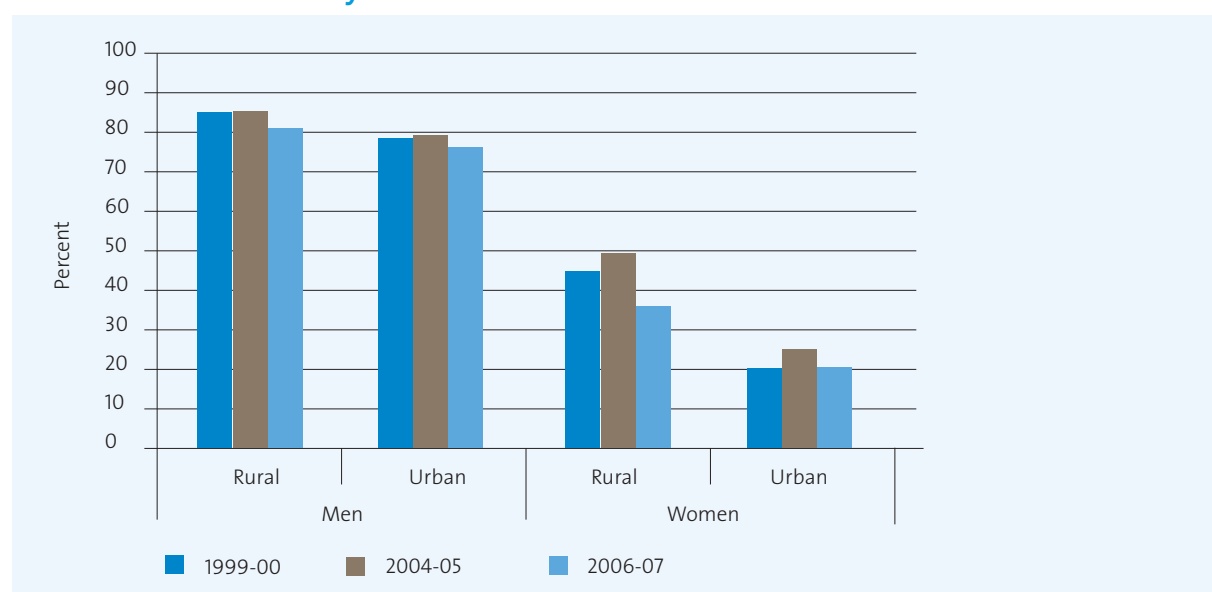
Area of residence – rural or urban

LFPRs of both women and men residing in rural areas are significantly higher than those in urban areas. While the LFPRs of rural women varied between 35.6 and 49.6 per cent in rural areas, the variation was between 20.5 and 24.4 per cent in urban areas (Figure 6-4). The LFPRs of rural men varied between 81.3 to

85.9 per cent, while those of urban men were in the range of 76.3 to 79.2 per cent. The reduction in the labour force participation of women is thus largely in rural areas and is consistent with the reduction of employment opportunities in agriculture.

FIGURE 6-4

LFPRs of women and men by rural–urban areas



6.6

Level of education

Education is another major determinant of labour force participation. For the purpose of analysis in this paper, the population was divided into six broad categories by level of general education for which LFPRs have been computed (Table 6-6). This reveals that illiterates and those not having even primary level of education have the highest LFPRs in all three of the survey years as they mostly belonged to poor households who could not afford to abstain from work. Nevertheless, the LFPRs of illiterate women suffered considerable reduction in 2011–2012. LFPRs fell with increasing levels of education up to higher secondary stage as a good percentage of those with such levels of education continued to be in educational institutions. LFPRs increased significantly, however, in the case of those with graduate and above level of education. The phenomenon is the same for both women and men.

The percentage of people in the younger age groups who do not go into the labour force because they are continuing their education has been increasing over the years. In order to adjust for the impact of increasing attendance in educational institutions, LFPRs were computed excluding those classified as students (Table 6-7). The participation rates thus computed did not change in the case of illiterates, except for a small change in 1999–2000 for men, as illiterates over the age of 15 generally do not get into the educational stream. The changes were also marginal in the case of those with education below the primary level. The maximum increases were in the LFPRs of those with middle, secondary and higher secondary levels of education, showing that increasing numbers with these levels of education continue to be in educational institutions. The increases in the LFPRs of women were, however, considerably lower than men's, implying that fewer women continue to be in education after the completion of primary education.

TABLE 6-6
Labour force participation rates by level of general education and sex

General education	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference
Illiterate	89.0	47.0	42.0	88.7	50.7	38.0	87.8	38.3	49.5
Below primary	89.6	35.1	54.5	91.0	40.3	50.7	90.2	32.1	58.0
Primary	86.7	31.8	54.9	88.6	38.0	50.6	88.3	32.1	56.2
Middle	78.0	23.2	54.8	80.7	30.4	50.3	78.2	23.9	54.3
S/HS/Diploma	72.8	19.6	53.3	73.0	25.3	47.7	66.2	17.9	48.3
Graduate & above	87.4	34.4	53.1	86.6	37.5	49.1	83.5	33.2	50.3
Total	83.4	38.1	45.2	83.8	41.8	42.0	79.7	30.7	49.0

TABLE 6-7

LFPRs of those not in educational institutions by general education and sex

General Education	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference
Illiterate	89.2	47.0	42.2	88.9	50.7	38.2	87.8	38.3	49.5
Below primary	91.2	35.7	55.6	92.6	40.9	51.7	91.2	32.5	58.7
Primary	93.5	33.5	60.0	94.0	40.0	54.0	93.8	33.8	60.1
Middle	94.8	27.8	67.0	95.7	35.7	60.0	95.5	29.1	66.4
S/HS/diploma	93.8	26.2	67.6	94.2	34.0	60.2	93.2	25.3	67.9
Graduate & above	94.3	38.2	56.0	93.7	41.0	52.7	92.1	37.5	54.7
Total	92.1	40.5	51.6	92.7	44.7	48.0	92.1	34.0	58.1

6.7

Per-capita consumption expenditure groups

The relative affluence or otherwise of the population is assessed here in terms of monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) rather than by per capita income due to non-availability of income data. There are, however, significant differences in the consumption patterns and average prices of commodities across different states and between rural and urban areas in the country. Decile groups of monthly per capita consumption expenditures have therefore been formed for each state/region by rural and urban areas. The LFPRs of women and men were computed using the decile groups thus formed (Table 6-8). There is a clear linear

gradation in the LFPRs of both women and men, with the first three decile groups recording higher levels of labour force participation. LFPRs decrease thereafter with increasing deciles, with the lowest LFPR recorded by the population in the highest decile. The decline in participation rates of women was also higher in low decile groups as the loss of employment opportunities affected them the most. The gap in the LFPRs of women and men did not vary much across different decile groups except that it was somewhat lower in the lowest two deciles. The gap increased across all deciles in the year 2011–2012, however.

TABLE 6-8

Labour force participation rates of women and men by decile group

Decile Group	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference
0–10	87.0	48.1	38.9	87.0	48.1	38.9	82.8	34.6	48.1
10–20	86.5	43.9	42.6	87.5	44.3	43.2	82.5	35.4	47.1
20–30	86.4	40.9	45.5	86.7	44.7	41.9	81.6	32.4	49.2
30–40	84.8	40.3	44.5	86.4	44.5	41.9	80.6	31.9	48.7
40–50	84.4	38.0	46.4	85.0	42.8	42.2	81.2	31.8	49.4
50–60	84.1	37.1	47.0	84.8	40.8	44.0	81.0	29.8	51.3
60–70	83.6	36.2	47.4	84.2	40.0	44.1	79.7	29.8	49.9
70–80	81.8	35.7	46.0	82.3	39.1	43.2	78.5	28.3	50.2
80–90	81.0	33.8	47.2	80.8	39.0	41.8	76.7	28.2	48.5
90–100	77.7	31.3	46.4	77.2	37.5	39.7	74.5	26.2	48.3

7.

WORKERS BY ACTIVITY STATUS

Workers, as per the existing classification, can be either self-employed or wage workers. The self-employed are further classified as own account worker (OAW), employer and contributing family worker (CFW). Similarly, wage workers consist of regular wage/ salaried worker⁵, casual worker in public works or casual worker⁶ in others. The gender composition of workers in each of the activity statuses reveals that the share of self-employed among men in 2011–2012 is almost the same as in 1999–2000, although there was a significant increase in 2004–2005 (Table 7-1). The reduction in the share of self-employed between 2004–2005 and 2011–2012 resulted in a corresponding increase between 2004–2005 and 2011–2012 in the percentage of wage workers.

