

Role of Urbanization in Gender Equality: The Indian Context

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Abstract

India is experiencing rapid urbanization. It is estimated that, by 2030 more than 400 million in India will be living in cities. In this context, it is essential to measure the role and impact of urban expansion on empowering women in India. Though urban women are more privileged than their rural counterparts in enjoying independence and opportunities, but till recent times, there are widespread barriers to women empowerment in the urban sector. Available data indicates that, during 2020-25, there are positive trends in the status of urban Indian women, particularly in areas like education, financial inclusion, employment and political participation. However, significant challenges still persist across a range of issues, like healthcare and nutrition, gender-based violence, etc. As these are often dictated by male dominance thus marginalising the experiences and needs of women, impacting their extent of authority. Promoting girls' education and equal opportunities for skill development is essential for them to pursue their aspirations and break traditional gender roles. Hence the emphasis should be on gender-based urban planning, giving the women access to overcome the obstacles and vulnerabilities. This article focusses on how urbanisation spells both hope and despair, with regard to gender. Addressing these inequalities, urban areas can create more inclusive and equitable domain where women have the opportunity to succeed.

Keywords: Barriers, Empowerment, Gender-equality, Urbanization

Introduction

In India, urbanization has evolved significantly, shifting towards a liberalised economic framework since 1990. The country boasts the second largest urban system [1]. In this scenario, it is imperative to understand women's economic empowerment, extending beyond their economic position in terms of work, income, education and assets. Empowerment refers to a situation where the powerless gain greater control over resources and ideologies. Traditionally being a patriarchal society, women have secondary role to play in every household in India. However, issues related to welfare of women have been always prioritised by the policy makers though this gradual shift has been observed mainly after independence, over the course of time and as per the demands of the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards. This has resulted in a remarkable shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. India has embraced various global efforts like Mexico Plan of Action (1975), Outcome document adopted by UNGA Session on Gender Equality and Development and Peace for the 21st Century and more. The Indian

constitution has very clearly given equal access to same opportunities and resources regardless of gender. This includes equal pay for equal work, equal access to education, healthcare, and economic openings, as well as eliminating discrimination and bias in all areas of life. It has directed authorities to frame rules and regulations to safeguard the right.

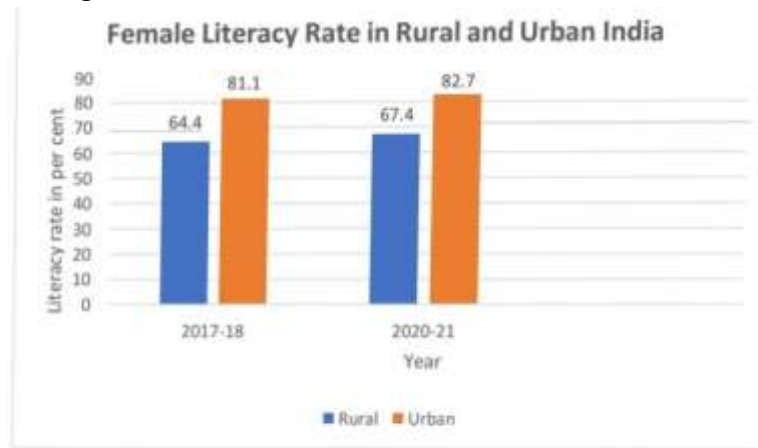


Figure 1. Female Literacy Rate in Rural and Urban India.
Source: PLFS Annual Report (literacy rate for 5 years and above age group)

In this respect, urbanization has a significant impact as it leads to improvements in women's mobility and financial independence. Women residing in urban areas may encounter fewer constraints on their movement, possibly due to the convenience and efficiency of commuting in such areas.

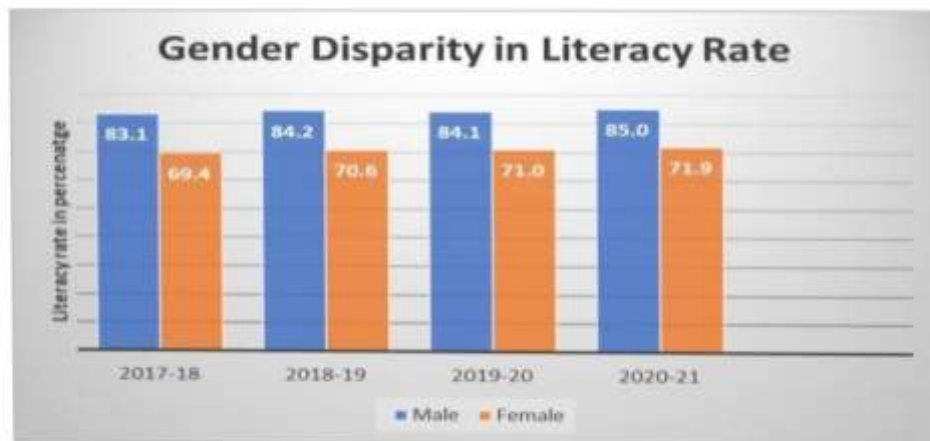


Figure 2. Gender Disparity in Literacy Rate.
Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Reports (Data taken for All India Urban and Rural persons)

However, until few years back, urbanisation has limited impact on women's labour market participation, access to information, and women's gender beliefs as evident from gender disparity in literacy rate. The situation is showing a positive trend at present, helping in empowerment of women in India.

2019.

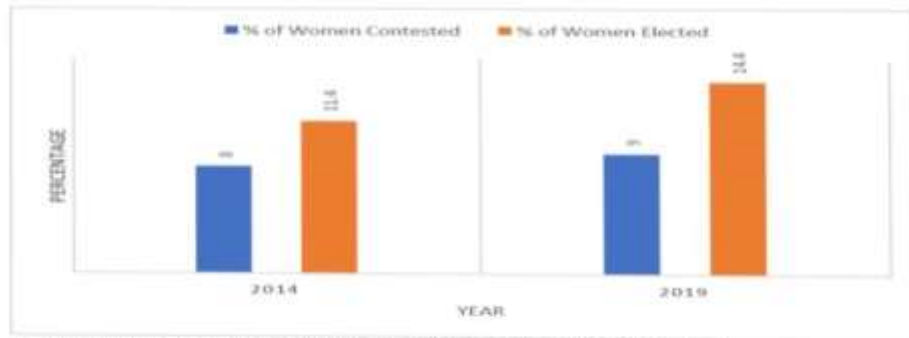


Figure 21. Lok Sabha Elections: Percentage of Women Elected and Contested

Source: PIB (2022)

It has been observed that, gender inequality varies widely from state to state in India, in different fields.

