

Employment Scenario in Rural And Urban Uttar Pradesh: Recent Evidence from PLFS Survey

Ashutosh Upadhyay

Assistant Professor, (Dept. of Economics), D.A.V. PG College, Siwan, (A constituent unit of Jai Prakash University, Chapra)

Abstract

This research paper looks at the employment and unemployment situation of women with the help of preliminary data to recent data of PLFS survey (2017-2023) based on the results of the female workforce participation in rural and urban Uttar Pradesh. In this research paper, the employment status of women in Uttar Pradesh has been compared with the employment status of the country in both rural and urban areas which highlights that the situation in state is more worrisome than the country. The impact of basic differences in rural and urban areas in the state is clearly visible on female workforce participation. The rural areas of the state have higher female workforce participation as compared to urban areas, mainly due to the absorption of women's supply by the agricultural sector. The continuous widespread reduction in regular wage employment in urban Uttar Pradesh is a serious concern. Pandemic COVID 19 has created an even more adverse situation for the already worrisome female workforce participation of the state. Occupational distribution of employment for women in the state is a widespread of casual employment and unpaid workers in the informal sector, which needs to be changed significantly. The challenge of converting unpaid workers into regular wage employment and own account workers in a wide range of self-employment is also in front of the state and country. At a time, when India is reaping the demographic dividend, there is a need to reform policies as well as formulate new policies according to the current situation and challenges of women's employment in Uttar Pradesh.

Keywords: Female labor force participation, female working population ratio, female workforce participation, Unemployment rate, regular wage employment

Introduction

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India with the population of about 23 Crore. In a state where the population is so large, it becomes very important to study the supply of labor and the ability of that state to absorb the labor force. As we know that globally and also at the level of India, women constitute almost half of the total population. Similarly in Uttar Pradesh, women constitute approximately half of the total population. Such a large and significant state like Uttar Pradesh, it becomes necessary to look at the current situation of women's labor supply and workforce since it represents the largest segment of the female workforce in India. It is important to look at the employment situation of women in Uttar Pradesh in recent years, especially after a pandemic like COVID 19. At current prices in 2022-23, Gross state domestic product of Uttar Pradesh is around INR 19 trillion making it third largest economy of India. Per capita GSDP of Uttar Pradesh is around INR 81,398 as compared to the national level which is calculated to be INR 1,72,761. In 2022-23, the contribution of primary sector and secondary sector to the GDP of

Uttar Pradesh is almost equal at 25% while the contribution of tertiary sector is the highest 50%. If we look at the sector wise contribution to the GDP of Uttar Pradesh relative to India at the national level it appears that the contribution of primary sector i.e. agriculture and its allied sector in Uttar Pradesh comparatively higher. The main reason behind this is the structural distribution of the rural population in Uttar Pradesh. As we know that the largest contribution of rural areas to India's economy is from the agriculture and their allied sector. Generally, the expansion of secondary and tertiary sector in urban areas of India is considered to be but in a developing state like Uttar Pradesh, it becomes very important to look at the employment situation of women in the context of urban areas.

Background of the study

The structural distribution of the population and habitat of any province has a wide impact on its economy. In Uttar Pradesh too, the distribution of population is divided into both rural and urban areas. About 70% of the population of Uttar Pradesh lives in rural areas. Since the predominance of Agriculture and allied sector is found naturally in rural areas, So the workforce participation of both male and female in rural areas is more in the primary sector i.e. agriculture and allied sector. The majority of the female workforce participation in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh is employed in agriculture and its allied sector. Since the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh are socially and culturally traditional and backward, an analysis of the impact of socio-economic status on female workforce participation within this rural area becomes relevant. Similarly, it is necessary to assess the current status of female workforce participation in the urban areas of Uttar Pradesh. Since urban areas are dominated by industry as secondary sector and service sector as tertiary sector, so workforce participation of both male and female is high in these sectors. The level of education, health, skill and awareness in urban areas is effectively more than rural areas, so there is also the challenge of selective demand for employment and supply of labour force in urban areas. The analysis of the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on women's employment in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh is also very important.

Thus, the research paper presents a comparative study of the current status of female workforce participation in rural and urban Uttar Pradesh in terms of different aspects like socio-economic status, structural differences, factor-endowment, pandemic COVID-19 etc. and attempt to find out what kind of policies can be adopted to increase the female workforce participation in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh so that the Indian economy can grow at a rapid pace.

Literature review

An extensive investigation of female workforce participation in Uttar Pradesh explains widespread disparities between rural and urban areas which is influenced by a complex interaction of socio-economic, cultural and political factors. Policy related concerns are also responsible for this disparity. This literature review which is based on findings from various studies to elucidate disparities in the underlying causes. Educational-attainment, employment vulnerability, social and religious influences significantly impact female workforce participation. (Yudhvir singh) A combination of both low job opportunities and gender-biased cultural norms contributes to the low and declining participation of females in labour markets. Traditional expectations regarding female's roles within the household often restrict their involvement in external employment, especially in rural areas. (Nagalia & Barua, 2023)

In rural India, female workforce participation has traditionally been higher in agriculture and allied sectors.

However, women's economic contribution remains largely informal, unregistered, and underreported. According to a study by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), rural women are primarily engaged in unpaid family labour or casual wage labour. The Economic Survey also indicates that the female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) in rural areas has been declining over the years, with a sharp drop observed in recent decades. However, there have been efforts to improve women's participation in rural labour markets through various government schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which provides employment opportunities for women in rural areas. A research study by Desai and Kulkarni (2019) noted that MGNREGA has successfully provided women with a steady source of income, however, issues like remuneration parity and gendered division of labour force continue to persist. Kabeer (2000) in her study highlights that women in rural India face significant barriers to formal employment, including illiteracy, lack of access to education, mobility restrictions, and socio-cultural norms that prioritize domestic roles for women. These constraints result in lower work force participation rates for women in rural India compared to men.

In urban areas, female workforce participation is somewhat higher than in rural areas, but still not proportionate to the available opportunities. Women in urban areas tend to be employed in formal and informal sectors, with the latter seeing significant growth in recent years. Studies have shown that despite urbanization, women's participation in the labour market remains constrained by factors like gender-based wage discrimination, work-family conflict, and safety concerns in the workplace. Srivastava and Sahoo (2015) argue that urban women are often employed in low-wage and low-skill jobs, primarily in retail, manufacturing, and services. These sectors are increasingly seen as women's domain, yet their wages remain lower than those of their male counterparts.

A study published in the Indian Journal of Labour Economics in 2023 examined the long-term impact of COVID-19 on India's labour market. Arun Deshpandey 2023 pointed out that the pandemic reinforced and deepened pre-existing gender disparities, with women's employment being slower to recover compared to men's. Report of (International labour organisations 2023) highlighted that household changes such as loss of employment by other members and increased unpaid care work, significantly affected women's employment status in rural areas.