The share of self-employed among women is significantly higher than that of men in all the periods surveyed, despite a decline in 2011–2012 as compared to 2004–2005. The corresponding increase of 4.8 per cent in the share of women wage workers between 2004–2005 and 2011–2012 is mainly contributed by the increase in the share of regular workers. Although this can be considered a positive change, it is undercut by the fact that the female workforce overall went down by about 16.3 million from 143.1 million in 2004–2005 to 126.8 million in 2011–2012. The largest shares of women workers are in the categories of contributing family worker and casual worker. While the share of the former decreased by about 7.5 percentage points, the share of the latter increased by 0.3 percentage points between

2004–2005 and 2011–2012. If compared to 1999–2000, the shares of both categories decreased significantly. However, the share of own account worker among women workers has been increasing over the years. Thus, there seems to be a transition of women workers from contributing family worker to own account worker to fill the vacuum created by men becoming wage workers. There is also an increasing phenomenon of Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women taking up own account entrepreneurial activities.

Employers constituted only 1.2 per cent of men and 0.5 per cent of women in 1999–2000 and 1.8 per cent and 0.4 per cent in 2011–2012. The share of women employers is thus negligible.

⁵ Regular wage/salaried employees are persons working in another's farm or non-farm enterprise (both household and non-household) and getting in return salary or wages on a regular basis (and not on the basis of daily or periodic renewal of work contract).

⁶ Casual wage labourers are persons working in another's farm or non-farm enterprise (both household and non-household) and getting in return wages according to the terms of a daily or

periodic work contract. Public works are those activities sponsored by the Government or local bodies such as construction of roads, dams, bunds, digging of ponds, etc. as relief measures or as an outcome of employment generation schemes under poverty alleviation programmes such as National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREG) works, Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP), etc.

TABLE 7-1

Percentage distribution of workers by activity status

Activity status	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Own account worker	36.9	16.6	38.9	16.9	38.1	19.8
Employer	1.2	0.5	1.8	0.6	1.8	0.4
Contributing family worker	12.7	38.0	13.6	43.5	10.8	36.0
Total self-employed	50.8	55.1	54.3	61.0	50.7	56.2
Regular wage/salaried worker	18.3	8.0	18.4	9.1	20.4	13.4
Casual worker in public works	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.8	3.1
Casual worker in others	30.6	36.7	27.1	29.8	28.1	27.2
Total wage worker	49.2	44.9	45.7	39.0	49.3	43.8
Grand total	100	100	100	100	100	100

7.1

Workers by area of residence and activity status

Significant differences exist in the activity statuses of workers in rural and urban areas. While considerable proportions of women and men in rural areas are in self-employment, wage workers constitute the largest share in urban areas (Table 7-2). However, in both rural and urban areas, the shares of self-employed women and men increased in 2004–2005 and then decreased in 2011–2012. Self-employed women are

mostly unpaid family workers in rural areas and own account worker in urban areas. The share of unpaid family worker in rural areas was 41.3 per cent in both 1999–2000 and 2011–2012, though it was significantly higher in 2004–2005. At the same time, the share of own account worker among women has been increasing in both rural and urban areas.

TABLE 7-2

Percentage distribution of workers by area of residence and activity status

Activity status	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Rural						
Own account worker	38.7	15.3	41.2	15.6	40.7	18.2
Employer	1.2	0.5	1.3	0.5	1.4	0.4
Unpaid family worker	14.7	41.3	15.9	47.6	12.7	41.3
Self-employed total	54.6	57.0	58.4	63.8	54.8	59.9
Regular wage	9.0	3.2	9.0	3.7	9.9	5.4
Casual in public works	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.0	4.0
Casual in others	36.2	39.6	32.5	32.3	34.3	30.8
Wage worker total	45.4	43.0	41.6	36.2	45.2	40.1
Total worker	100	100	100	100	100	100
Urban						
Own account worker	32.4	23.9	33.6	23.7	32.4	25.9
Employer	1.4	0.6	2.9	0.8	2.8	0.5

Unpaid family worker	7.5	20.2	8.2	22.3	6.7	16.3
Self-employed total	41.3	44.7	44.7	46.7	41.9	42.6
Regular wage	41.8	33.9	40.9	36.4	43.1	43.1
Casual in public	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.1
Casual in others	16.7	21.2	14.3	16.8	14.6	14.2
Wage worker total	58.7	55.3	55.3	53.3	58.1	57.4
Total worker	100	100	100	100	100	100

Most wage workers in rural areas are casual workers, while in urban areas they are regular wage workers. While the share of regular wage worker among women increased moderately in rural areas, it increased

substantially in urban areas. The overall increase in the share of regular wage workers among women is thus contributed mainly by urban workers.

7.2

Age group and activity status of workers

The distribution of workers in different age groups by activity status differs significantly. In general, the share of self-employed workers increases and the share of wage workers decreases for both women and men as they get older (Table 7-3). The same pattern is observed in the case of own account workers and employers. Contributing family workers among men are largely confined to younger age groups, while such workers among women are present in all the

age groups in almost equal proportions except the lowest, where it is the largest percentage. The shares of casual workers among men decrease with age. This implies that casual workers and unpaid family workers among men and unpaid family workers among women at young ages become own account workers as they get older. The transition of women from contributing family workers to own account workers is, however, slower.

TABLE 7-3

Percentage distribution of workers in each age group by activity status, 2011–2012

Age group	OAW	Employer	CFW	Self-employed	Wage-regular	Casual	Wage worker	Total
Men								
15–24	11.9	0.3	30.5	42.7	19.6	37.7	57.3	100
25–34	29.0	1.2	14.8	45.0	25.1	30.0	55.0	100
35–44	44.4	2.0	4.6	51.0	20.8	28.2	49.0	100
45–54	49.4	2.5	1.7	53.7	21.0	25.3	46.3	100
55 plus	59.9	3.7	2.9	66.6	11.2	22.2	33.4	100
Total	38.1	1.8	10.8	50.7	20.4	28.9	49.3	100
Women								
15–24	13.7	0.0	43.3	57.0	15.6	27.4	43.0	100
25–34	18.6	0.1	35.5	54.2	16.0	29.8	45.8	100
35–44	21.6	0.5	33.4	55.6	13.2	31.3	44.4	100
45–54	22.1	0.5	34.0	56.6	12.8	30.5	43.4	100
55 plus	23.1	1.2	36.3	60.5	6.6	32.9	39.5	100
Total	19.8	0.4	36.0	56.2	13.4	30.4	43.8	100

7.3

Level of education and activity status

The shares of own account workers and casual workers decrease while shares of employers and regular wage workers increase with increasing levels of education for men (Table 7-4). The pattern is similar for women workers also, except in the case of own account worker where no clear pattern is visible. Further, women with low levels of education are mostly casual or unpaid

family workers. Both women and men with higher levels of education are more likely to be in regular wage work. About three quarters of women workers with graduate and above qualifications are in regular wage employment. Better education is thus a crucial factor for getting regular jobs.

TABLE 7-4
Percentage distribution of workers in each level of education by activity status, 2011–2012

Education	OAW	Employer	CFW	Self-employed	Wage-regular	Casual	Wage worker	Total
Men								
Illiterate	41.7	0.9	6.0	48.7	6.2	45.2	51.3	100
Below primary	40.6	1.2	8.1	49.8	10.1	40.1	50.2	100
Primary	38.7	1.3	9.7	49.8	13.4	36.8	50.2	100
Middle	38.5	1.7	13.5	53.7	17.9	28.4	46.3	100
S/HS/diploma	37.0	2.9	15.6	55.5	29.2	15.3	44.5	100
Graduate & above	28.4	3.1	9.8	41.3	56.3	2.4	58.7	100
Total	38.1	1.8	10.8	50.7	20.4	28.9	49.3	100
Women								
Illiterate	18.4	0.2	38.8	57.4	4.5	38.1	42.6	100
Below primary	19.9	0.2	34.9	55.0	8.4	36.5	45.0	100
Primary	21.5	0.4	38.1	60.0	10.2	29.8	40.0	100
Middle	24.0	0.6	39.2	63.7	12.8	23.4	36.3	100
S/HS/diploma	24.1	1.1	33.4	58.6	28.3	13.1	41.4	100
Graduate & above	13.6	1.0	9.0	23.5	75.0	1.5	76.5	100
Total	19.8	0.4	36.0	56.2	13.4	30.4	43.8	100

7.4

Social group and activity status

The distribution of Scheduled Caste (SC) workers by activity status is distinctly different from other socio-religious groups. In 2011–2012, about two thirds of male SC workers were wage workers and among them about three quarters were casual workers (Table 7-5). Even among women workers, the largest percentage of wage workers was among SCs. The highest percentage of self-employed men was

among others, while among women this position was taken by Muslims.

The largest share of contributing family workers among women and men belonged to the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community. ST women and men also have the second largest share of casual workers. This implies that status of employment is linked to socio-religious status.