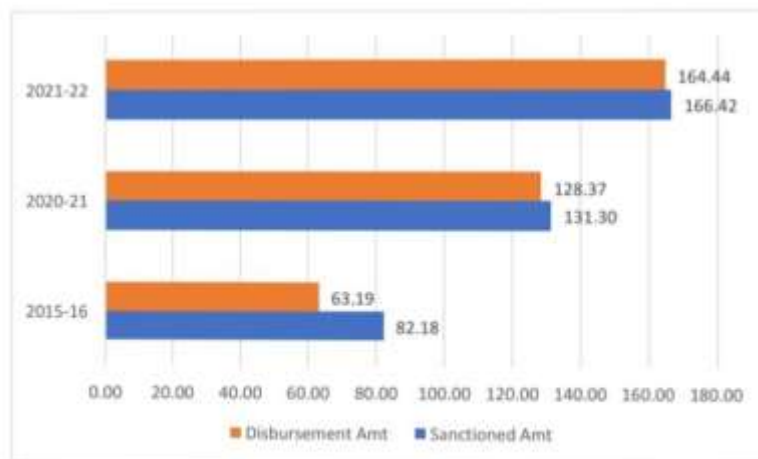


Figure 19. Women Entrepreneurs who received loans through PMMY.

Source: PMMY Portal (figures in thousands)

Indicators		India	Highest	Lowest
Literacy and Education				
Literacy Rate - 2011	Total	73.0%	94.0%	61.8%
	Female	64.6%	92.1%	51.5%
	Male	80.9%	96.1%	71.2%
Gross Enrolment Ratio at Primary level – 2015-16	Total	99.2%	140.9%	84.5% (Andhra Pradesh)
	Female	100.7%	143.1%	84.1% (Andhra Pradesh)
	Male	97.9%	138.8%	84.9% (J & K)
Gross Enrolment Ratio at Upper Primary – 2015-16	Total	92.8%	150.6%	70.2% (J & K)
	Female	97.6%	157.9%	71.9% (J & K)
	Male	88.7%	143.7%	68.2% (Uttar Pradesh)
Gross Enrolment Ratio at Secondary level – 2015-16	Total	80.0%	119.8%	71.6% (Nagaland)
	Female	81%	126.1%	65.9% (J & K)
	Male	79.2%	116.2%	67.7% (UP, J & K)
Gross Enrolment Ratio at Higher Secondary Level – 2015-16	Total	56.2%	95.5%	35.6%
	Female	56.4%	96.6%	36.7%
	Male	56%	94.6%	34.8%
Participation in Economy				
Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) (15+ years) 2015-16	Total	52.4%	68.7% (Tripura)	39.3%
	Female	27.4%	60.4% (Mizoram)	10.6%
	Male	75.5%	83.3% (Tripura)	65.6%
Unemployment Rate (15+ years) 2015-16	Total	3.7%	10.6% (Kerala)	0.6%
	Female	5.8%	25.7% (J & K)	0.5%
	Male	3.0%	8.7% (H P)	0.7%
Worker Population Ratio (15+ years) 2015-16	Total	50.5%	67.4% (Mizoram)	36.7%
	Female	25.8%	59.0% (Mizoram)	7.9%
	Male	73.3%	79.9% (Jharkhand)	63.1%
Participation in Decision Making				
% of women representatives in Central Council of Ministers -2017		12%		
Women participation in 16 th Lok Sabha		12%	29% (West Bengal)	0 % (10 states/UTs)
Elected women representatives in PRI's - 2016		46%	59% (Jharkhand)	33% (Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat & Tamil Nadu)
Social Obstacles in Women's Empowerment				
Rate of incidence of total crime against women - 2016		55.2	131.3 (Assam)	9.2 (Nagaland)
Total Rape victims - 2016		39068	4908 (MP)	23 (Mizoram)
Percentage disabled in total population 2011		2.2%	3.0% (Odisha, Sikkim)	1.4% (Meghalaya, Nagaland)

Source: Gender inequality index of states in India.

Existing research suggests that, due to urbanization, education system involve women in the teaching learning process. The rise in urbanization, brought about educational empowerment among women. Traditionally, Indian men earned for their family and women did household things. As a result of urbanization, women are getting more employed resulting in the improvement in their status in the society. However, monopoly of men often acts as a hindrance in the path of giving authority to women. In 2023, India ranked 127 out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index [2]. This article emphasises on the

association between urbanization and women empowerment in terms of literacy rate, educational infrastructure, financial set-ups, crime against women and women's participation in politics.

Review of Literature

This is a pivotal element of research articles since it aids readers in understanding and assessing past research on relevant subjects. The researcher may now, fully understand the research procedure. It accelerates the learning process and increases accessibility for all students. A review of the literature is a structured analysis of scholarly works that, guides the work of scholars.

Year	Author	Title	Place	Objectives	Methods	Findings
2024	Gaurav Dhamija, Punarjit Roychowdhury, Binay Shankar	Does Urbanization Empower Women? Evidence from India	States of India	To estimate the short term effects of urbanization on women empowerment in India; To account for several confounders that could affect the relationships between urbanization and women's outcomes	The outcome variables in this study are obtained from the 4 th and 5 th rounds of NFHS of India. Urbanization is measured using district-level night time lights.	The short term effects of urbanisation on women's outcomes are mixed at best; It also reduces women's intra-household agency and increase their exposure to IPV
2020	Aanya Bahl	Discrimination Faced by Urban Women in Educated Societies and its Manifestations	Different cities of India	To understand the challenges an urban woman faces every day; To show that the society that projects a progressive façade is just that-a facade	An explanatory study using the Critical Incident Technique was conducted to identify discriminatory factors, that are prevalent in the Indian workplace, the nature of their interactions and their influence on organised decisions	In urban society, individuals, who project a belief in the equality of the sexes, still continue to put men at a higher standard than women

2022	Bapan Biswas, Nasrin Banu	Economic empowerment of rural and urban women in India: A comparative analysis ⁹⁸	Rural and urban areas in India	To compare women empowerment in the rural-urban area in different dimensions; To compare the magnitude of women's work participation in urban India with its rural counterpart based on their literacy status, education level and marital status; Comparative analysis of rural and urban women workforce at the national level as well as state level; Adding a section on women's work participation in different job profiles to understand better the quality of work they are engaged with	This study is entirely based on secondary databases collected from the Census of India, 2011 and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2019-20. Economic Empowerment Index (EEI) of women have been measured with the help of women work participation, literate women work share, educational level-wise women work participation, work share by married women and job profile wise women work share using the widely adopted normalization technique	The result of the study is showing that, the rural women are more engaged in the workforce in all the selected dimensions. The overall analysis is reflected in EEI, which proves that rural women are more economically empowered in comparison with their urban counterparts
2022	Trinayani Bordoloi	Urban working women of India and health status: A Review	Cities of India	To examine the health status of urban working women in India; to explore the	This review employs a systematic literature search and analysis of	This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the prevalent health issues