The State of Uttar Pradesh Economic Report (2018) highlights that more than 70% of women in rural UP are engaged in agriculture, but most are involved in unpaid labour. Mishra (2014) highlights that the lack of basic infrastructure, such as reliable transportation and childcare facilities, further limits women's ability to participate in formal work. However there has been a gradual increase in women's involvement in self-help groups (SHGs) and micro-enterprises in UP, as part of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). Agarwal (2016) emphasizes that these initiatives have empowered rural women by providing them with income-generating opportunities and social capital. In urban areas, UP has witnessed a growing number of women entering the formal workforce in education, healthcare, and technology sectors, though challenges related to workplace discrimination and safety concerns persist.

Theoretical framework

W. Arthur Lewis Model of Economic Development states that economic development shifts labour-force from agriculture to industry. While this has occurred in India, women's participation has not proportionally increased in industrial jobs due to cultural and structural barriers such as safety concerns, employer biases, and skill mismatches.

Dual Labor Market theory explains that the labour market is divided into a primary (high-wage, secure jobs) and secondary (low-wage, insecure jobs) sector. Women in India are often concentrated in the secondary sector, leading to job instability and lower participation over time.

Becker’s Household Specialization Model suggests that within households, individuals specialize in either market work or domestic work based on comparative advantage. Traditional gender roles often push women into domestic responsibilities while men engage in paid labour. In India, this results in women’s workforce participation being dependent on family structure, education, and childcare availability.

Neoclassical Labor Supply theory explains that individuals make rational choices regarding work based on wages, income, and personal preferences. Women’s participation in the labour force is determined by the opportunity cost of working and staying at home. If wages are high and outweigh the value of unpaid household labour, more women will join the workforce. In India, low wages in female-dominated sectors and high opportunity costs of childcare contribute to low FLFP.

Capability Approach (Amartya Sen) argues that women’s participation in the workforce is not just an economic decision but a function of their capabilities and freedoms. Lack of access to education, healthcare, and social mobility restricts women’s ability to participate in the economy meaningfully.

Intersectionality Theory proposed by Kimberle Crenshaw, highlights how overlapping identities (gender, caste, religion, class) shape women's workforce participation. In India, Dalit and tribal women face compounded discrimination that affects their employment opportunities.

Social Stratification theory highlights how caste, class, and religious identities affect workforce participation. Women from lower-income groups often engage in labour-intensive and informal sector jobs out of economic necessity, whereas women from higher-income families may withdraw from work due to social prestige considerations.

All these theories have helped a lot in creating an understanding about female’s employment nature and their difficulties.

Recent trends of female labour force participation in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh

Labor force participation is a broad and common measure of the employment status of any country. The greater labour force within a country encourages greater the possibility of economic development of that country.

Table-1 Female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) in U.P. age group: 15 years and above

Year (PLFS)	Rural			Urban			Rural+ Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2017-18	75.6	14.2	44.9	73.4	11.1	43.4	75.1	13.5	44.6
2020-21	78.4	25.1	51.7	73.4	13.1	44.3	77.3	22.6	50.1
2022-23	80.7	35.5	57.9	74.1	14.1	45.0	79.3	31.2	55.2

Source: NSO annual periodic labour force survey of 2017,2020 and 2022

Table-2 Female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) in India

age group: 15 years and above

Year (PLFS)	Rural			Urban			Rural+ Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2017-18	76.4	24.6	50.7	74.5	20.4	47.6	75.8	23.3	49.8
2020-21	78.1	36.5	57.4	74.6	23.2	49.1	77.0	32.5	54.9
2022-23	80.2	41.5	60.8	74.5	25.4	50.4	78.5	37.0	57.9