TABLE 7-5

Percentage distribution of workers in each socio-religious group by activity status, 2011–2012

Social group	OAW	Employer	CFW	Self-employed	Wage-regular	Casual	Wage worker	Total
Men								
ST	38.5	0.6	12.9	52.0	11.4	36.6	48.0	100
SC	27.9	0.5	6.0	34.4	17.3	48.3	65.6	100
OBC	40.5	1.6	12.3	54.4	18.2	27.4	45.6	100
Muslim	40.3	1.9	10.8	53.0	17.5	29.4	47.0	100
Others	41.0	3.7	11.4	56.1	31.6	12.3	43.9	100
All	38.1	1.8	10.8	50.7	20.4	28.9	49.3	100
Women								
ST	11.4	0.0	45.0	56.5	5.4	38.1	43.5	100
SC	17.3	0.2	25.1	42.6	12.6	44.8	57.4	100
OBC	18.3	0.5	40.1	58.8	11.5	29.7	41.2	100
Muslim	36.0	0.2	29.8	66.0	12.4	21.6	34.0	100
Others	25.1	0.9	35.3	61.3	25.1	13.6	38.7	100
All	19.8	0.4	36.0	56.2	13.4	30.4	43.8	100

7.5

Per capita consumption deciles and activity status

There is a strong correlation between status of work and poverty. Both women and men with regular wage work tend to be in higher deciles while those with casual work tend to be in lower deciles (Table 7-6). Indeed, the percentage of regular workers is highest in the last decile group while the percentage of casual workers is highest in the first decile.

A clear distinction between regular and casual work, therefore, is that a regular worker is less likely to be poor while a casual worker is more likely to be poor. A disturbing finding is that the percentages of regular workers in the lower deciles increased over the years although the percentages of casual workers in the higher deciles did not change. This implies that the

quality of regular employment in terms of income security and social protection has deteriorated over the years. Further, a good percentage of women in the highest decile is made up of casual workers,

possibly because professionally qualified women seeking flexible work tend to take up casual rather than regular work.

TABLE 7-6
Percentage distribution of workers in each decile group by activity status, 2011–2012

Decile group	OAW	Employer	CFW	Self-employed	Wage-regular	Casual	Wage worker	Total
Men								
0–10	29.6	0.3	10.6	40.6	10.6	48.8	59.4	100
10–20	32.3	0.5	11.6	44.3	12.8	42.9	55.7	100
20–30	35.1	0.7	11.8	47.6	15.3	37.1	52.4	100
30–40	37.6	0.9	10.9	49.5	16.5	34.0	50.5	100
40–50	39.5	1.5	11.6	52.6	17.4	30.0	47.4	100
50–60	37.4	1.5	10.8	49.7	20.4	29.9	50.3	100
60–70	40.2	1.7	11.4	53.4	21.5	25.2	46.6	100
70–80	42.2	2.7	11.2	56.1	24.1	19.8	43.9	100
80–90	42.3	3.1	9.7	55.1	27.4	17.5	44.9	100
90–100	41.7	4.5	8.6	54.7	33.4	11.8	45.3	100
Total	38.1	1.8	10.8	50.7	20.4	28.9	49.3	100
Women								
0–10	15.7	0.0	29.3	45.0	9.2	45.9	55.0	100
10–20	17.3	0.0	34.4	51.8	9.0	39.1	48.2	100
20–30	17.2	0.1	36.9	54.2	9.6	36.1	45.8	100
30–40	18.6	0.2	36.1	54.9	9.3	35.8	45.1	100
40–50	20.4	0.2	37.3	57.8	10.7	31.5	42.2	100
50–60	21.2	0.6	36.3	58.1	11.9	30.0	41.9	100
60–70	21.2	0.6	39.1	60.9	12.3	26.8	39.1	100
70–80	20.1	0.3	40.0	60.4	16.6	23.1	39.6	100
80–90	22.5	0.7	38.0	61.2	19.0	19.8	38.8	100
90–100	24.6	1.6	32.5	58.7	27.9	13.5	41.3	100
Total	19.8	0.4	36.0	56.2	13.4	30.4	43.8	100

8.

WORKERS BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The composition of workers by industrial sectors is considered to be a good indicator for assessing a country's level of development. A larger proportion of workers in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy is considered to be a sign of development. However, the main source of employment for both women and men in India continues to be agriculture, although there have been significant reductions in its share over the years.

TABLE 8-1

Percentage distribution of workers by economic activity group and sex

Economic activity	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Agriculture	52.7	75.4	48.6	72.8	42.5	62.0
Mining & quarrying	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.6	0.3
Manufacturing	11.5	9.5	12.4	11.3	12.6	13.4
Electricity, gas & water supply	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.1
Construction	5.8	1.6	7.6	1.8	12.4	6.0
Services	28.8	13.2	30.2	13.7	31.5	18.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

This is despite the fact that the contribution of agriculture to the gross domestic product (GDP) declined to 24.5 per cent in 1999–2000 and 17.9 per cent in 2011–2012. Though the share of men in agriculture declined to 42.5 per cent in 2011–2012, the share of women still continues to be 62.0 per cent even after a reduction of 13.4 percentage points from the level in 1999–2000 (Table 8-1).

There was also a reduction in the number of workers in agriculture in absolute terms by 2011–2012. The estimated number of male workers in agriculture in that year was 144.9 million as compared to 148.1 million in 2004–2005. Similarly, female agricultural workers in 2011–2012 were 78.6 million as compared to 104.2 million in 2004–2005. This decline in female agricultural labour is caused by a number of factors. For example, a good number of rural women got into

land development and construction activities under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) as low productive crop cultivation became increasingly unprofitable with negative labour absorption capacity.⁷

The emergence of contract farming in certain areas also had an impact on reducing the employment of women in agriculture as small and marginal farmers were eliminated and women lost opportunities to become unpaid family workers in household agricultural activities. Though the reduction in the number of workers in oversaturated agriculture can

⁷ MGNREGA aims at enhancing the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to a rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Act was passed on 7 September 2005.

be considered as a positive outcome, the fact that they go out of the labour force due to non-availability of alternate employment opportunities is a cause for concern. It is also one of the reasons for the large percentage of women still tied to agriculture.

The other industries with a relatively higher share of employment are manufacturing, construction and services. There has been an impressive growth of 3.9 percentage points in the share of women workers in manufacturing between 1999–2000 and 2011–2012 as against a growth of only 1.1 percentage points in the case of men. As a result, the percentage of women workers in manufacturing industries has overtaken that of men.

The construction sector made significant growth in the share of employment from 5.8 per cent to 12.4 per cent in the case of men and from 1.6 per cent to 6.0 per cent in the case of women. The increase in the percentage of women in the construction sector is primarily because of their large-scale engagement in MGNREGA projects.

The services sector accounted for 28.8 per cent of men and 13.2 per cent of women in 1999–2000, and the shares increased to 31.5 per cent and 18.3 per cent, respectively, by 2011–2012. Here again the growth in share of employment was more impressive in the case of women.

It is evident that a slow process of transition of workers from agriculture to other sectors is in operation

and the prominent sectors of absorption are construction and services.

The overall share of women in the workforce was 30.5 per cent in 1999–2000 but declined to 27.1 per cent in 2011–2012 after registering an increase in 2004–2005 (Table 8-2). By industry group, agriculture has the largest share of women workers followed by manufacturing. In other words, women remain concentrated in traditional industries.

Within the services sector, the prominent activities in terms of larger employment shares of women are trade, education, other community, social and personal services, private households with employed persons and other services, including health and social work (Table 8-3).

The share of women workers in trade has been declining consistently over the years due to the spread of organized trade and emergence of new forms of trade. The services that increased the shares of women workers between 1999–2000 and 2011–2012 were education, private households with employed persons and other services

The only service activity in which the share of women workers constituted more than two thirds of the workers was private households with employed persons (Table 8-4). This is primarily because most domestic workers are women. The other major service with a significant share of women workers is education.

TABLE 8-2

Percentages of women and men workers in each industry group

Industry	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Agriculture	61.4	38.6	58.7	41.3	64.8	35.2
Mining & quarrying	84.8	15.2	85.1	14.9	85.7	14.3
Manufacturing	73.6	26.4	70.1	29.9	71.7	28.3
Electricity, gas & water supply	96.2	3.8	95.5	4.5	92.2	7.8
Construction	89.0	11.0	89.7	10.3	84.8	15.2
Services	83.3	16.7	82.4	17.6	82.2	17.8
Total	69.5	30.5	68.0	32.0	72.9	27.1

TABLE 8-3

Percentage distribution of service sector workers by industry group and sex

Service	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Trade	40.8	27.8	41.3	24.4	39.7	22.7
Hotels & restaurants	4.8	5.1	5.2	5.8	6.2	5.2
Transport, storage & communication	18.3	2.7	19.4	2.6	19.2	1.8
Public administration & defence	12.1	7.5	8.6	5.4	6.8	4.4
Education	6.8	21.1	7.2	24.3	7.6	27.0
Other community, social & personal services	8.4	19.1	7.0	9.3	6.2	11.5
Private households with employed persons	0.7	6.7	1.5	16.6	1.2	11.7
Other services	8.0	10.1	9.9	11.5	13.0	15.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE 8-4

Percentages of women and men service sector workers in each industry group

Service	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Trade	88.0	12.0	88.8	11.2	89.0	11.0
Hotels & restaurants	82.3	17.7	80.5	19.5	84.6	15.4
Transport, storage & communication	97.1	2.9	97.2	2.8	98.0	2.0
Public administration & defence	89.0	11.0	88.2	11.8	87.8	12.2
Education	61.6	38.4	58.1	41.9	56.5	43.5
Other community, social & personal services	68.8	31.2	77.7	22.3	71.4	28.6
Private households with employed persons	36.0	64.0	29.1	70.9	32.8	67.2
Other services	79.9	20.1	80.1	19.9	79.3	20.7
Total	83.3	16.7	82.4	17.6	82.2	17.8

9.

