

Macro-Data Analysis of Women's Employment and Migration



The macro-context of employment

Source : www.indiaspend.com

- The link between employment and female migration is significant. National datasets- due to conceptual and definitional issues- have not only under-represented women's work, but have also largely invisibilised female labour migration.
- The macro-context of employment in India has two salient features:
 - a) Crisis in employment, especially female employment.
 - b) Growth of temporary and predominantly casual forms of labour.
- According to the usual principal and subsidiary status (UPSS) definition, 101.8 million women in rural areas and 27.3 million in urban areas were in the workforce in 2011-12 (NSS, 2011-12).
- There has been a sharp decline in women's workforce participation rate (WPR) from 28.2% in 2004/05 to 21.7% in 2011/12, which reflects an ongoing crisis (NSS, 2011-12). For rural women there has been a dramatic fall, while for urban women it has stagnated.
- Male WPR during the period though has not increased has remained more or less the same.
- The pattern of growth in the last few decades had a negative impact on employment which is also gendered.

Trends in Work Participation Rates - Male and Female - UPSS

Rounds	Total		Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1993-94	54.4	28.3	55.3	32.8	52.1	15.5
1999-2000	52.7	25.4	53.1	29.9	51.8	13.9
2004-05	54.7	28.2	54.6	32.7	54.9	16.6
2007-08	55.0	24.6	54.8	28.9	55.4	13.8
2009-10	54.6	22.5	54.7	26.1	54.3	13.8
2011-12	54.4	21.7	54.3	24.8	54.6	14.7

Source: National Sample Survey Data, Different Rounds

Nature and quality of women's employment

- For urban women workers, a trend of increasing numbers of regular workers by 10% in 20 years has been noticed. However, it is not formal, regulated work, with minimum wages and decent working conditions. This includes paid domestic work and other service sector jobs such as shop assistants, receptionists, etc., besides different forms of contract employment.
- The other trend to note is about 1% point increase in paid self-employment. The bulk of these self-employed are working as part of the vast expanding base of home-based workers in manufacture– in beedi, textiles, bangle or bindi making, packaging, etc.
- Wage rates in home-based work are very low, whether piece rate or hourly wages, requiring very long hours of work and onerous labour, where they may be dependent on the contractor.
- It is not in trade, hospitality or communication sectors that a large proportion of women are employed. The bulk of the growth has been in education sector and in domestic work. With increasing privatization of education at all levels, often women are in uncertain employment, exploited in various ways.

Female migration and employment: The macro picture

- Female migration is known to account for a large proportion of population migration with marriage occupying a key position. 80% of migrants are female, and they accounted for 48% of the rural female population and 46% of urban females respectively (NSS, 2007-08).
- With increasing urbanization and on-going rural crisis, urban bound migration has been of particular interest and focus.
- Marriage accounted for 61% of female migrants followed by associational migration (29%) in urban areas in 2007-08. Large numbers of women are recorded as migrants only because they have married into another village/area.
- Migration rate for women workers for employment related reasons in urban areas have shown a decline from 4.9% to 2.7% (NSS, 2007-08).
- Distinguishing features show that agriculture is the single largest employer of female labour migrants followed by other services (i.e., transport/storage/communications/finance/real estate/business services and community/social/personal services).
- For males, other services followed by mining/manufacturing/electricity, etc. (i.e., basic components of industry minus construction) appear as the prime drivers of labour/employment migration.

- The share of women remained the highest among migrants for agriculture at more than 27%, which is more than double their share of around 12% in migration based employment for all other sectors/industries taken together. In any approach to female labour migration in India, agricultural migration merits special attention.
- Another striking feature is the relative insignificance of trade in female migration. Trade, hotels and restaurants accounted for a mere 5% of female labour migration and a similar share in migrant worker based employment in trade. Migration for trade related employment is most heavily weighed in favour of males.
- From the demand side, manufacturing/mining/quarrying and construction are the industries that display a higher share of migrants in their workforce, as predominantly evident from the proportions of migrants in their male workforce.
- However, for their female workers, manufacturing/mining/quarrying appears to rely much less on migrants, and it is the construction industry that relies to a much greater extent on migratory workers for its female workforce.
- Migration is playing a larger role as far as women's participation in non-agricultural employment is concerned.
- Other services, accounted for 30% of female labour migrants and 27% of male labour migrants. Thus, it appears as more significant in driving female labour migration in comparison to male. However, 85% of migrant workers employed in other services were men.
- A similar pattern of an even larger scale of male domination of migration based employment is visible in manufacturing, etc. with male share at 88% of all migrant jobs in manufacturing.
- In 2007-08, migration for construction too seemed to be overwhelmingly male, with women accounting for just 10% of construction jobs for migrant workers.
- It is significant that among female short term migrants, construction is second only to agriculture, while among female migrants by UPR, the numbers in construction are less than in any other sector. It would then appear that for women, migration for construction work does not offer opportunities for more durable employment or for effecting a more permanent movement out of agriculture.
- Thus, diversification of female employment through migration is of a relatively more limited nature.



Profiling migrant women workers in urban areas

- A large segment of women migrant workers are in the age cohort of 26-40.
- Currently married women account for almost more than three fourth of all migrant

women workers with a declining proportion over the two periods (1999-2000 and 2007-2008).

- There is relatively higher share of OBCs among female migrants which reflects greater levels of internal differentiation within the larger category of OBCs.
- The educational profile of women migrant workers reflects the nature of work available for women in urban areas. The largest chunk of women is illiterate. The illiterate and poorly educated take up less skilled, less paid jobs like domestic work, casual labour in construction and manufacturing or that of vendors and helpers.
- Profile of both male and female workers across technical education show a weak outcome with about 94% of females and 90% of males having no technical education.
- The proportions of workers are high among the less educated and the highest educated, with middle level educated having the lowest.

Female migrant workers in urban Areas: Expanding opportunities with increased segregation

- For women, the proportion of non-working category remains high even after migration though some increase in work participation is noted. The proportion of migrant women in employment before migration was only 9% which increased to 19% after migration.
- Self-employment is critical even after migration with the share of women self employed at 44%.
- Regular work is another category which has shown an increase for women, but also includes insecure and precarious employment such as domestic work.
- For male migrants there is occupational diversification, whereas, females show more concentration. This nature of concentration of women before migration seems to have influenced their choice of sector in urban areas.
- Domestic work was found to top the list of occupations for urban female migrants in a multi-locational study carried out by CWDS; accounting for more than 27% of urban female migrants.
- Though migration has opened up more possibilities of employment, overtime, there are tendencies of concentration especially within the service sector occupations.