Source: NSO annual periodic labour force survey of 2017,2020 and 2022

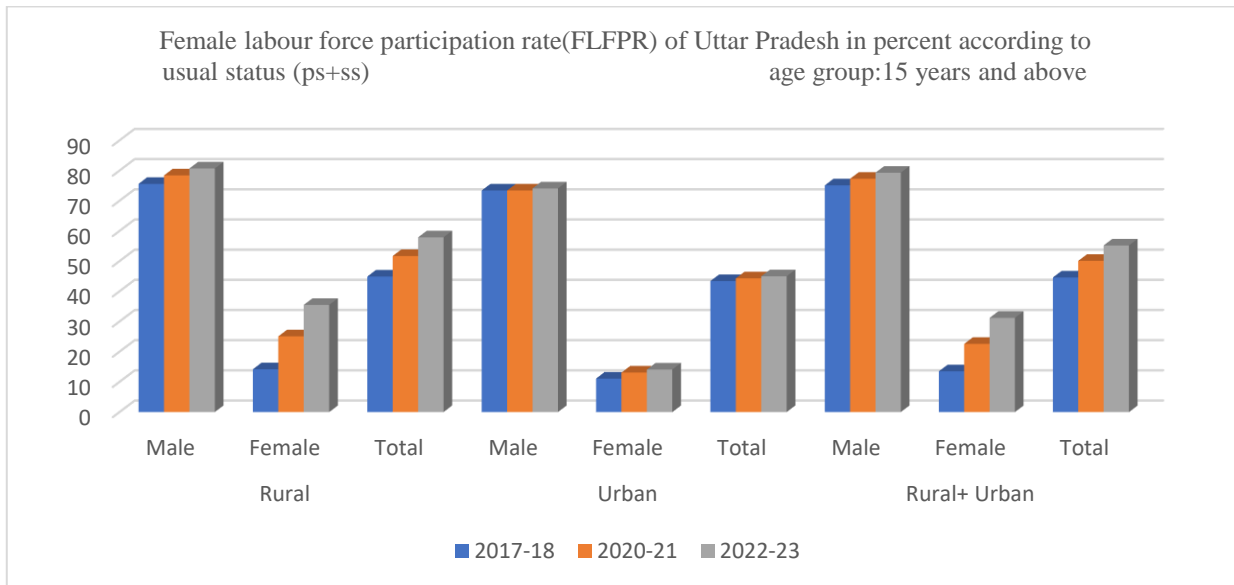


Figure 1

Source: Author's Compilation based on Table 1

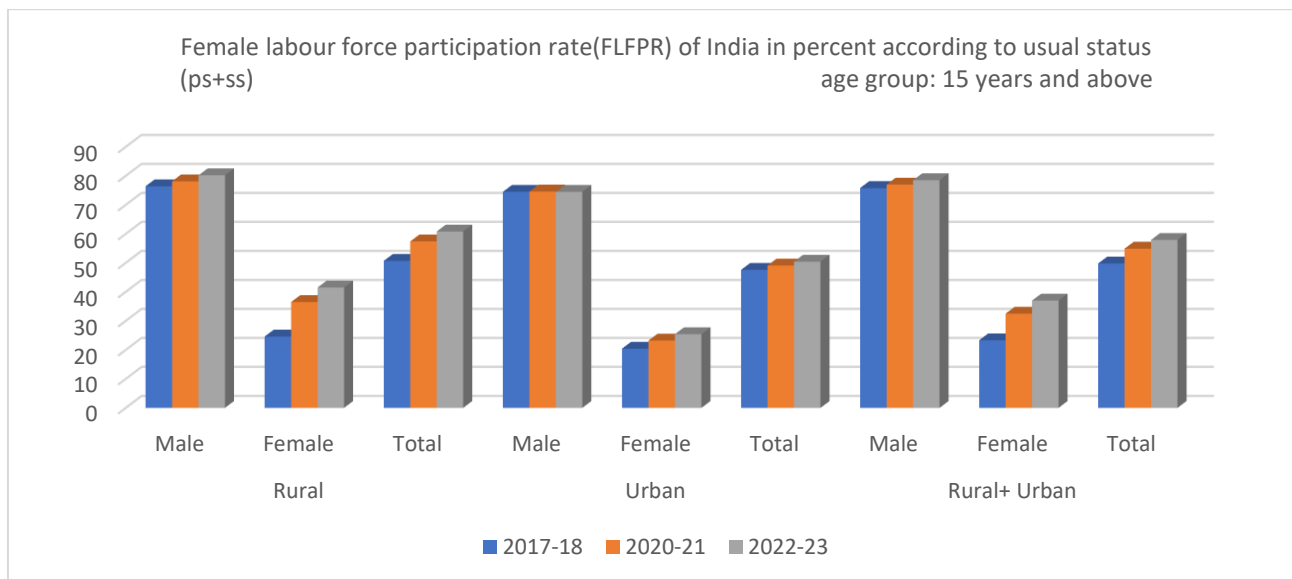


Figure 2

Source: Author's Compilation based on Table 2

Table 1 and 2 which are based on PLFS data 2017-18, 2020-21 and 2022-23, show the female labour force participation of all persons above 15 years of age based on usual status with reference to Uttar Pradesh and the national average of India. In this, we can see that the female labor force participation rate of Uttar Pradesh which was 13.5% in 2017-18 has increased to 31.2% in 2022-23 which shows a major improvement. If we look at India’s average female workforce participation rate at national level, it was 23.3 percent in 2017-18 which has increased to 37% in 2022-23. Thus, it is clear that female workforce participation rate of Uttar Pradesh is lower than the national average, but during the last five years, the female workforce participation rate of Uttar Pradesh has increased by 2.5 times, registering a significantly higher growth than the national average.

Tables 1 and 2 reveals the rural and urban structural division of female labour force participation in Uttar Pradesh which is the main theme of study for this research paper. The female labour force participation rate in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh was 14.2% and 11.1% respectively in 2017-18, which has increased to 35.5% and 14.1% respectively in 2022-23. If the female labour force participation rate in rural and urban areas is seen on the national average, then in rural and urban areas it was 24.6% and 20.4% respectively in 2017-18, which has increased to 41.5% and 25.4% respectively in 2022 23. From the data presented, it is revealed that there has been a sharp increase in the female labor force participation rate in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh while this increase has been partially in urban areas of Uttar Pradesh. If we look at this trend of female labor force participation as a national average, then it is known that the rate of growth in rural areas has been almost similar in the last five years at Uttar Pradesh and national level, but in the urban areas of Uttar Pradesh, the female workforce participation rate is alarmingly low than the national average and the rate of growth has also been comparatively lower than the national average

Recent trends of female workforce participation in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh:

After labor force participation workforce participation is also an extremely important term as it assesses the actual situation of employment, actually the workforce participation rate which is known as the working population ratio in the periodic labor force survey, tells how many of the labour force are contributing to the GDP of an economy by participating in economic activities while receiving remuneration or profit. The difference between labor force participation and workforce participation is what determines the unemployment rate.

Table-3 Female worker population ratio (FWPR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) in U.P.

age group: 15 years and above

Year (PLFS)	Rural			Urban			Rural+ Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2017-18	71.0	14.0	42.5	66.5	9.9	39.3	70.0	13.1	41.8
2020-21	75.4	24.8	50.0	68.1	11.4	40.8	73.8	21.9	48.0
2022-23	79.2	35.2	57.0	69.7	12.6	42.0	77.2	30.6	53.9

Source: NSO annual periodic labour force survey of 2017,2020 and 2022

Table-4 Female worker population ratio (FWPR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) in India
age group:15 years and above

Year (PLFS)	Rural			Urban			Rural+ Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2017-18	72.0	23.7	48.1	69.3	18.2	43.9	71.2	22.0	46.8
2020-21	75.1	35.8	55.5	70.0	21.2	45.8	73.5	31.4	52.6
2022-23	78.0	40.7	59.4	71.0	23.5	47.7	76.0	35.9	56.0