WORKERS BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES

Women are largely employed in low-level occupations. About 39.9 per cent of the women workers were employed as skilled agricultural and fisheries workers in 2011–2012 as against 28.1 per cent of men workers (Table 9-1).

Another 30.7 per cent of women workers were in elementary occupations, compared to 26.1 per cent of men. The percentages of women in higher levels of occupations were relatively lower compared to men except in

the case of technicians and associated professionals. Though 8.3 per cent of men workers in 2011–2012 were legislators, senior officials and managers, only 3.8 per cent of the women workers were in that category.

TABLE 9-1
Percentage distribution of workers by occupation and sex, 2011–2012

Occupation	2011–2012	
	Men	Women
Legislators, senior officials & managers	8.3	3.8
Professionals	3.9	3.4
Technicians & associated professionals	3.1	3.5
Clerks	2.2	1.3
Service & sales workers	8.7	4.6
Skilled agricultural & fisheries workers	28.1	39.9
Craft & related trade workers	13.4	11.6
Plant & machine operators & assemblers	6.1	1.0
Elementary occupations	26.1	30.7
Workers not classified by occupations	0.1	0.1
Total	100	100

10.

PLACE OF WORK OF NON-AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

The distribution of workers by place of work provides a clear indication of their mobility. The place of work of about 34.9 per cent of women workers in 2011–2012, as against 11.4 per cent of men, was own dwelling or adjacent areas (Table 10-1). These workers are known as home-based workers and are either self-employed or receiving wages on a piece-rate basis for the amount of work done.

Home-based workers generally use traditional skills and technologies as they tend to have low levels of education and belong to lower deciles of monthly per capita consumption expenditure.

The share of women workers in employer's enterprises increased significantly from 27.2 per cent in 2004–2005 to 39.9 per cent in 2011–2012. At the same time, the share of those working at own enterprises declined for both women and men, indicating that

own enterprises operated from outside workers' homes decreased over the years.

The shares of those working on the street or without any fixed place of work increased in the case of men while it decreased in the case of women, which indicates that men are more involved in activities such as street vending and other street services such as shoe shining, street-side repair facilities, etc.

TABLE 10-1
Percentages of non-agricultural workers by place of work

Place of work	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Own dwelling & adjacent areas	12.2	38.1	11.3	40.0	11.4	34.9
Own enterprise	19.6	9.3	19.0	7.6	15.5	4.9
Employer's enterprise	39.1	29.2	36.2	27.2	39.0	39.9
Employer's dwelling	3.3	8.7	3.1	10.3	2.6	8.5
Street/ construction site	19.7	12.0	22.8	12.3	24.8	9.8
No fixed place	6.0	2.8	7.6	2.5	6.7	2.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

11.

GENDER DIFFERENTIALS IN QUALITY OF WORK

Significant gender inequalities exist in respect of a number of specific characteristics of quality of work including informal work status, regularity of work, full-time work and participation in unions/ associations.

11.1

Informality of employment

In line with the recommendations of the Delhi Group and International Labour Organization (ILO) Guidelines (ILO, 2013), India has evolved working definitions of the informal sector and informal employment:

“The unorganized (informal) sector consists of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers.”

“Un-organized (informal) workers consist of those working in the un-organized (informal) sector or households, excluding regular workers with social security benefits provided by the employers and the workers in the organised (formal) sector without any employment and social security benefits provided by the employers.” (NCEUS, 2008)

As per the above definitions, all casual workers and contributing family members are informal workers. In addition, those self-employed in the informal sector are informal. Among regular wage/salaried workers, those without any social security benefits provided by their employers are also informal. In other words, all workers without either job security or social security are regarded as informal workers. Using these definitions, it is estimated that about 92 per cent of the workers in India, including those in agricultural activities, are informal workers (Table 11-1).

The share of informal workers among women was 4 to 5 percentage points higher than that of men in all the study years. The share of informal workers, however, increased marginally over the years in the case of men, while that of women decreased between 2004–2005 and 2011–2012.

TABLE 11-1

Percentage distribution of workers by informality of employment and sex

	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Informal worker	89.5	95.4	90.5	95.8	90.7	94.7
Formal worker	10.5	4.6	9.5	4.2	9.3	5.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

The shares of informal workers in different economic activities reveal that almost all men (99.4 per cent) and women (99.9 per cent) in agricultural activities—which employed about 42.5 per cent of total male workers and 62.0 per cent of women workers in 2011–2012—were informal (Table 11-2). The economic activity with the second largest share of informal workers that year was construction, which had 97.1 per cent of men and 99.6 per cent of women in informal work. In manufacturing, which accounted for 12.6 per cent of men and 13.4 per cent of women workers, 85.4 per cent of men and 95.9 per cent of women workers were informal. In mining and quarrying, about 86.8

per cent of women workers were informal while only 65.3 per cent of men workers were informal—a gender gap was 21.5 percentage points. As compared to earlier years, however, the gender gap was less as the share of women informal workers decreased during the year. In electricity, gas and water supply activities and services, more men were informal than women.

In services, informal workers constituted 95 per cent or more of both female and male workers in trade, hotels and restaurants, other community, social and personal services and private households with employed persons (Table 11-3).

TABLE 11-2
Percentage shares of informal workers in different sectors of the economy

Economic activity	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference
Agriculture	98.6	99.0	0.4	98.7	99.2	0.5	99.4	99.9	0.5
Mining & quarrying	68.0	92.7	24.7	62.2	91.4	29.2	65.3	86.8	21.5
Manufacturing	81.4	93.8	12.4	85.1	94.7	9.6	85.4	95.9	10.5
Electricity, gas & water supply	19.2	19.3	0.1	18.2	29.2	11.0	29.7	17.9	-11.8
Construction	96.6	99.4	2.8	97.0	99.5	2.5	97.1	99.6	2.5
Services	76.3	76.4	0.1	79.5	78.3	-1.2	79.9	75.3	-4.6
Total	89.5	95.4	5.9	90.5	95.8	5.3	90.7	94.7	4.0

TABLE 11-3
Percentage shares of informal workers in different service sector activities

Service activity	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference
Trade	97.0	98.0	1.0	97.9	98.9	0.9	97.4	97.4	0.0
Hotels & restaurants	95.1	98.5	3.4	94.2	97.3	3.1	94.6	96.4	1.8
Transport, storage & communication	79.6	46.2	-33.4	83.2	62.5	-20.8	85.6	59.1	-26.5
Public administration & defence	14.8	25.3	10.5	11.5	26.3	14.8	14.5	27.2	12.7
Education	32.9	52.3	19.4	38.6	56.4	17.7	38.8	56.6	17.8
Other community, social & personal services	95.4	97.5	2.1	94.0	98.1	4.1	91.7	95.2	3.5

Private households with employed persons	96.0	99.2	3.2	98.2	99.7	1.5	98.0	98.5	0.5
Other services	59.6	46.8	-12.8	64.0	53.0	-11.1	62.0	51.9	-10.1
Total	76.3	76.4	0.1	79.5	78.3	-1.2	79.9	75.3	-4.6

In the case of transport, storage and communication services, more men were informal workers although the share of women workers in this activity was comparatively insignificant. Modern service activities such as financial intermediation, real estate, renting and business activities and health and social work also have more informal workers among men than women. Public administration and defence is primarily in the government sector and as such has the lowest percentage of informal workers. However, about one quarter of the women workers even in this sector are informal.

The percentage shares of informal workers among women and men by level of education depict a clear declining trend by increasing levels of education except for some minor aberrations (Table 11-4). The lowest percentage of informal workers is among those with graduate and above levels of education, although it has been increasing over the years among both women and men. The percentages of such workers among those with education up to middle level varied between 91.7 per cent and 99.5 per cent and the gender gap remained small. The percentages went down significantly among those with secondary, higher secondary or diploma levels of education.