				<p>various that, influence their physical, mental and reproductive well-being</p>	<p>relevant academic research, government reports, NGO studies related to the health status of urban working women in India. The literature was conducted using various Research paper published in various Journals and Books as well as from online databases, including PubMed, Google Scholar, and JSTOR, as well as government websites and NGO repositories</p>	<p>faced by this population, including occupational hazards, work-life balance challenges and access to healthcare services; It evaluates the role of existing policies and programs in addressing the unique health needs of the urban working women. By highlighting the gaps and identifying areas for improvement, this review contributes to the ongoing discourse on promoting the overall well-being of this vital segment of India's workforce</p>
2017	J. K. Pawar	<p>"Impact of Urbanization on the Status of Women in India" A Sociological Study</p>		<p>To study the meaning and phase of urbanization; To find out the impact of urbanization on the status of women from social point of</p>	<p>Secondary sources are used such as, essays, newspapers, periodicals, Research papers, internet sources, etc.</p>	<p>Urbanisation has great impact on women position and status in society and research find positive result that urbanization</p>

				view; To know the present position of women after urbanization		empowered the status of women in society; Urbanization opened the doors of all fields to work and to get equal status with men, but still the doors of social mind are closed to this equality; Monopoly of men in the society is right of male race, is a psychological state, which still prevails in society.
2020	Sangeetha Menon, Ranjitha M. and Shweta Sharma	A Study on the Status of Women's Empowerment in Urban Bangalore, India	Bangalore, India	To analyse different women's empowerment indicators with the help of structured questionnaire being distributed to the female population in urban Bangalore	A structured questionnaire was used with details like age, marital status, education, employment status, work experience to survey. This was assessed with 5-point Likert scale (through 30 statements). Data collected for the study were analysed using factor analysis by	The study revealed that, working women were highly empowered concerning work, home and freedom of choice or movement and their total empowerment is better than women, who are not working; It also observed that, women in the age group of 51 and above are most empowered,

					Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation in IBM SPSS 19 statistical software	followed by 36-50; It is found in empowerment at the workplace, single women are more empowered than married women, while the reverse is true at home, as the decisions on household aspects are made by parents in Indian homes
2020	Prof. Seema Singh and Dr. Antra Singh		Women Empowerment in India: A Critical Analysis	To critically examine women empowerment in India, various models and dimensions. To focus on constitutional safeguards as well as plans and programmes by the government and their implementation, indicators of women empowerment; To provide suggestions to meet the challenges and path forward to move ahead; To identify the gaps between	Relevant secondary sources like scholarly articles, report by various ministries functional under Government of India, reports by corporate and non-government organisations and international organisations have been used for review, analysis and discussion	The paper has covered about affirmative legislation, plans and programmes initiated by the Government, NGOs and Corporate sector through their Corporate Social Responsibility over a large spectrum starting from Indian constitution to development in the recent years. It has been reflected in achieving

				present state of women empowerment in India and what is expected from stakeholders to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal-5 on gender equality by 2030		gender parity in educational attainment, improvement in political participation, but showing a declining trend in economic participation and opportunity as well as in survival segment. The findings open up several avenues for policy discussion and intervention towards women empowerment
2024	Sunetra Nath & Gurudas Das	What determines women empowerment in India? A capability-based approach	Barak Valley region of Assam, India	To quantify women's empowerment by constructing an index and attempts to investigate the potential drivers that, accelerate women's degree of empowerment using a capability-based approach; To define women empowerment as the process	The index was developed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) in SPSS software. EFA identifies eight domains of women empowerment in the Indian context. Then linear multiple	The study's novelty lies in its attempt (i) to expand the extant literature on women's agency by incorporating 3 new domains in constructing a women empowerment index; (ii) to improve the conventional domains of women's agency by incorporating

				<p>by which women gain the ability to make strategic life choices and transform their lives by challenging structural constraints with the help of both tangible and intangible resources and achieve favourable outcomes at the personal and relative levels</p>	<p>regression was performed using the index as regressed and socio-demographic and economic factors and self-reported capabilities as regressors in the STATA software. The authors have applied linear multiple regression to estimate the determinants of women's empowerment as it is the best-suited technique, when the dependant variable is continuous.</p>	<p>some new indicators ; (iii) to shed light on a few additional determinants specific to the Indian context that have not received adequate attention so far. Technological acquaintance is found to be the most significant domain, followed by women's household decision-making. Thirdly, women's freedom to visit different places independently. The study also reveals that, Hindu women are relatively more empowered than their Muslim counterparts are; this study also identifies a spatial impact on women's empowerment.</p>
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2024	Siwan Anderson	The Complexity of Female Empowerment in India		To examine the complexity across the different dimensions of female empowerment in India; to highlight the newly emerging research focused on ameliorating gender biased norms and discusses potential steps forward the salience of restrictive local customs as a core hindrance towards transformative change;	Averages are computed at the regional level from individual level data on female respondents aged 15-45. Standard deviations are reported in parentheses.	This work suggests that, successful policies to female empowerment not only need to target women, but also protect their accrued benefits from husbands (and other household members). There is research documenting how simply increasing exposure to less-biased gender norms leads to dramatic changes in behaviour
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Research Gap

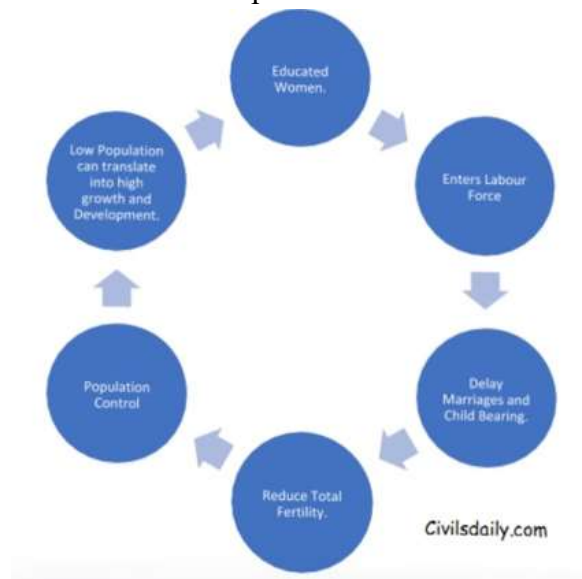
This study is based on secondary data collected from authentic data sources, like government websites, relevant official websites, different available literature in the form of journals and reviews, different official reports, magazines and newsprints. Numerous research had been conducted on the role of urbanization on gender equality. The purpose of this study is to assess the role of urbanization in empowering women in India and locate the sectors where gender inequality is prevalent. It also focusses on gender inclusive policies by the government.

Objectives

1. To observe how has urbanization empowered women in India
2. To analyse how urban environments impact women's lives, involving their access to education, healthcare, employment, and social participation
3. To analyse the areas where the women face gender inequality
4. To promote gender-inclusive urban development

Research Methodology and Analysis

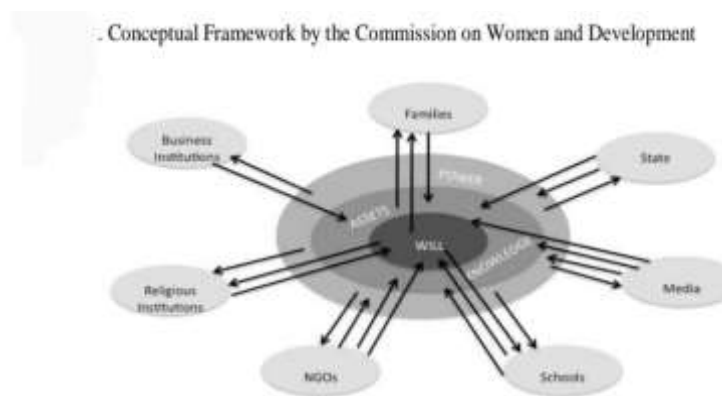
How gender equality promotes economic development



The theme for International Women’s Day 2019, “Think equal, build smart, innovate for change” was chosen to identify innovative ways to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women[3]. However, the focus on empowerment is the result of discrimination.