Source: NSO annual periodic labour force survey of 2017,2020 and 2022

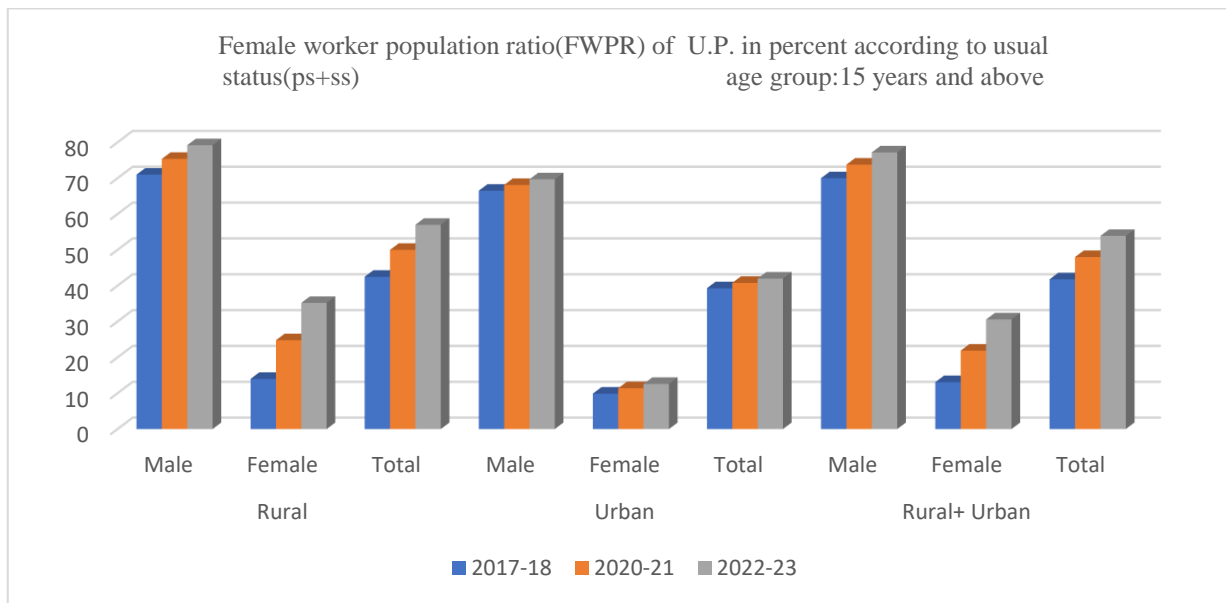


Figure 3

Source: Author's Compilation based on Table 3

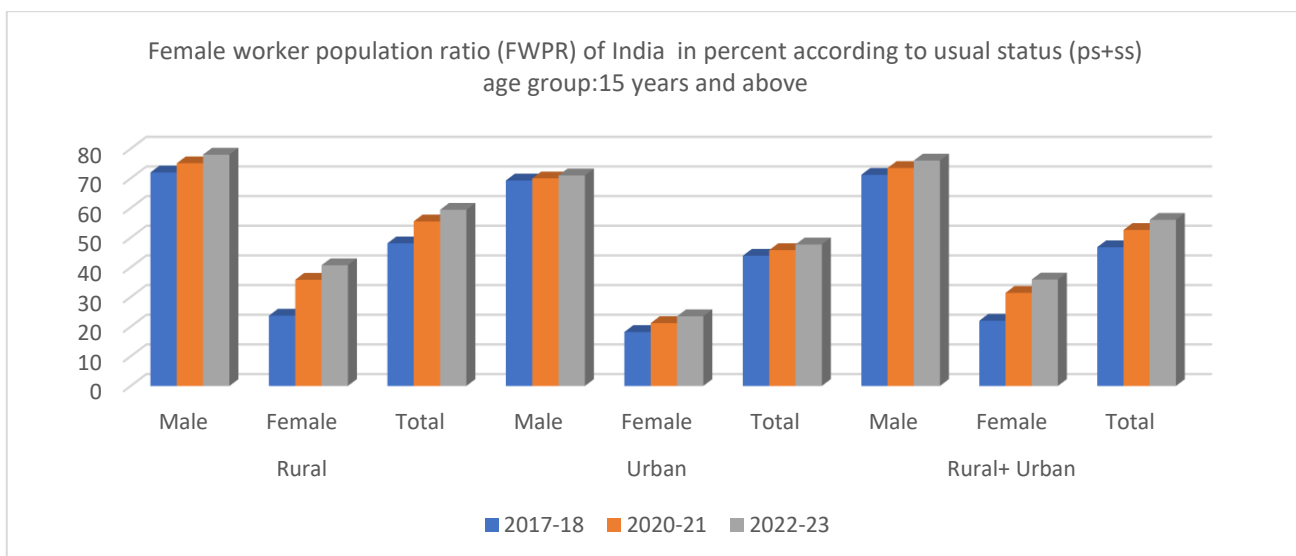


Figure 4

Source: Author's Compilation based on Table 4

Table 3 and 4 which are based on PLFS data 2017-18, 2020-21 and 2022-23, show the female workforce participation of all persons above 15 years of age based on usual status with reference to Uttar Pradesh and the national average of India. Based on the table 3 and 4, we see that the female workforce participation rate of Uttar Pradesh which was 13.1% in 2017-18 has increased to 30.6 %in 2022-23 while at the national level average female workforce participation rate of India has increased from 22% in 2017-18 to 35.9% in 2022-23. The Above figures present testify to the fact that the rate of increase in the female workforce participation rate of Uttar Pradesh has been higher than the average increase of female workforce participation in the country. The female workforce participation rate in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh was 14% and 9.9% respectively in 2017-18, which has increased to 35.2% and 12.6 % respectively in 2022-23. If the female workforce participation rate in rural and urban areas is seen on the national average, then in rural and urban areas it was 23.7% and 18.2% respectively in 2017-18, which has increased to 40.7% and 23.5% respectively in 2022-23. On the basis of the above data, it is confirmed that the female workforce participation rate of Uttar Pradesh is lower than the average female workforce participation rate of India and the situation of female workforce participation in urban areas of Uttar Pradesh is much worse than in rural areas. However, in the last five years, the growth rate of female workforce participation in Uttar Pradesh in both rural and urban areas have been higher than average growth rate of India but the female workforce participation rate in the urban areas of Uttar Pradesh is still only 12.6% which is almost half of the average female workforce participation rate of 23.5% in India’s urban area which explains the extremely worrying situation for the economy and gender equality of Uttar Pradesh.

Female employment status in Uttar Pradesh remains stagnant with low employment level

Table-5 Female unemployment rate (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) in U.P. age group: 15 years and above

Year (PLFS)	Unemployment rate								
	Rural			Urban			Rural+ Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2017-18	6.1	1.5	5.4	9.4	10.6	9.5	6.8	3.1	6.2
2020-21	3.8	1.5	3.3	7.1	13.2	8.0	4.5	2.9	4.2
2022-23	1.8	0.9	1.5	5.8	10.6	6.5	2.6	1.8	2.4

Source: NSO annual periodic labour force survey of 2017,2020 and 2022

Table-6 Female unemployment rate (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) in India age group: 15 years and above

Year (PLFS)	Unemployment rate								
	Rural			Urban			Rural+ Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2017-18	5.7	3.8	5.3	6.9	10.8	7.7	6.1	5.6	6.0
2020-21	3.8	2.1	3.3	6.1	8.6	6.7	4.5	3.5	4.2
2022-23	2.7	1.8	2.4	4.7	7.5	5.4	3.3	2.9	3.2