TABLE 11-4
Percentage shares of informal workers by different levels of education and sex

Level of Education	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference	Men	Women	Difference
Illiterate	97.9	98.7	0.8	98.3	99.1	0.9	98.8	99.5	0.7
Below primary	95.6	96.8	1.2	96.4	96.7	0.2	97.9	98.5	0.5
Primary	94.3	96.3	2.1	95.5	97.5	2.0	97.5	98.8	1.3
Middle	91.7	94.7	3.0	93.4	96.6	3.3	95.6	97.0	1.4
S/HS/diploma	77.7	77.3	-0.4	81.6	81.1	-0.5	86.2	87.0	0.7
Graduate & above	54.6	43.3	-11.3	57.9	53.4	-4.5	58.1	52.3	-5.8
Total	89.5	95.4	5.9	90.5	95.8	5.3	90.7	94.7	4.0

11.2

Regularity of work

Men are better placed in regularity of work, with 89.9 per cent in 2004–2005 and 91.2 per cent in 2011–2012 having regular jobs. In the case of women, only 83.8 per cent in 2004–2005 and 84.2 per cent in 2011–2012 had

regular jobs. However, there was a marginal improvement in the percentage of regular workers between the two years (Figure 11-1).

FIGURE 11-1
Percentage of women and men workers by regularity of work

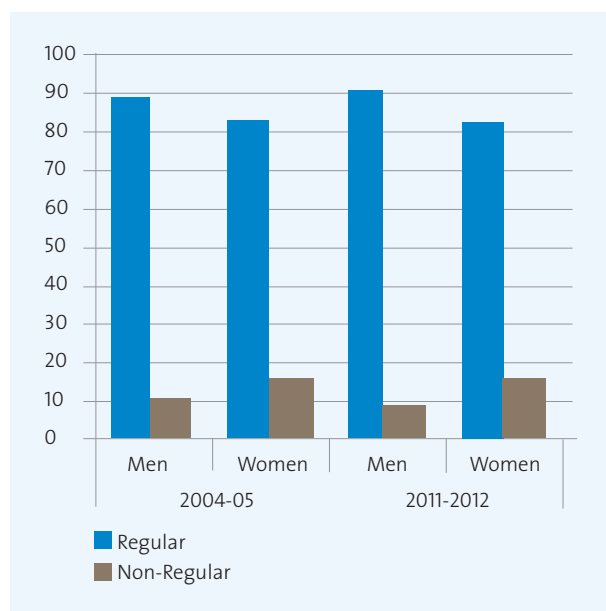
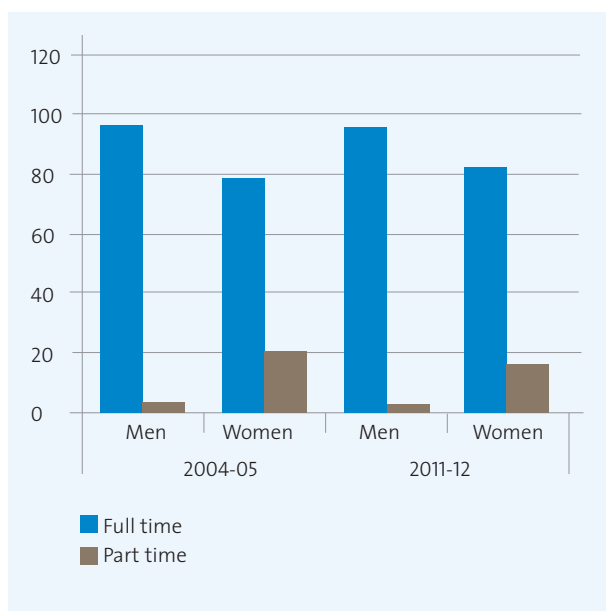


FIGURE 11-2
Percentage of women and men workers by full/part-time work



11.3

Full-time/ part-time work

Women are less fortunate even in terms of full-time employment. While 96.8 per cent of men were full-time workers in 2011–2012, only 82.7 per cent of women were in that category (Figure 11-2). There was, however, a small improvement in the shares of full-time workers between

2004–2005 and 2011–2012. This was just about 0.7 percentage points in respect of men while it was 3.5 percentage points in respect of women. The improvement has to be seen, however, in the context of the overall decline in the work participation rate (WPR) of women in 2011–2012.

11.4

Work availability in all seasons

The 2011–2012 survey showed that 22.9 per cent of men and 26.1 per cent of women among the workers did not have work for at least a month during the previous one-year period (Table 11-5). The shares of such workers during 2004–2005 were 26.9 per cent and 33.6 per cent, respectively, for men and women. Women were thus the worst sufferers even in non-availability of a continuous job.

11.5

Membership of union/ association

Only 18.9 per cent of men and 11.0 per cent of women workers were employed in establishments with a union/ association during 2011–2012 (Table 11-6). The percentage shares of workers in such establishments were somewhat higher during 2004–2005. In other words, there was a reduction in workers in formal establishments.

Among those employed in establishments with a union/association, 64.9 per cent of men and 53.3 per cent of women workers were members of unions/ associations (Table 11-7). There was a reduction in the percentage of members of union/ association among male workers while there was an increase in the case of female workers.

TABLE 11-5
Percentages of workers without work for at least a month

Year	Men	Women	Person
2004–2005	26.9	33.6	29.0
2011–2012	22.9	26.1	23.7

TABLE 11-6
Percentages of workers in establishments with union/association

Year	Men	Women	Person
2004–2005	21.6	12.3	18.6
2011–2012	18.9	11.0	16.7

TABLE 11-7
Percentages of workers with membership in union/association in establishments covered by a union

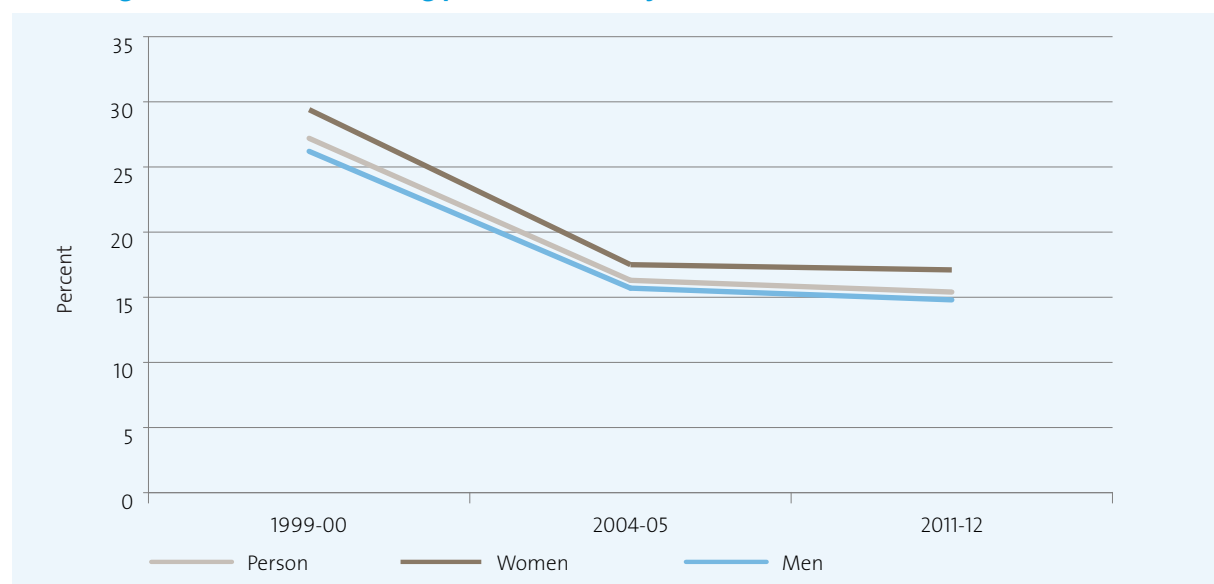
Year	Men	Women	Person
2004–2005	68.7	45.1	63.8
2011–2012	64.9	53.3	62.8

11.6 Working poor

For the purpose of this analysis, a person is considered to be poor if s/he belongs to a household with an average monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) equal to or less than two third of the median MPCE of the same sector in the same state. The median MPCEs were derived for rural and urban areas of each state separately for each year as there are significant variations in the consumption pattern of people in different states as well as between rural

and urban areas (see Annex). Those classified as poor among workers are considered as the working poor. The percentages of the working poor were 14.8 per cent among men and 17.1 per cent among women in 2011–2012. In other words, women workers were more vulnerable than men. Such workers constituted 26.2 per cent of men and 29.4 per cent of women in 1999–2000, while the percentages fell to 15.7 per cent and 17.5 per cent, respectively, by 2004–2005 (Figure 11-3).

FIGURE 11-3
Percentage distribution of working poor in different years



Although there were substantial decreases in the percentages of working poor between 1999–2000 and 2004–2005, the changes between 2004–2005 and 2011–2012 were negligible. The relative poverty measure is essentially an indicator of inequality in the per capita income/ consumption expenditure of the population. It implies that there has been considerable reduction in inequality in the earlier period, although the average per capita consumption expenditure did not change in real terms between 1999–2000 and 2004–2005.