Urbanisation can affect women positively as well as negatively. It is essential to understand that women’s empowerment continues further than women’s economic position in terms of work, income, education, and assets, to consider a wider range of factors beyond the main focus. This requires women to have skills and resources to participate in markets, unbiased and equal access to economic institutions, and the ability to develop flexibility and freedom to choose their actions in order to achieve desired outcomes, convincing others in the process.

Despite many challenges in India, women’s representation and participation in various fields witnessed an increase in recent years. The current economic scenario is undergoing a positive shift with an increasing number of women entering the field. Over 39 percent of MSMEs in India are owned by women. The funding share for women-led start-ups also surged by over 94 percent over last year [4]. The women have better opportunities to engage in paid employment.



(Source: Commission of Women and Development, 2007)

The figure illustrates empowerment process as a catalyst for social change. India's rank on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) improved from 122 in 2021 to 108 in 2022, according to Public Information Bureau (PIB). A significant increase has been observed in women having bank accounts that they themselves operate, possibly due to government schemes like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. Economic participation and opportunity improved slightly to 40.7, educational attainment scored 97.1%, reflecting strong gains in literacy and higher education enrolment. According to GII 2025, sub indices, India shows gains in Economic Participation (40.7%) with improvement in income parity from 28.6% to 29.9%, and educational attainment at a high 97.1%, indicating near-parity in literacy and tertiary education enrolment. Health and Survival improved with better sex ratio and life expectancy [5].

State-wise List of NGOs

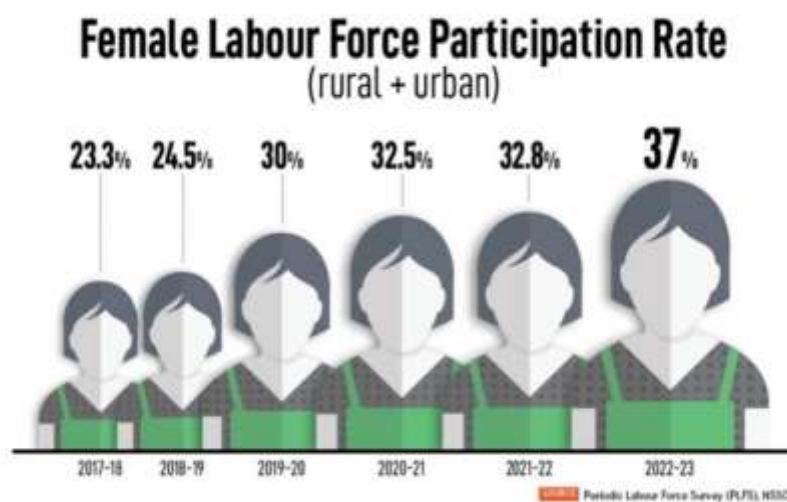
State	Performing NGOs	% age of NGOs working for Women Empowerment*
Andhra Pradesh	35	68.6
Arunachal Pradesh	4	100
Assam	38	81.6
Bihar	18	100
Chandigarh	7	57.1
Chhattisgarh	7	100
Delhi	146	54.8
Goa	1	-
Gujarat	16	93.8
Haryana	17	58.8
Himachal Pradesh	8	100
Jammu and Kashmir	2	50
Jharkhand	11	90.9
Karnataka	63	74.7
Kerala	12	75
Madhya Pradesh	12	75
Maharashtra	82	90.2
Manipur	37	89.1
Meghalaya	2	-
Mizoram	1	100
Nagaland	2	100
Orissa	72	87.5
Punjab	5	60
Rajasthan	25	92
Tamil Nadu	53	87.7
Telangana	20	75
Uttar Pradesh	61	86.9
Uttarakhand	15	73.3
Tripura	1	-
West Bengal	37	73
Total	811	77.5

* the area of work included women development or/and empowerment

(Source: List of Performing and Non-Performing NGOs issued by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. Of India)

The Government of India has taken various steps to ensure empowerment of women through their social, educational, economic and political uplifting through various organised and planned approaches. India has shown remarkable progress in human development over the years, however, it has a long way to go in fulfilling the needs of its people and achieving its true potential.

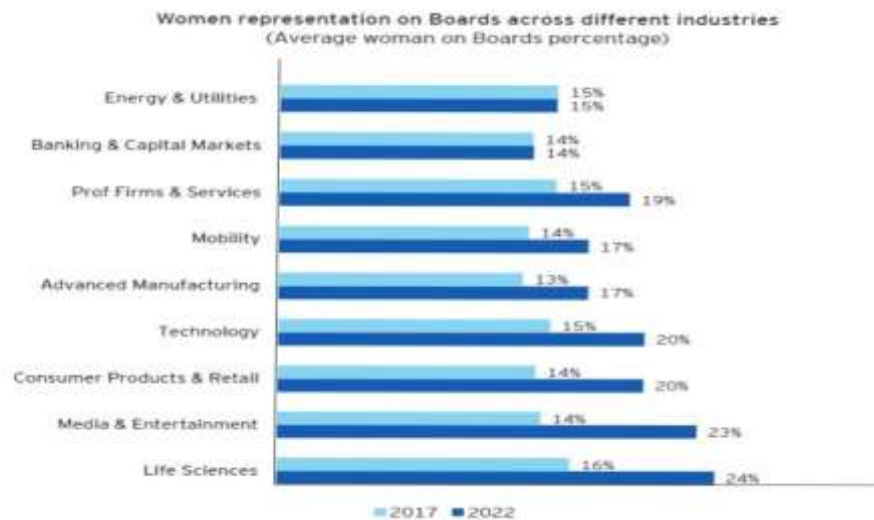
Urbanisation spells both hope and futility, with regard to gender, to the lower class and unskilled Indian woman. For many women, migration to the mega-cities seems like the best way to earn some more money to save, to create a less busy life and to provide their families with a more secured future. Around the world, the urban landscape has drawn in migrants for decades. As a result, the traditional gendered roles witnessed a drastic change. Urban India observed socio-cultural changes within the family, with the rise of employment of women in workforce and rising income in the family, helping women to rise from the role of nurturer to achiever and decision maker.



According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Report 2022-2023, the participation of women in the workforce rose from 23.3% in 2017-18 to 37% in 2022-23. While the growth rate remains gradual, upcoming government initiatives to empower women through entrepreneurship and improved education are expected to accelerate the increase in female participation faster.

In the corporate world, the principle of gender equality emphasizes fair treatment for both men and women. This involves equal pay, benefits, job consideration, opportunities for advancement, timely career progression, and access to training and career development programs. However, male executives predominantly occupy senior management positions in both developed and developing countries, making it challenging for women to attain such roles. Doubling the percentage of women in the workforce would boost India's growth rate from 7.5% to 9% and raise the country's GDP to US \$700 billion by 2025. Report by EY in 2022, indicated that women occupied 18% of board seats in India in 2022, compared to 13% in 2017 and 6% in 2013 [6].