Source: NSO annual periodic labour force survey of 2017,2020 and 2022

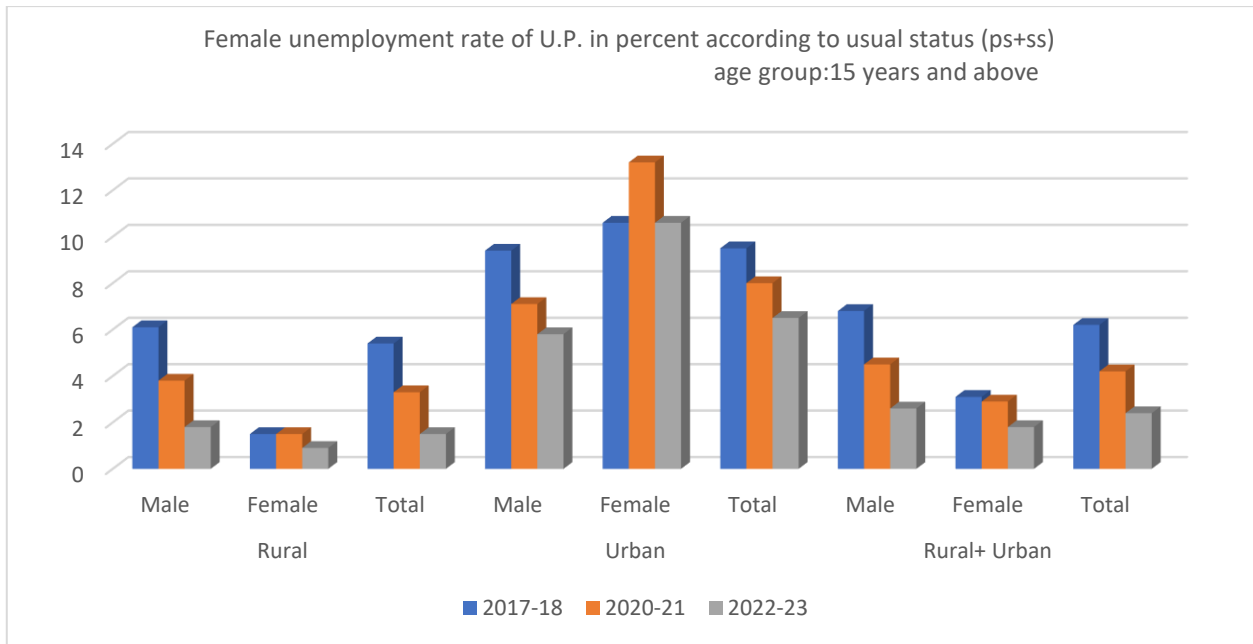


Figure 5

Source: Author's Compilation based on Table 5

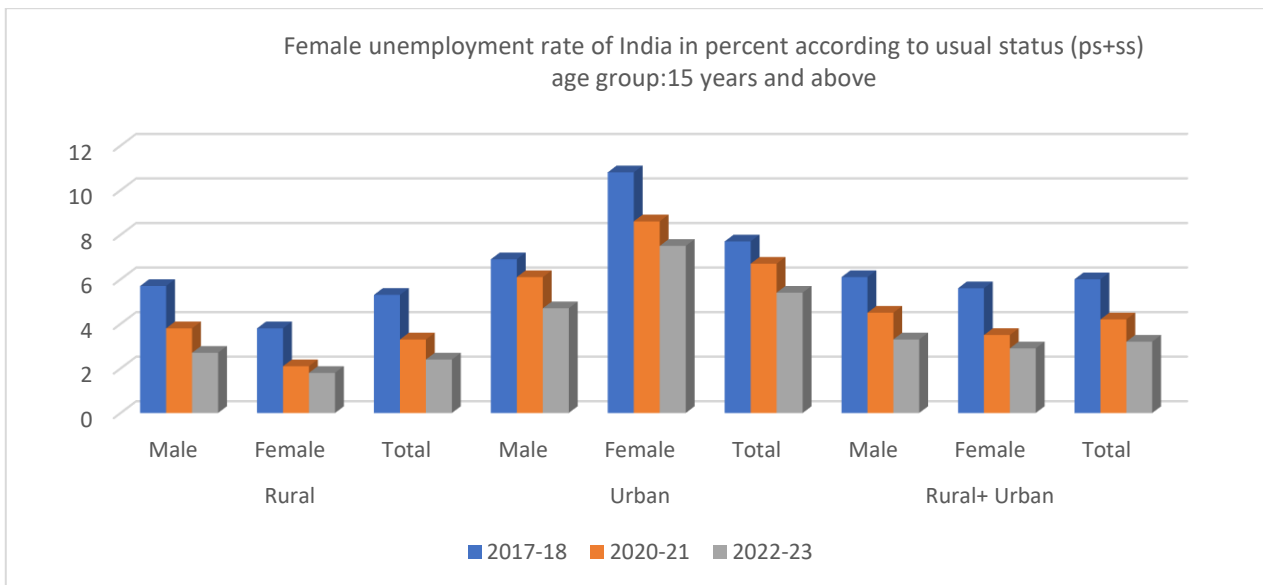


Figure 6

Source: Author's Compilation based on Table 6

On the basis of the above table 5 and 6, we can say that female labour force participation rate of Uttar Pradesh is resonating as the female workforce participation rate of Uttar Pradesh. It can be considered a good thing for the economy of Uttar Pradesh that in the last five years high growth rate has been achieved while keeping the rate of employment almost constant, But the employment situation cannot improve due to stagnation of the already low employment rate. The unemployment rate of female in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh has declined from 1.5% in 2017-18 to 0.9% in 2022-23, which is in line with the decline of the unemployment rate of female in rural areas of India as 3.8% in 2017-18 to 1.8% in 2022-23. The

unemployment rate of female in urban areas of Uttar Pradesh which was 10.6% in 2017-18 has remained at the level of 10.6% in 2022-23 as well, while the unemployment rate of female in urban areas of India has come down from 10.8% in 2017-18 to 7.5% in 2022-23. Thus, while the unemployment rate of female in urban areas of Uttar Pradesh has remained stable, the unemployment rate of female in urban area of India has declined by about 30%. The data submitted confirms that there is a wide disparity in the employment of female labour force in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh.

Impact of pandemic COVID 19 on female employment in Uttar Pradesh

The COVID 19 pandemic had a massively negative impact on India’s employment which was a major setback for the whole economy. Uttar Pradesh the most populous state also had to deal with the setback. In the trajectory of figure 7 given below in which the employment status of women within rural and urban Uttar Pradesh is displayed in the pre-covid 19 and post-covid 19 pandemic periods. In this trajectory, we can see that the negative impact of the pandemic COVID 19 on women’s employment in rural U.P. has been less than that of men, however, after the pandemic the, unemployment rate for women in rural up has decreased by 0.6% while the unemployment rate for main has decreased by 2%. Further, we can see that unemployment among women has increased sharply during the COVID 19 pandemic in urban Uttar Pradesh, while unemployment among men has decreased surprisingly during this period. However, after the pandemic, unemployment rate of women has again declined and has come down to its pre-pandemic level. Urban employment in Uttar Pradesh is largely focused in sectors such as retail shops, hospitality, education and domestic work, where women contribute a significant share of the workforce. All these sectors suffered a major setback from the continuous lockdowns in pandemic. The lockdown increased unpaid domestic labour for women cause to closed schools and staying family members at home. The result of this, women had to take on additional caregiving responsibilities. The main reason behind the decline in the unemployment rate of men in rural Uttar Pradesh was the large-scale absorption of such workers by the agricultural sector, who had migrated from cities to villages after the lockdown. Whereas in rural Uttar Pradesh, women were working in the agricultural sector, informal sector and unpaid labor as pre-pandemic period, that is why their employment status remained stagnant.