The poverty ratios indicated above and the conclusions based on them are quite different from the official poverty ratios released by the Planning Commission

(2014) for the years 2004–2005 and 2011–2012. The methodology used for the estimation until 2004–2005 was anchored on a calorie norm of 2,400 K.Cal per day per person in rural areas and 2,100 K.Cal per day per person in urban areas. The poverty lines for rural and urban areas in each of the major states were determined as the MPCE required for deriving the required calorie norm. Based on the recommendations of an Expert Committee, the methodology for compiling poverty headcount ratios was revised by the Planning Commission. It was assumed by the Committee that a headcount ratio of about 25.7 per cent represented the broad order of magnitude of urban poverty at all-India level. The MPCE corresponding to that poverty ratio was taken as the urban poverty line. The rural

poverty line was derived using the price differential between rural and urban areas. Specific poverty lines in states were derived using price differentials across the states.

According to the estimates based on the new methodology, there has been a reduction of poverty to the tune of 7.4 percentage points over the seven years from 2004-05 (Table 11-8). This new methodology has, however, been criticized by a number of experts on several counts including an arbitrary choice of poverty line, improper price adjustments and deviation from

any measure of welfare. Although the official poverty ratios include the entire population and not only the workers as estimated in this paper, the trend should have been similar.

Status of employment is closely related to incidence of poverty, with the most vulnerable group of workers being casual workers followed by contributing family and own account workers as a higher percentage of casual workers are poor (Table 11-9). The more affluent groups are employers and regular wage paid employees.

TABLE 11-8
Poverty headcount ratios as per official estimates

Year (method)	Headcount ratio		
	Rural	Urban	All
1999–2000 (old method)	27.1	23.6	26.1
2004–2005 (old method)	21.8	21.7	21.8
2004–2005 (new method)	42.0	25.5	37.2
2011–2012 (new method)	33.8	20.9	29.8

TABLE 11-9
Percentage of working poor by activity status

Activity status	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	Person	Men	Women	Person	Men	Women	Person
OAW	22.5	24.2	22.8	13.0	16.1	13.5	12.0	14.6	12.4
Employer	7.0	5.0	6.7	2.3	2.8	2.4	2.9	0.6	2.7
CFW	22.5	23.0	22.7	11.5	13.2	12.5	14.3	13.9	14.1
Regular wage employee	12.9	13.4	13.0	11.8	16.6	12.7	10.2	14.2	11.0
Casual labour	40.9	42.3	41.4	25.0	25.1	25.0	22.7	24.0	23.0
Total	26.2	29.4	27.2	15.7	17.5	16.3	14.8	17.1	15.4

The relationship between employment status and poverty implies that any increase in the share of casual workers will have the effect of increasing the number of poor. For example, between 1999–2000 and 2004–2005 there was a significant reduction the percentages of both the working poor and casual workers. However, the reduction in working poor between 2004–2005 and 2011–2012 was

negligible as there was an increase in the percentage of casual workers.

Households can be classified into those with (i) male workers only, (ii) female workers only, (iii) both male and female workers and (iv) no workers. The percentages of poor among those aged 25–54 in each category reveal that households with male only workers are

less likely to be poor while those with both male and female workers are more likely to be poor. This implies that both men and women in poor households need to work to make ends meet, while this is not necessary for rich households. The poverty ratio of households with no worker is the lowest as most of these are

single member households of pensioners, renters or institutional households such as hostel residents, etc. This implies that the relative affluence of the household is a determining factor in the labour force participation of women (Table 11-10).

TABLE 11-10
Percentages of poor among those aged 25 to 54 by type of household

Household type	Headcount poverty ratios by type of household		
	1999–2000	2004–2005	2011–2012
Male workers only	24.2	14.6	13.5
Female workers only	25.3	17.9	15.8
Male & female workers	30.4	18.1	17.7
No worker	24.8	11.0	7.2
Total	27.0	16.3	15.0

The above result is confirmed by an analysis of workers in each type of households by MPCE decile groups. This shows that workers belonging to households with male only workers are proportionately more in higher deciles while those belonging to households

with male and female workers are more in lower deciles. In the case of female only worker households, the lower and higher deciles have higher percentages of workers, implying that they can be at both extremes (Table 11-11).

TABLE 11-11
Percentage distribution of workers from different types of households by decile groups

Decile	Male only			Female only			Both male & female		
	1999–2000	2004–2005	2011–2012	1999–2000	2004–2005	2011–2012	1999–2000	2004–2005	2011–2012
0–10	7.6	8.4	9.1	12.4	12.9	9.8	12.6	11.4	12.1
10–20	8.6	8.9	8.8	9.8	9.3	10.8	12.0	11.3	12.3
20–30	9.3	9.1	9.7	9.4	10.5	9.5	11.0	11.1	10.7
30–40	9.5	9.3	10.0	9.5	8.4	8.8	10.4	10.9	10.4
40–50	10.3	9.6	9.9	8.4	9.2	9.6	9.9	10.5	10.4
50–60	10.6	10.1	10.4	9.3	8.1	8.8	9.8	10.1	9.6
60–70	10.4	10.5	10.4	8.9	9.6	10.0	9.2	9.6	9.3
70–80	10.9	11.1	10.6	9.5	9.1	9.3	9.0	8.9	9.0
80–90	11.3	11.2	10.5	9.9	11.3	10.9	8.4	8.6	8.6
90–100	11.4	11.7	10.5	12.8	11.7	12.6	7.6	7.5	7.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

11.7

Wage differentials of women and men

The wage per day of women is significantly lower than that of men in the case of wage workers. While the average wage per day of rural men in 2011–2012 was Rs.188.95, it was as low as Rs.120.62 in the case of women (Table 11-12). In urban areas, the wage rates were Rs.404.89 for men and Rs.319.32 for women. The wage gap between women and men in rural areas was 44.7 per cent in 1999–2000 and increased to 45.8

per cent in 2004–2005. However, it decreased to 36.2 per cent in 2011–2012. In the case of urban areas, the wage gap during 1999–2000 was 25.4 per cent. This increased to 28.8 per cent in 2004–2005 and then went down to 21.1 per cent by 2011–2012. Despite improvements in the wage gap between women and men workers since 2004–2005, wide disparities still exist.

TABLE 11-12

Average wage per day (Rs.) of women and men workers and wage gap index (WGI)

Year	Rural			Urban			Rural + Urban		
	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI
1999–2000	64.56	35.68	-44.7	143.4	107.01	-25.4	94.32	52.90	-43.9
2004–2005	79.62	43.13	-45.8	175.6	124.98	-28.8	117.62	66.77	-43.2
2011–2012	188.95	120.62	-36.2	404.9	319.32	-21.1	274.64	188.78	-31.3

Differences exist not only at the aggregate level but also at different levels of education. The differentials are exceedingly high for those with low levels of education, although they get reduced to some extent for those with secondary and above levels of education

(Table 11-13). This implies that the level of education of the worker has a significant impact on the wage gap. The differentials in wage rates act as both a disincentive for work participation and as a formidable obstacle to the empowerment of women.

TABLE 11-13

Average wage per day (Rs.) of wage paid workers and wage gap index (WGI) by general education

General education	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI
Illiterate	46.85	30.19	-35.6	57.12	36.10	-36.8	148.96	102.31	-31.3
Primary & below	63.28	45.92	-27.4	73.21	44.29	-39.5	165.84	109.55	-33.9
Middle	81.48	45.84	-43.7	90.99	47.57	-47.7	195.44	117.77	-39.7
Secondary & HS	140.60	122.84	-12.6	165.22	138.85	-16.0	307.33	245.15	-20.2
Graduate & above	261.51	221.36	-15.4	337.37	248.14	-26.4	726.93	563.98	-22.4
Total	94.32	52.90	-43.9	117.62	66.77	-43.2	274.64	188.78	-31.3

There are also variations in wage rates by age groups. Wage rates are lowest in the youngest age group of 15–24 years for both women and men (Table 11-14). There is a significant gain in wages with increasing age for both sexes, except for an aberration for women

in the 35–44 age group in 2011–2012. Further, there is an increasing wage gap between women and men with increasing age. This implies that the age-related wage gain is relatively less for women than men.

TABLE 11-14

Average wage per day (Rs.) of wage paid workers and wage gap index (WGI) by age group

Age group	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI
15–24	50.39	35.24	-30.07	61.54	45.76	-25.64	164.55	141.39	-14.08
25–34	82.89	51.72	-37.60	105.80	65.66	-37.94	255.51	203.67	-20.29
35–44	110.68	60.53	-45.32	134.82	75.92	-43.68	299.21	187.32	-37.40
44–54	139.16	71.22	-48.82	181.92	84.44	-53.58	368.75	231.47	-37.23
55+	108.85	43.12	-60.39	144.03	58.04	-59.70	314.63	150.70	-52.10
Total	94.32	52.90	-43.91	117.62	66.77	-43.23	274.64	188.78	-31.26

There is also a gradation in wage rates by socio-religious groups (Table 11-15). Scheduled Tribe (ST) women and men have the lowest wage rates followed by Scheduled Caste (SC) workers. Those not belonging to any of the special categories have the highest wage

rates—significantly higher than all the other four categories. The gender gaps in wage rates are high in the case of ST, SC and Other Backward Communities (OBC) workers.