It highlights an increase in women's representation on boards across various industries such as energy & utilities, technology, and life sciences in 2022 compared to the figures from 2017. This enhances the crucial role of women, which significantly contributes to the country's GDP.



Job profile-wise women work share in different states

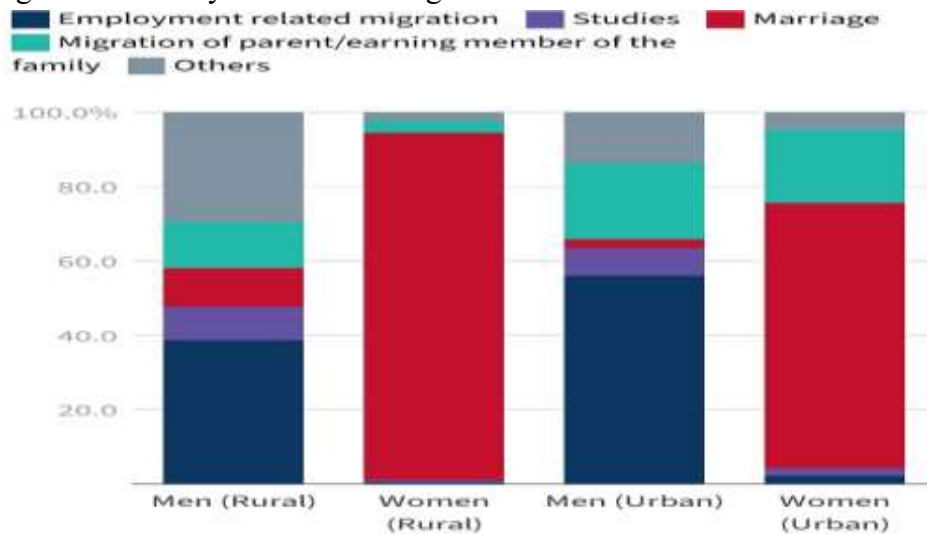
	High Profile Job		Mid Profile Job		Low Profile Job	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
India	29.53	23.02	23.41	13.89	23.91	21.33
Jammu & Kashmir	24.54	27.98	20.03	9.79	4.91	9.91
Himachal Pradesh	21.10	31.78	13.44	12.91	18.60	18.24
Punjab	30.99	26.04	16.14	8.27	11.96	14.02
Chandigarh	16.71	27.39	8.82	10.99	18.11	18.63
Uttarakhand	28.30	23.67	12.40	8.85	13.73	13.51
Haryana	22.29	24.43	18.77	8.38	10.05	15.31
Delhi	20.13	23.60	6.82	8.05	18.23	17.01
Rajasthan	23.49	22.58	26.07	11.07	34.55	16.19
Uttar Pradesh	27.32	20.28	22.59	10.77	10.49	9.19
Bihar	27.22	19.79	14.67	8.21	7.51	8.41
Nagaland	34.98	34.36	21.55	21.35	35.47	33.46
Arunachal Pradesh	30.66	28.96	24.19	23.59	31.94	26.20
Nagaland	36.09	37.88	36.03	28.04	21.26	21.89
Mizoram	37.57	39.95	45.61	42.64	33.37	23.15
Mizoram	34.66	42.67	28.40	37.83	17.26	22.95
Tripana	31.72	28.68	18.24	12.11	40.28	31.26
Meghalaya	46.87	44.83	26.94	26.60	29.99	32.91
Assam	32.50	29.17	19.40	9.38	34.65	20.62
West Bengal	29.89	26.73	26.79	15.30	18.25	20.76
Jharkhand	30.19	22.21	27.97	9.59	14.77	14.73
Odisha	28.35	22.42	22.69	10.42	24.72	25.97
Chhattisgarh	23.43	23.86	23.86	12.29	24.49	30.41
Madhya Pradesh	33.65	25.62	29.82	14.78	23.22	19.41
Gujarat	30.43	30.15	29.03	8.17	22.88	19.10
Daman & Diu	23.40	19.00	10.64	6.52	35.81	16.65
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	26.86	20.16	6.36	5.89	23.73	15.72
Maharashtra	27.00	23.77	16.53	13.53	19.52	23.76
Andhra Pradesh	28.77	24.45	26.49	16.15	32.47	28.58
Karnataka	31.57	25.88	26.46	19.64	32.82	27.94
Goa	34.45	31.77	17.05	17.69	29.78	31.25
Lakshadweep	27.02	29.80	15.09	13.14	12.92	17.04
Kerala	39.74	36.37	19.93	18.04	39.89	36.75
Tamil Nadu	32.01	27.30	24.76	19.86	34.38	28.18
Puducherry	30.67	28.54	14.02	14.52	27.64	34.18
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	34.51	31.47	17.25	15.84	17.68	17.12

Source: Census of India 2011

In the last two decades, a large empirical literature in economics has come into being that looks at the determinants of women empowerment and gender inequality in developing countries. Gender inequality manifests itself in various forms including, but not limited to disparities in health, education, labour market participation, freedom of choice, and bargaining power within marriage [7]. With urban India encompassing 7,933 settlements and a population of 377.1 millions as of 2011, India boasts the world's second largest urban system [8].

This was further propelled by the rise of towns and increase in population in major cities. For women, as well as men, the city's main attraction is the possibility of economic opportunities, which are unavailable to them in rural areas. Additionally, a common perception is that cities allow women to escape from the miseries of gender violence, gender discrimination, and disinheritance [9].

Reason for migration can vary on the basis of gender and sector.



Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), Ashoka University
Data source: Multiple Indicator Survey, 2020-21

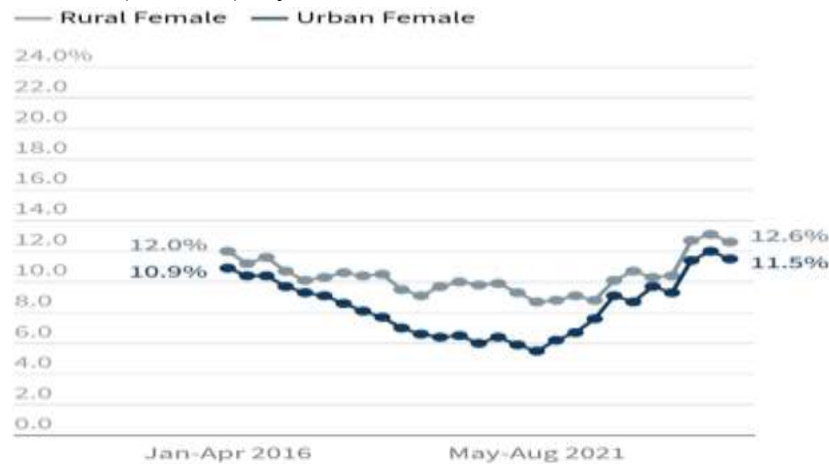
As a result of urbanization it has been observed that, more than half (56 percent) of the migrants reported an increase in their incomes, whereas 22 percent experienced a decline in their earnings. The data reveals a gap in the earning potential for migrating individuals to rural and urban areas. Among those who relocated to rural areas, 46 percent of the individuals experienced an increase in their earnings on the contrary to those who had moved to urban areas, the corresponding share was 68 percent. However, it is important to remember that since the costs of living and consumption tend to be higher in urban areas as compared to rural areas, it is likely that the real gains in income might be lower.