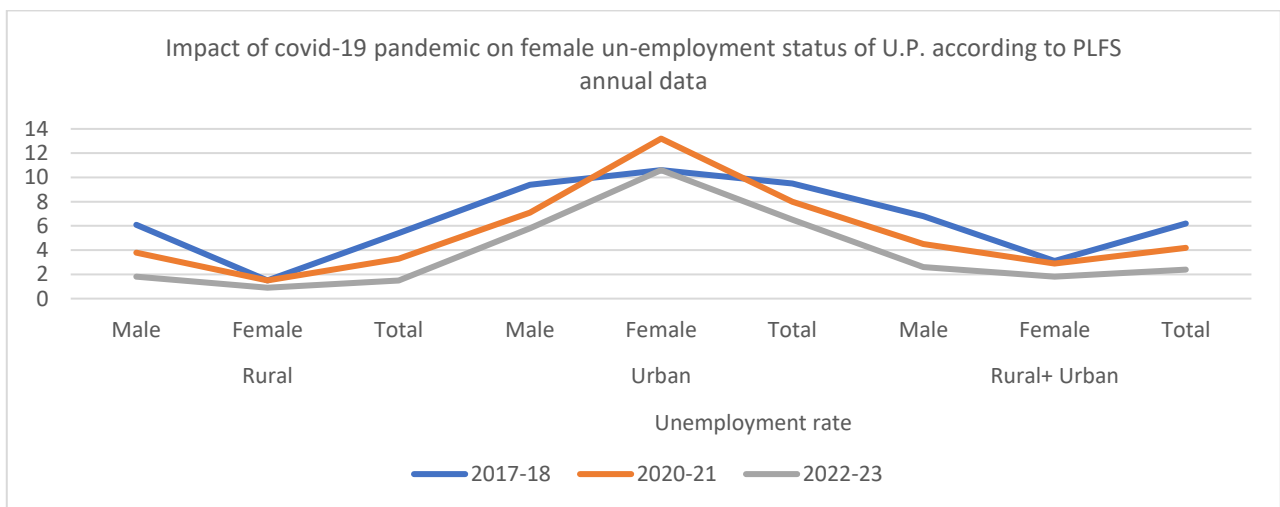


Figure 7

Source: Author’s Compilation based on Table 5

In the trajectory of figure 8, given below in which the employment status of women within rural and urban India is displayed in the pre-covid 19 and post-covid 19 pandemic periods. In this trajectory, we can see that in rural India, the unemployment rate for both males and females declined almost equally during the pandemic but in urban India the unemployment rate for females declined sharply while the unemployment rate for males declined marginally. The impact of pandemic on the employment situation of women in urban India and Uttar Pradesh is quite different: where unemployment for women has increased by 2.6% in Uttar Pradesh and unemployment for women in India has decreased by 2.2% during the pandemic period.

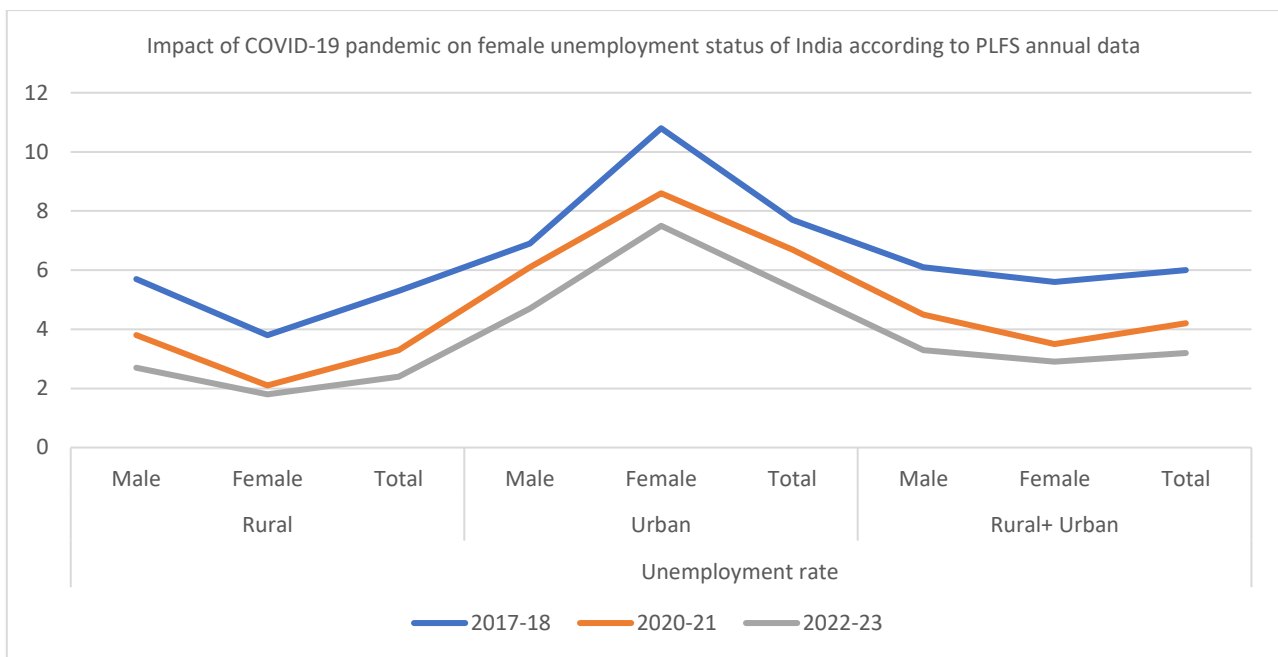


Figure 8

Source: Author's Compilation based on Table 6

Status of female workers employment distribution in Uttar Pradesh:

We can see in table-7 and figure-9 that the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh females are largely self-employed but in urban areas females primarily engaged in regular or salaried work. The number of self-employed females in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh has increased from 78.5% in 2017-18 to 88.8% in 2022-23. The key reason for this self-employment is the large number of females working as agricultural labourers in rural areas. On the other hand, female who work in other forms of employment such as regular workers and casual workers declined respectively from 7.6% to 5.0% and 13.9% to 6.2% between 2017-18 to 2022-23. The number of self-employed females in urban areas of Uttar Pradesh has increased from 46.2% in 2017-18 to 60.1% in 2022-23. The biggest reason for this self-employment is the large number of females working as agricultural labourers in rural areas. On the other hand, female who work in other forms of employment such as regular workers and casual workers declined respectively from 46.2% to 34.1% and 7.6% to 5.8% between 2017-18 to 2022-23. The number of females employed as own account worker is higher in urban areas than in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh.