TABLE 11-15

Average wage per day (Rs.) of wage paid workers and wage gap index (WGI) by socio-religious group

Socio-religious group	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI
ST	64.59	37.13	-42.52	78.70	44.50	-43.46	199.43	127.42	-36.11
SC	67.63	37.86	-44.01	82.58	47.34	-42.67	204.95	134.50	-34.37
OBC	80.72	44.07	-45.41	103.78	53.83	-48.13	250.09	160.31	-35.90
Muslim	78.92	46.33	-41.29	94.66	64.21	-32.16	208.66	149.77	-28.22
Others	150.33	105.51	-29.82	198.78	134.47	-32.35	457.95	367.67	-19.71
Total	94.32	52.90	-43.91	117.62	66.77	-43.23	274.64	188.78	-31.26

Significant and consistent gradation also exists in wage rates across different categories of workers in rural and urban areas as well as between female and male workers (Table 11-16). Casual workers in both rural and urban areas have the lowest wage per day

as they are mostly involved in manual jobs. Regular informal workers have better wage rates compared to casual workers but still much below the wage rates of regular formal workers.

TABLE 11-16

Average wage per day (Rs.) and wage gap index (WGI) of different categories of workers

Category	1999–2000			2004–2005			2011–2012		
	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI
Rural casual	45	29	-35.6	55	35	-36.4	146	102	-30.1
Rural regular informal	76	68	-10.5	76	43	-43.4	180	101	-43.9
Rural formal	179	123	-31.3	239	141	-41.0	550	416	-24.4
Urban casual	65	37	-43.1	75	44	-41.3	184	111	-39.7

Urban regular informal	89	57	-36.0	99	60	-39.4	252	159	-36.9
Urban formal	239	219	-8.4	315	275	-12.7	755	658	-12.8
All casual	48	30	-37.5	58	36	-37.9	153	103	-32.7
All regular informal	84	61	-27.4	91	54	-40.7	227	139	-38.8
All formal	219	188	-14.2	291	228	-21.6	694	598	-13.8

The wage gap between women and men is consistently high in the case of regular informal and casual workers in both rural and urban areas, whereas it is relatively less in the case of formal workers, particularly urban formal workers. Casual workers in urban areas have the highest level of gender difference in wage rate.

The wage rates at current prices do not indicate real changes over time. However, there is no proper price index available for the computation of wage rates at constant prices since 1999–2000. The ratios between

median MPCEs of 1999–2000 to those in 2004–2005 and 2011–2012 are taken to be reflective of price changes over the years. By using these ratios, wage rates at 1999–2000 prices were computed along with growth rates for female and male workers (Table 11-17). Real wages decreased at an average annual rate of 0.4 per cent in the case of male workers and 2.3 per cent in the case of female workers between 1999–2000 and 2004–2005. The most significant reductions were in the case of regular informal workers in both rural and urban areas and urban casual workers, although there were declines in all categories of female workers.

TABLE 11-17

Average wage per day (Rs.) of different categories of workers at 1999–2000 prices and growth rates

Category	1999–2000	2004–2005	2011–2012	2004–2005/ 1999–2000	2011–2012/ 2004–2005	2011–2012/ 1999–2000
Men						
Rural casual	45	43	55	-0.9	3.6	1.7
Rural regular informal	76	60	67	-4.6	1.6	-1.0
Rural formal	179	186	209	0.8	1.7	1.3
Urban casual	65	55	64	-3.3	2.2	-0.1
Urban regular informal	89	72	87	-4.2	2.7	-0.2
Urban formal	239	229	266	-0.9	2.2	0.9
All casual	48	45	57	-1.3	3.4	1.4
All regular informal	84	68	80	-4.1	2.3	-0.4
All formal	219	215	249	-0.4	2.1	1.1
Women						
Rural casual	29	27	36	-1.4	4.2	1.8
Rural regular informal	68	33	38	-13.5	2.0	-4.7
Rural formal	123	108	153	-2.6	5.1	1.8
Urban casual	37	32	39	-2.9	2.9	0.4

Urban regular informal	57	43	56	-5.5	3.8	-0.1
Urban formal	219	200	232	-1.8	2.1	0.5
All casual	30	28	37	-1.4	4.1	1.8
All regular informal	61	40	49	-8.1	2.9	-1.8
All formal	188	167	213	-2.3	3.5	1.0

Real wages improved between 1999–2000 and 2011–2012 at the rate of 1.1 per cent per year in the case of male workers and 1.0 per cent in the case of female workers. However, negative growth of wage rates of regular informal workers in rural and urban areas persisted, although the rate of reduction became lower. In other words, the increase in real wages of both women and men between 1999–2000 and 2011–2012 was mainly because of growth in wage rates of formal workers and rural casual workers.

Real wage rates by economic activity reveal that agriculture, which employs the largest percentage of women and men, had the lowest wage rate (Table 11-18). Real wages of men decreased in all segments of the economy between 1999–2000 and 2004–2005, and the overall rate of decline was 1.4 per cent per annum. There was, however, some improvement after 2004–2005 and hence overall a positive growth rate of 1.4 per cent per annum between 1999–2000 and 2011–2012. Both the mining and quarrying and electricity, gas and water supply activities still maintained negative growth at a reduced rate.

TABLE 11-18
Average wage per day (Rs.) of workers in different economic activities at 1999–2000 prices

Economic activity	1999–2000	2004–2005	2011–2012	2004–2005/ 1999–2000	2011–2012/ 2004–2005	2011–2012/ 1999–2000
Men						
Agriculture	40.92	37.54	48.37	-1.7	3.7	1.4
Mining & quarrying	64.28	56.05	56.82	-2.7	0.2	-1.0
Manufacturing	59.07	50.92	60.49	-2.9	2.5	0.2
Energy, gas & water supply	63.83	53.95	58.88	-3.3	1.3	-0.7
Construction	64.27	58.27	66.24	-1.9	1.8	0.3
Services	58.80	51.84	62.82	-2.5	2.8	0.6
Total	48.09	44.80	56.86	-1.4	3.5	1.4
Women						
Agriculture	28.11	25.86	34.81	-1.7	4.3	1.8
Mining & quarrying	39.33	36.12	42.86	-1.7	2.5	0.7
Manufacturing	36.47	29.85	36.23	-3.9	2.8	-0.1
Energy, gas & water supply	55.48	35.63	61.14	-8.5	8.0	0.8

Construction	46.25	40.52	45.33	-2.6	1.6	-0.2
Services	31.86	33.38	34.94	0.9	0.7	0.8
Total	29.63	27.57	36.58	-1.4	4.1	1.8

Real wages of women workers also declined at the same rate of 1.4 per cent per annum between 1999–2000 and 2004–2005, although there was a moderate increase in the case of services. Since 2004–2005, their real wages improved and achieved an annual rate of growth of 1.8 per cent between 1999–2000 and 2011–2012. Manufacturing and construction, however, could not eliminate negative growth in real wages even by 2011–2012.

As mentioned earlier, about 82.8 per cent of men and 88.3 per cent of women wage workers were informal workers in 2011–2012. The real wages of such workers in 2011–2012 were lower than those in 1999–2000 in all segments of economic activity (Table 11-19). In other words, the real wages of over 82 per cent of the workers did not increase in this period.

TABLE 11-19
Average wage per day (Rs.) of informal workers in different economic activities at 1999–2000 prices

Economic activity	1999–2000	2004–2005	2011–2012	2004–2005/ 1999–2000	2011–2012/ 2004–2005	2011–2012/ 1999–2000
Men						
Agriculture	57.70	51.30	65.06	-2.3	3.5	1.0
Mining & quarrying	96.19	126.86	74.50	5.7	-7.3	-2.1
Manufacturing	84.13	65.17	79.93	-5.0	3.0	-0.4
Energy, gas & water supply	97.91	76.37	94.20	-4.8	3.0	-0.3
Construction	89.96	77.86	82.35	-2.8	0.8	-0.7
Services	86.74	69.18	80.54	-4.4	2.2	-0.6
Total	84.23	67.57	80.04	-4.3	2.4	-0.4
Women						
Agriculture	55.10	46.67	38.21	-3.3	-2.8	-3.0
Mining & quarrying	53.24	36.38	41.10	-7.3	1.8	-2.1
Manufacturing	48.24	31.82	46.90	-8.0	5.7	-0.2
Energy, gas & water supply	145.35	54.23	100.12	-17.9	9.2	-3.1
Construction	77.29	78.40	62.73	0.3	-3.1	-1.7
Services	64.72	41.32	50.10	-8.6	2.8	-2.1
Total	60.86	40.00	49.22	-8.1	3.0	-1.8

Although the phenomenon of declining real wages existed even in 2004–2005, more women and men were able to engage in own account self-employment activities to supplement their overall household income and reduce the incidence of working poverty. This was not possible in 2011–2012, however, due to several reasons including deepening of globalization and corporatization and lack of focus on employment generation in the economy. As a result, the percentage of working poor remained almost static in that year.