Recent report of the United Nations states that, India is going through a kind of urban revolution. According to this report, by 2031, India's urban population will be approximately 60 crores. Recent data shows that 101 percent of female workers have migrated compared to 48.7 percent of male workers [10]. The simple average Femdex score of the five states that are closest to gender parity—Mizoram, Kerala, Meghalaya, Goa, and Sikkim—is 0.67, while the simple average Femdex of 0.46 in India's bottom five states on gender parity—Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh (McKinsey Report, 2015).

The important question was whether urbanization leads to modernization of women?

In urban areas, the emergence of gender-segregated labor markets following liberalization has led to many low-skilled, uneducated women finding opportunities in the informal sector (World Bank Report, 2023). High female literacy as well as attainment of education is also motivating many women to migrate. However, roughly 80% of the country's migrant women work on a contract basis in the informal sector – in activities such as agriculture, construction, transportation, domestic work and mining. Manufacturing labor is the largest occupation for the female workforce in urban areas (there are 45 lakh women in this sector), followed by teaching (27.5 lakh) and domestic work (20 lakh) [12]. There has been a steady rise in female literacy rates along with increasing access to financial services. This includes digital payment platforms and experimenting with new investment avenues. This has empowered women giving more access to information and opportunities.

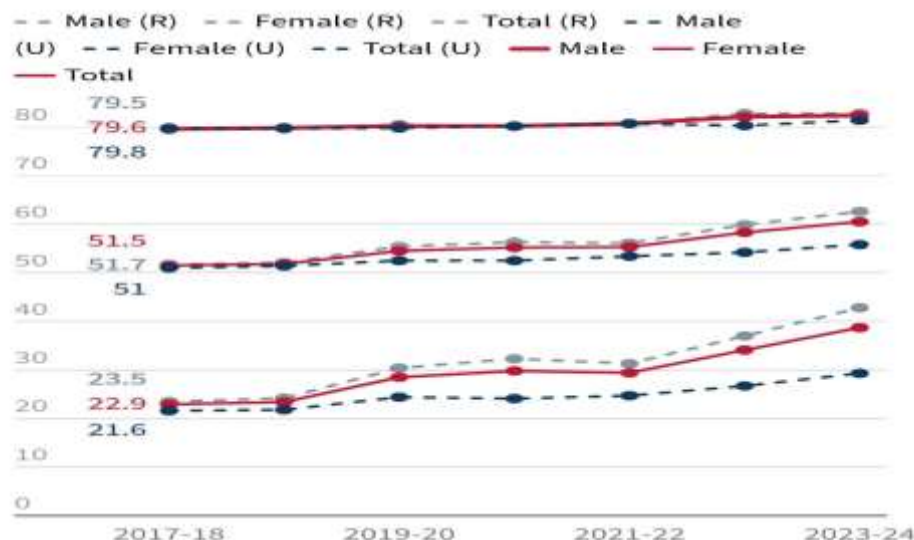
Employment rates of women (all India), by sector, Jan 2016 to Dec 2024



Centre for Economic Data and Analysis
(CEDA), Ashoka University
Data source: Consumer Pyramids
Household Survey, Centre for Monitoring
Indian Economy (CPHS-CMIE)

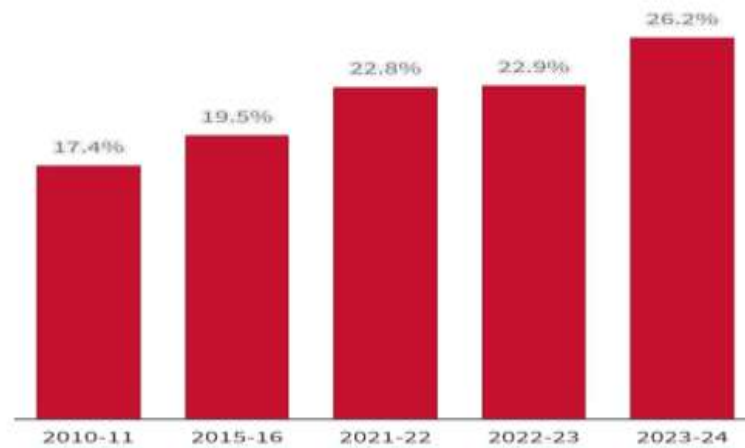
The government must ensure that women workers have access to technological skills, quality and affordable child care, pay equality, occupational safety, affordable healthcare, reliable public transport and safe cities. A focus on strengthening the participation of a girl at each of the educational levels is essential for greater workforce participation. Recent years have witnessed a shift in policy interventions pertaining to women with multiple policies to address various challenges.

Share of women – owned proprietary establishments in India’s informal sector, 2010-11 to 2023-24



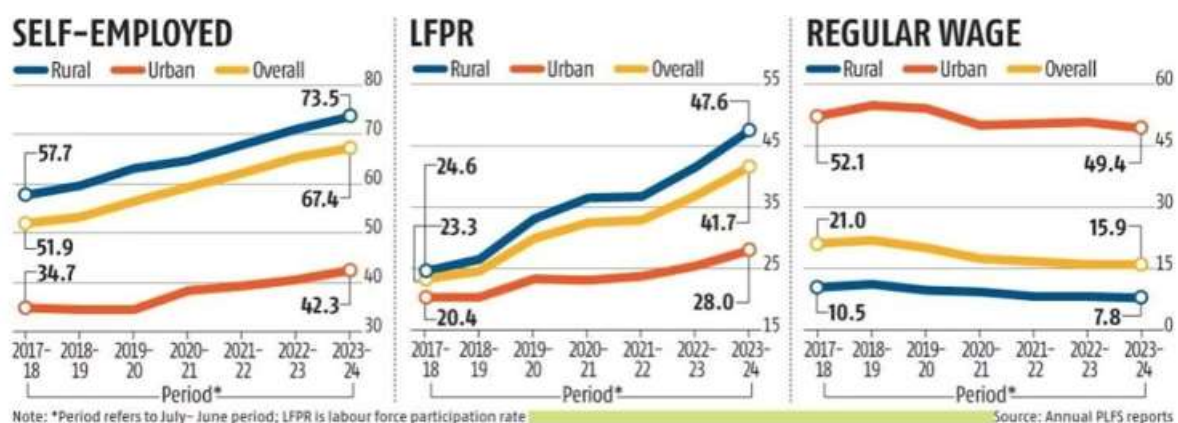
(R) against label refers to rural and (U) refers to urban
Centre for Economic Data and Analysis
(CEDA), Ashoka University
Data source: Periodic Labour Force
Surveys, various rounds

Labour force participation rates, for working age population 15 to 59 (all India), by gender and sector, 2017-18 to 2023-24.



Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), Ashoka University
Data source: The numbers for 2010-11 and 2015-16 and 2010-11 are derived from NSS 67th and 73rd rounds titled respectively. The numbers for 2021-22 to 2023-24, 2022-23 are from ASUSE survey reports and factsheets for the corresponding years released by MoSPI.