Table-7 Percentage distribution of female workers in usual status (ps+ss) by broad status in employment for rural and urban U.P.

Year (PLFS)	Rural			Urban		
	Self-employed	Regular wage/salary	Casual labour	Self-employed	Regular wage/salary	Casual labour
2017-18	78.5	7.6	13.9	46.2	46.2	7.6
2020-21	87.0	4.9	8.1	53.8	40.3	5.9
2022-23	88.8	5.0	6.2	60.1	34.1	5.8

Source: NSO annual periodic labour force survey of 2017,2020 and 2022

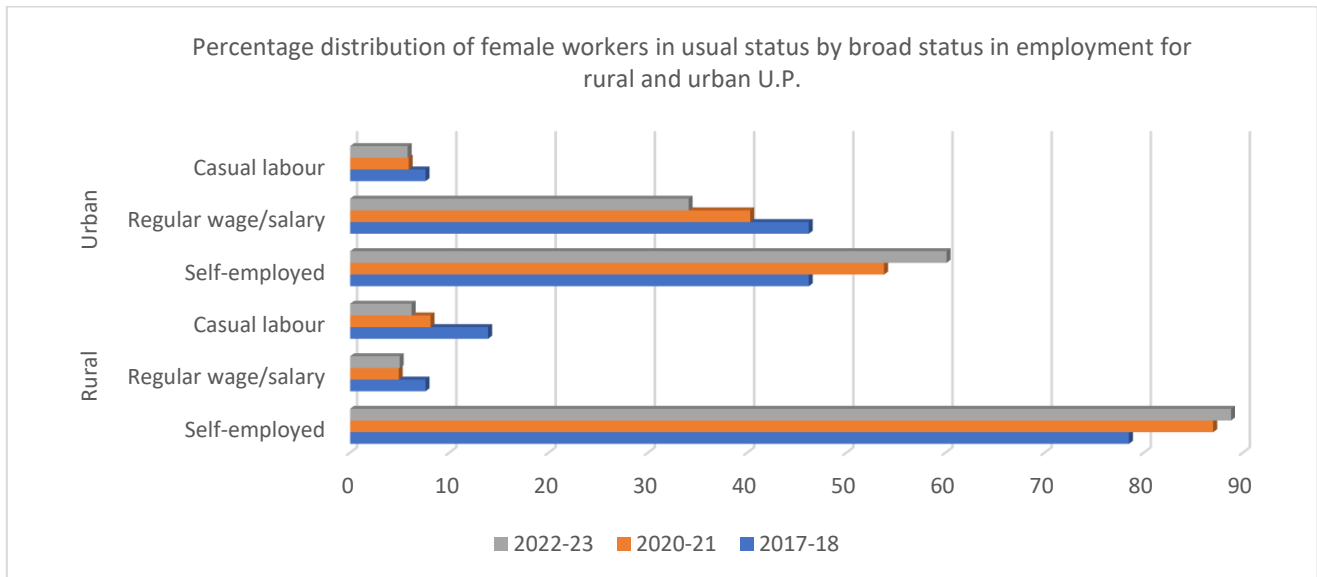


Figure 9

Source: Author's Compilation based on Table 7

Table-8 Percentage distribution of female workers in usual status (ps+ss) by broad status in employment for rural and urban India

Year (PLFS)	Rural			Urban		
	Self-employed	Regular wage/salary	Casual labour	Self-employed	Regular wage/salary	Casual labour
2017-18	57.7	10.5	31.8	34.7	52.1	13.1
2020-21	64.8	9.1	26.2	38.4	50.1	11.5
2022-23	71.0	8.0	21.0	40.4	50.8	8.9

Source: NSO annual periodic labour force survey of 2017,2020 and 2022

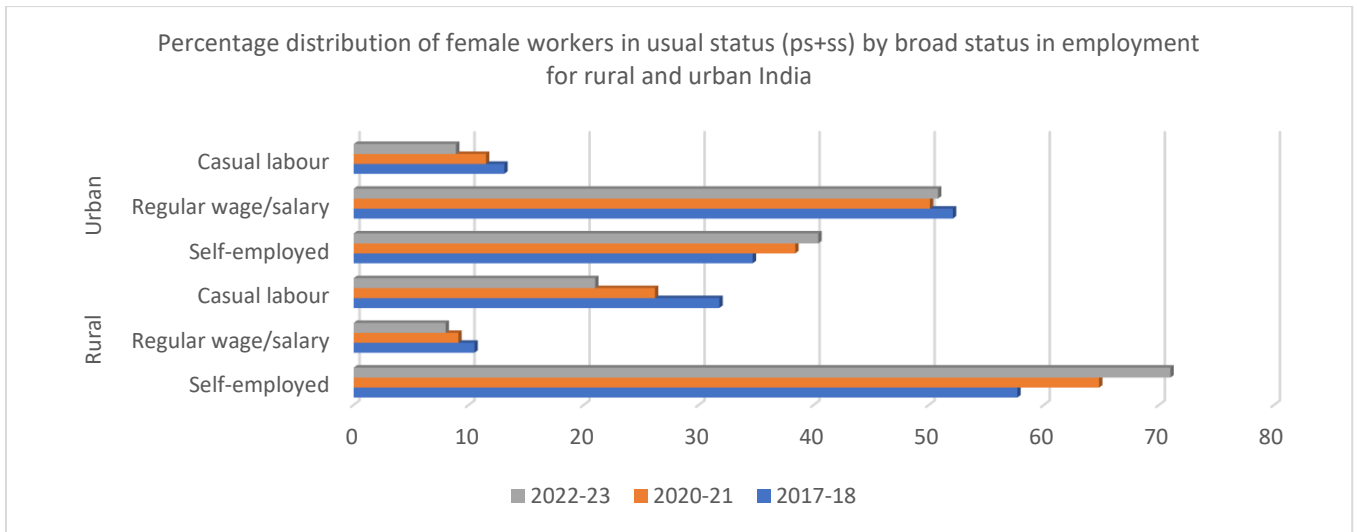


Figure 10

Source: Author’s Compilation based on Table 8

From table-8 and figure-10 we can analysis that the females of rural India are largely self-employed but in urban India females primarily engaged in regular or salaried work. The number of self-employed females in rural India has increased from 57.7% in 2017-18 to 71 % in 2022-23. Along with this, females who work in other forms of employment such as regular workers and casual workers declined respectively from 10.5% to 8.0% and 31.8% to 21% between 2017-18 to 2022-23. The number of self-employed females in urban India has increased from 34.7% in 2017-18 to 40.4% in 2022-23, on other hand the females who work in other forms of employment such as regular workers and casual workers declined respectively from 52.1% to 50.8% and 13.1% to 8.9% between 2017-18 to 2022-23.