The average wage per worker by occupational categories reveals that both women and men in senior

and middle management positions in urban areas enjoyed relatively high wage rates in 2011–2012 (Table 11-20). The wage gap was also somewhat less in this category of workers. The second highest wage rates were enjoyed by professionals in urban areas, and in their case also the wage gap between women and men was comparatively less. The wage gap is also less in the case of clerks in both rural and urban areas as they are largely formal workers in formal sector enterprises. The wage gap is consistently high in all categories of rural workers except those in occupations such as clerks and elementary occupations.

TABLE 11-20
Average wage per day (Rs.) and wage gap index (WGI) by occupation

Occupation	Rural			Urban			All		
	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI	Men	Women	WGI
Legislators, senior officials & managers	484.8	255.5	-47.3	1146.5	1023.7	-10.7	1029.8	922.4	-10.4
Professionals	602.5	358.4	-40.5	872.7	697.3	-20.1	803.3	618.0	-23.1
Technicians & associated professionals	468.2	268.0	-42.8	606.2	406.1	-33.0	554.2	349.8	-36.9
Clerks	393.4	320.2	-18.6	483.2	421.5	-12.8	456.9	406.8	-11.0
Service & sales workers	250.5	100.1	-60.0	288.1	169.7	-41.1	275.7	141.7	-48.6
Skilled agricultural & fisheries workers	146.4	102.3	-30.1	234.1	106.7	-54.4	154.0	102.5	-33.4
Craft & related trade workers	195.3	110.0	-43.7	254.3	140.5	-44.7	224.3	122.6	-45.4
Plant & machine operators & assemblers	216.5	117.6	-45.7	296.2	134.8	-54.5	262.0	125.9	-51.9
Elementary occupations	141.9	101.3	-28.6	199.3	115.5	-42.0	151.5	103.9	-31.4
Workers not classified by occupations	155.0	105.7	-31.8	178.6	103.9	-41.8	160.8	104.7	-34.9
Total	188.9	120.7	-36.1	404.9	319.4	-21.1	274.7	188.9	-31.2

11.8

Measuring gender inequality in quality of work

Gender-based inequalities in quality of employment exist for women. These include informality, non-regularity and part-time work. In order to quantify deprivation in the quality of work of men and women, indices of multi-dimensional deprivations are derived using Alkire and Foster's (2007, 2011) multidimensional poverty assessment method. The dimensions used are:

- Part-time employment
- Not having regular work
- Without work for more than a month
- Non-existence of union in the workplace
- Casual or unpaid family work
- Place of work other than the enterprise

A person deprived in any three or more of the above dimensions is considered to have multi-dimensional employment deprivation. The headcount ratio of multi-dimensionally deprived persons is computed by dividing the number of deprived persons with total number of persons. The intensity of deprivation is measured as the ratio of number of deprivations of multi-dimensionally deprived persons to the total number of possible deprivations. The product of the multi-dimensional headcount ratio and the intensity of deprivation is the Alkire and Foster multi-dimensional deprivation index. The ratio of the deprivation index of women to that of men indicates the overall gender bias in employment. While the multi-dimensional headcount ratio of men in 2011–2012 was 0.40, it was 0.68 in the case of women (Table 11-21). The Alkire and Foster index of women was 0.28 as against 0.10 for men. The gender bias index was thus as high as 3.0, indicating that women are three times more deprived than men.

TABLE 11-21
Multi-dimensional employment deprivation indices

Index	Men	Women	Person
Headcount ratio	0.40	0.68	0.48
Intensity of deprivation	0.24	0.42	0.29
Alkire & Foster Index	0.10	0.28	0.14
Gender bias index		3.0	

12.

CONCLUSION

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, and a number of policies and programmes for the empowerment of women have existed in the country for a long time. There have also been structural changes in the population, including an improved sex ratio, reduced birth rates, a rise in the average age at marriage, improved longevity and progressive ageing of the population. The incidence of child labour has also declined and became negligible. Despite these positive changes, however, significant gender differences still exist in several spheres of human activity, including employment status.

Age, marital status, presence of small children, socio-religious status, area of residence, level of education and relative affluence of households are some of the important determinants of the LFPRs of women and men in India. In all three survey years, nearly 80 per cent of men were employed while the share of employed women was less than half that. The participation rate of men attains the maximum in the 25–34 age group, while women of that age are mostly married and engaged in childbearing and child rearing. The gender gap in LFPRs is thus the highest in this age group. The LFPRs of women attain the maximum level later in life and decrease almost instantaneously. Thus, there is never a steady state for women's employment; peak employment comes later in life, so any possible gains in increased wages are short lived.

Women workers are mostly engaged in agriculture, manufacturing and services. While women agricultural workers still make up the majority of those employed, their numbers have decreased for various reasons. The share of women workers in manufacturing, however, has now surpassed men's. In the service sector, women have significant domination in education, other community, social and personal services and private households with employed persons as compared to men. On the other hand, their share in senior and middle management positions is much smaller than that of men.

In view of their main role in the care economy, fear of security and safety in workplaces and constraints of travel, women are more likely than men to work from their homes. This is particularly the case for currently married rural women and those belonging to the Muslim community. The level of education also plays a role in the choice of place of work, as women with low levels of education are more likely to work from their homes.

Gender-based inequalities in quality of employment include informality, non-regularity and part-time work. It is also noted that considerable wage differences exist between women and men among wage workers, especially among those with low levels of education and in higher age groups. The wage differential is relatively less among formal workers. Further, the real wages of some of the categories of women workers declined between 1999–00 and 2011–12. The annual reduction in real wages of regular informal workers in rural areas was 4.7 percent and that in the case of urban informal workers was 0.1 percent. It is thus clear that women are not only employed in traditional low income jobs but also discriminated in terms of wage rates.

ANNEX:

Median Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) in Different Years

Sl.No:	State/UT	1999–2000		2004–2005		2011–2012	
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
1	Jammu & Kashmir	554	813	676	892	1,248	1,744
2	Himachal Pradesh	539	961	692	1,175	1,323	2,334
3	Punjab	557	680	757	1,014	1,658	2,054
4	Chandigarh	640	1,071	769	1,468	1,732	2,380
5	Uttarakhand	*	*	565	862	1,276	1,608
6	Haryana	561	708	728	991	1,563	2,395
7	Delhi	853	887	897	1,220	2,031	2,256
8	Rajasthan	464	583	547	742	1,170	1,602
9	Uttar Pradesh	384	487	469	646	846	1,222
10	Bihar	329	457	423	574	838	1,111
11	Sikkim	439	757	636	1,167	1,207	2,276
12	Arunachal Pradesh	400	595	601	834	1,009	1,601
13	Nagaland	727	883	944	1,270	1,511	2,034
14	Manipur	474	603	603	700	1,139	1,304
15	Mizoram	612	866	772	1,134	1,287	2,173
16	Tripura	466	652	469	818	1,085	1,658
17	Meghalaya	526	875	677	1,107	1,192	2,118
18	Assam	371	650	541	846	939	1,549
19	West Bengal	369	642	494	862	963	1,634
20	Jharkhand	**	**	420	741	812	1,384
21	Orissa	311	484	360	614	776	1,346
22	Chhattisgarh	***	***	398	769	739	1,195
23	Madhya Pradesh	327	512	416	683	837	1,290
24	Gujarat	449	689	577	1,007	1,147	2,105
25	Daman & Diu	703	809	852	1,031	1,919	1,907
26	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	478	1073	489	1,201	919	2,421
27	Maharashtra	381	672	504	958	1,129	2,073
28	Andhra Pradesh	386	571	526	794	1,293	1,999
29	Karnataka	387	663	466	858	1,071	1,863
30	Goa	583	807	698	1,021	1,838	2,127
31	Lakshadweep	714	726	737	997	1,599	1,761
32	Kerala	568	630	757	895	1,599	1,888
33	Tamilnadu	382	631	518	865	1,153	1,894
34	Pondicherry	420	593	582	817	1,846	2,455
35	Andaman & Nicobar	610	878	766	1,313	2,125	3,430
36	All	385	607	479	824	991	1,748

* Part of Uttar Pradesh in 1999–2000. ** Part of Bihar in 1999–2000. *** Part of Madhya Pradesh in 1999–2000.

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