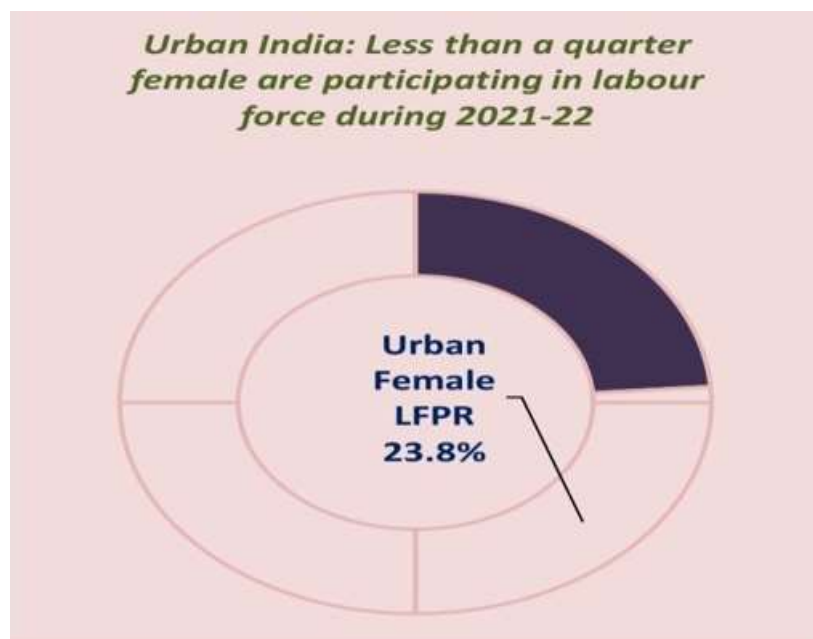
However, there's further scope for improvement. The draft Migrant Labor Policy by NITI Aayog proposes to create a suitable policy for migrant workers but it largely ignores the specific needs and concerns of migrant women. In the present times when women must advance socially and economically after lagging behind men for decades, one of the main reasons for lagging behind, is patriarchy and ignorance on one hand while the other reason is migration from one place to another. Thus there is a need for structural change in the entire system for women in India and there is a strong need for better policy making.



The data shows the share of women having a regular salaried job is at a seven-year low at 15.9 per cent in 2023-24 from 21 per cent in 2017-18, with the share of women wage workers in rural areas declining to as low as 7.8 per cent from 10.5 per cent in this period. Data reveals that, 23.8% of female aged 15 years & above in urban areas are participating in labour force, as against 74.7% male. In comparison to 36.6% of female aged 15 years & above in rural areas were in labour force in 2021-22 which was just 23.3%.



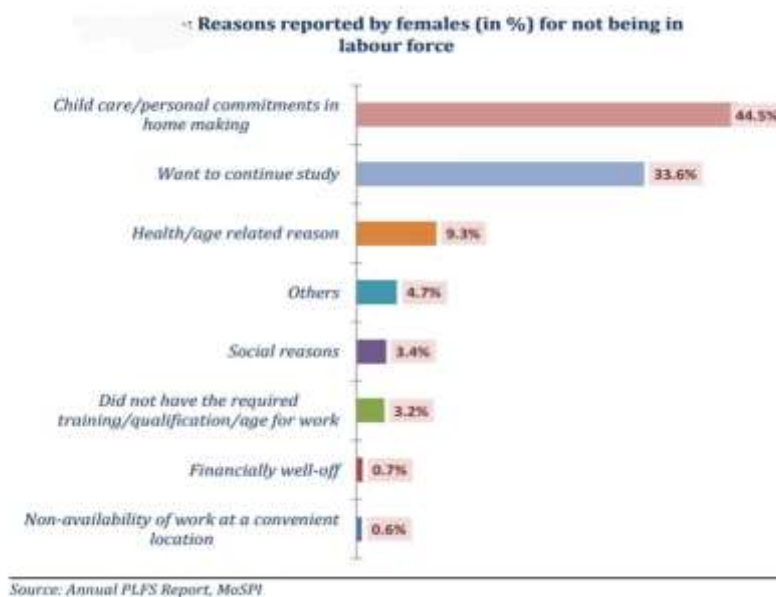
Source: Annual PLFS Report, MoSPI



Source: Annual PLFS Report, MoSPI

The major push came from the rural sector than the urban sector, where it increased by 12.0 and 3.4 percentage points, respectively. In rural areas, female labour force participation rate(LFPR) has increased to 36.6% during 2021-22 as compared to 24.6% in 2017-18, showing an increase of 12.0% points. The female participation in labour force has increased by 9.5% points in 2021-22 over the year 2017-18, this upward trend in female LFPR is the result of various influential factors. One of the main factors of positive signs in female labour market is various steps taken by the Government of India for boosting employment and women empowerment through various laws, policies and schemes. Although, the female LFPR is lower than male in India, but the optimistic point is that the female LFPR is increasing over the years and

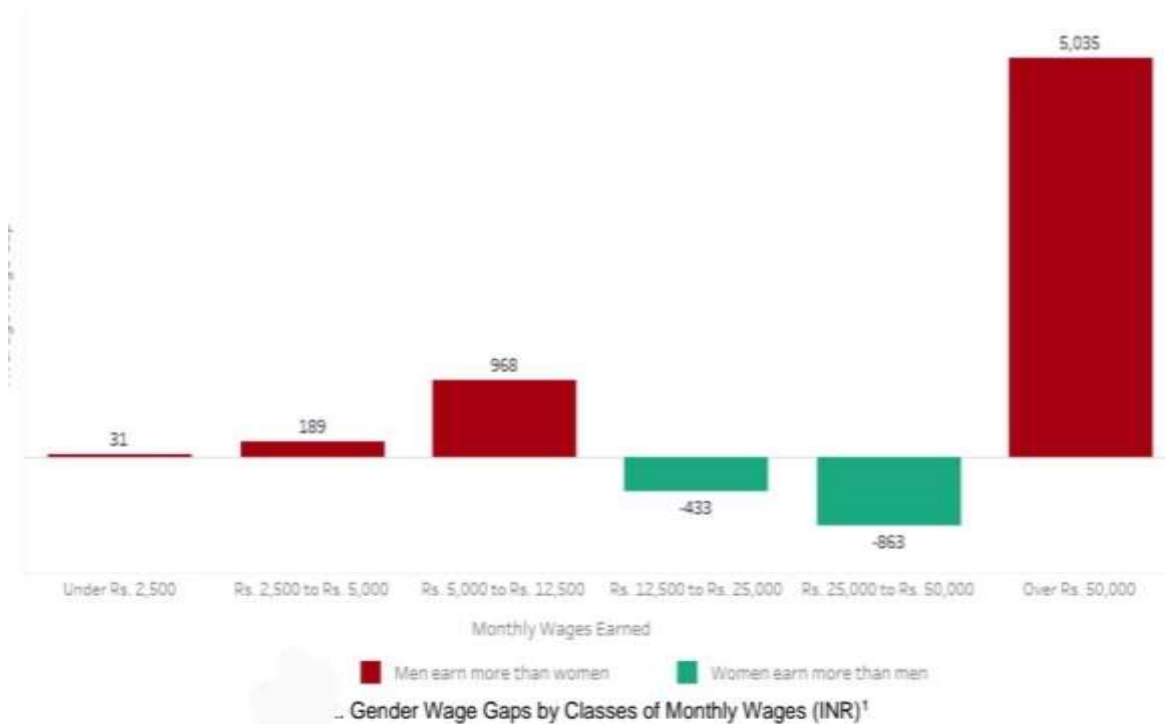
has already crossed one quarter of total female and touched one-third of women. Participation of women in the labour market are primarily driven by various factors, viz., economic development, education levels, fertility rates, access to childcare and others. These factors react as the “Push and Pull factors” for female participation in employment. The rapid economic growth, rising education, and declining fertility, results in increasing participation of women in employment. There is a positive correlation between higher education levels and women’s participation in the workforce. PIB reported that 39.6% of women with postgraduate degrees or higher are employed, compared to 23.9% of those with higher secondary education and 50.2% of those with primary education. The participation of women in the economic activities of the country is recognised as critical in empowering women.