The percentage distribution of female workers in employment is a clear reminder of the tragedy of employment status in India. The biggest challenge facing the Indian economy is to create adequate employment opportunities in the formal sector on regular wage or salary. The status of regular wage employment in rural India is very dismal for both male and female. Whereas in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, regular wage employment has remained negligible. Self-employment is the largest contributor to women’s employment in India at the rural level and Uttar Pradesh also is no exception but on a large scale this self-employment is spread in the form of unpaid workers. Unpaid workers do not become part of the economic chain-effect in the direct productive activities of the economy so that they did not contribute appropriately to the economy. In urban India, women’s regular wage employment is progressively decreasing while in Uttar Pradesh this decrease happening in a very tragic and frightening form which is a matter of great concern for the state. Under self-employed unpaid workers cannot be considered as self-employed in real spirit without converting them into paid workers. Converting helper in household enterprises into on account workers is a necessary condition for Indian economy.

Conclusion and Policy recommendations

On the basis of the above study, the employment status of women can be duly seen in the context of rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh. The situation of female liver force participation and female workforce participation is already alarming in India while the situation in Uttar Pradesh is even worse. There is a wide disparity in female workforce participation both qualitatively and quantitatively between rural and urban Uttar Pradesh. Female workforce participation in rural Uttar Pradesh is comparatively higher than

in urban Uttar Pradesh, but this participation is intimately concentrated in the form of unpaid work and in the unorganized sector. Urban Uttar Pradesh has a lower female workforce participation rate than rural Uttar Pradesh. The main reason for this is the higher educational attainment and enrollment of women in the last decade, while the employment opportunities are limited according to their demand. The most worrying thing in Uttar Pradesh is that regular wage job opportunities are continuously decreasing whereas in India it has only partially been reduced. In urban India regular wage employment has decreased by 1.3% in the last six years, while in urban Uttar Pradesh regular wage employment have decreased by 12.1% in the same time period. (PLFS rounds survey) India's employment situation cannot be transformed favorably without changing this status of regular wage employment in the urban areas of most populous state Uttar Pradesh. The above research study also underlines the impact of deep wounds of pandemic COVID 19 on the female employment status of Uttar Pradesh.

In order to improve the employment status of women in rural and urban Uttar Pradesh we have to address socio-economic, infrastructural and educational challenges and formulate policies. We need to create non-farm employment in rural areas so that women can get participation in non-agricultural work in a rural-dominated economy like Uttar Pradesh. There is a need to Promote telecommuting options where feasible, especially in sectors like information technology and services, to provide women with more employment choices. We have to strengthen the support infrastructure for women at workplace. Implementing flexible Workplace policies that allow for women's needs can enhance their participation in the work force. Employers need to have a flexible work-hours policy that allows women to work with balancing their household chores. There is a need to enhance women at the level of Education and skill development, especially in rural areas where there is a lack of quality education and vocational training. Vocational centres should be developed by the governments according to the requirement of the local market in rural areas, in which the necessary skill abilities can be adequately developed. Promoting female entrepreneurship will give a boost to female employment. For this microfinance related services will have to be developed by institutions in proper way. Necessary improvement in female employment cannot be done without addressing the socio-cultural barrier. In order to break the stereotypes of the Conservative Society, the importance of female employment has to be spread in the society by conducting awareness campaigns. Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood in rural areas. There is need to empower women in this sector, for this, women have to be ensured of equitable access to land, seeds, fertilizers, credit etc. This can be facilitated through Community awareness programmes and policy reforms. If women attain education and training in organic farming with modern farming techniques, then women can get employment opportunities in agricultural work related to these techniques. Micro and small enterprises will have to be established in rural areas so that regular wage employment can be given to women, while in urban areas there is a need to expand the service sector along with setting up medium and large-scale industries. Women should be made aware about the welfare schemes run by the government so that they can get the benefits of the schemes and engage in employment work. By implementing these comprehensive policy recommendations, Uttar Pradesh can create an enabling environment that fosters increased female employment in both rural and urban areas.

References

1. NSO Annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (2017-18). Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India
2. NSO Annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (2020-21). Ministry of Statistics and Programme Imple-

entation, Government of India

3. NSP Annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (2022-23). Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India
4. Das, D., & Pathak, M. (2012). The growing rural-urban disparity in India: Some issues. *International Journal of Advancements in Research & Technology*, 1(5), 1–7
5. Goldin, C. (1994). The u-shaped female labour force function in economic development and economic history. Working Paper No. 4707. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
6. Sharma, A., & Saha, S. (2016). Female employment trends in India: A disaggregated analysis. *The NEHU Journal*, 13 (2)
7. Ghose, A K and A Kumar (2021): “India’s Deepening Employment Crisis in the Time of Rapid Economic Growth,” *Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, Vol 64, pp 247–79.
8. Karpagam, U and Narayan, Binod (2006), “Vulnerabilities, Insecurities and Discrimination of women workers: Ethnography and Reflections”, *Man and Development*, September 2006, Vol. 28, No.3
9. Bhagat, R. (2017). Migration, gender and right to the city. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 52(32), 35–40
10. Rangarajan, C., Kaul, P. I., & Seema (2011). Where is the missing labour force? *Economic & Political Weekly*, 46(39), 68-72
11. Dasgupta, P and Bishwanath Goldar (2005), “Female Labour Supply in Rural India: An Economic Analysis”, Institute of Economic Growth, WP, No. e/265
12. Mehrotra, S and J K Parida (2019): “India’s Employment Crisis: Rising Education Levels and Falling Non-agricultural Job Growth,” CSE Working Paper 2019–04, Centre for Sustainable Employment, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru.
13. Mitra, A and P K Shrivastav (2021): “Reliability of PLFS 2019–20 Data,” *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol 56, No 39, pp 18–21.
14. Baruah, A., & Indervir, S. (2020). Employment of Women in Rural Punjab: Deconstructing Agricultural Growth Policy. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 55(26), 29–35
15. Mangain, R P and S Verick (2017): “The State of Employment in Uttar Pradesh: Unleashing the Potential for Inclusive Growth,” International Labour Organization.
16. Deshpande, A and N Kabeer (2021): “Norms that Matter: Exploring the Distribution of Women’s Work between Income Generation, Expenditure saving, and Unpaid Domestic Responsibilities in India,” No wp-2021–130, World Institute for Development Economic Research (UNU-WIDER).
17. Afridi, F., Mukhopadhyay, A., & Sahoo, S. (2016). Female Labour Force Participation and Child Education in India: Evidence from the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. *IZA Journal of Labour & Development*, 5(1), 1-27.
18. Srivastava, N., & Srivastava, R. (2010). Women, work, and employment outcomes in rural India. *Economic & political weekly*, 49–63