Wage Gap



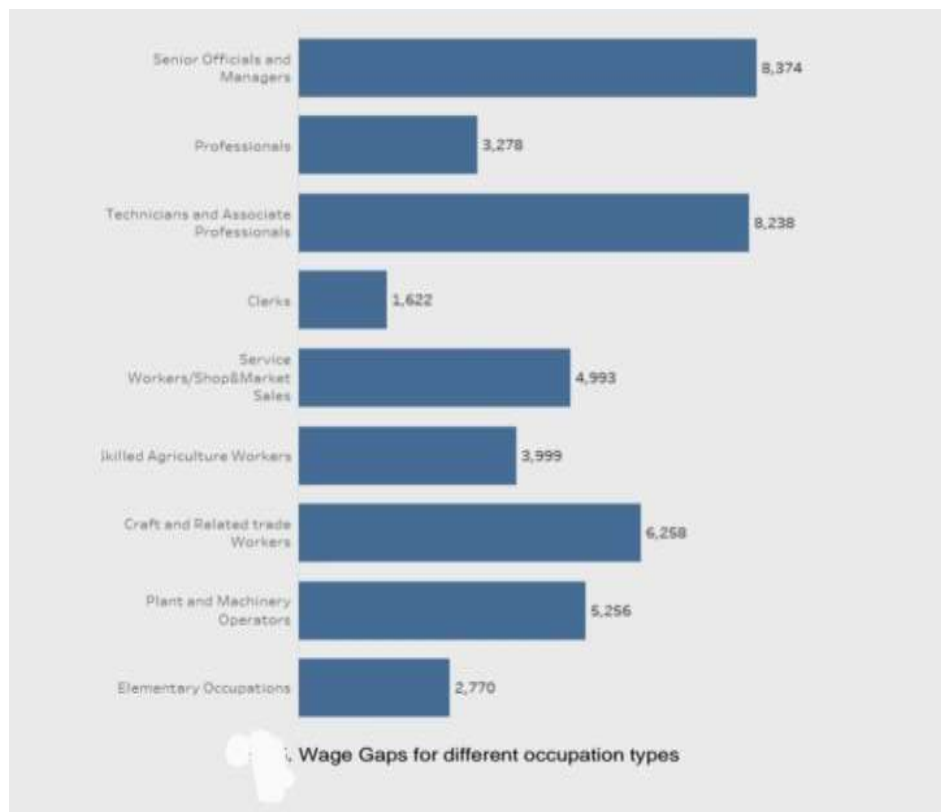
\Ensuring that women get fair and equitable pay is required to ensure women empowerment. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2019-20 suggests that just 28.2% of women in the 15-60 age group are part of the labour force. Even among the women who are part of the labour force, the largest share, 30%, is taken up by women who are working without any wages in enterprises of their own households, with another 5.3% unemployed. Thus only about 65% of women in the labour force actually earn wages. Study suggests that, average men earn INR 12,048 per month while women earn INR 8,034, i.e. about 33% less than men (PLFS 2019-20).



Source: Sattva Insights

It has been observed that, many of the “poorer” states like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh show lower levels of wage gap, less than INR 3,000 per month, compared to the “richer” states. This lower wage gap is observed even when considering the wage gap in percentage terms. For example, in Uttar Pradesh on average women earn about 26% less per month than men while in Chhattisgarh women earn about 29% less and in Bihar about 28% less. In comparison in Telangana on average women earn 50% less than men, and in Tamil Nadu it's 44% less (PLFS data 2019-20).

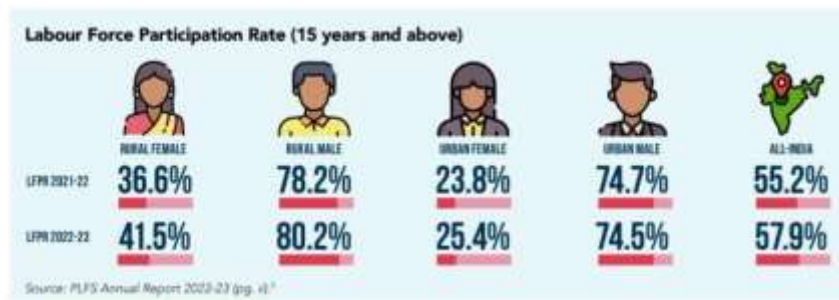
It is observed that the distribution of wage-earning persons by wage levels is more equitable for the higher paying jobs like professionals, managers etc. when compared to lower paying ones like the elementary occupations.



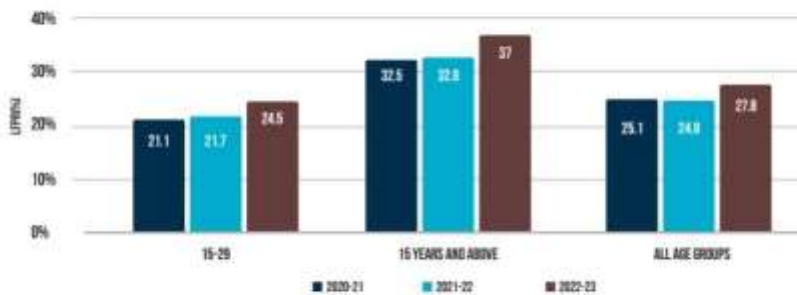
Source: Sattva Insights

Women (Labour Force) Participation Rate

A focus on strengthening the participation of a girl at each of the educational levels, from primary to higher education is imperative to greater female workforce participation. Urbanization characterized by technological progress, changing social values, has transformed various aspects of women's role, rights and status. Increased access to literacy empowered women to higher literacy, professional careers. This has resulted in promoting women's economic empowerment and narrowing gender pay gaps. However, urbanization has not equally benefitted all women, as discrepancies persist on the basis of class, caste, ethnicity and geographical locations. Women from marginalised communities often experience these barriers hindering their full participation and benefits from the process of urbanization[13]. India's inclusion of "women-led development" as a priority during its G-20 presidency indicates its progress for Sustainable Development Goals[14]. Thus women's participation in urban planning is imperative to their empowerment, which directly contributes to the country's GDP. A gender-equal democracy requires greater political participation.



Female Labour Force Participation Rate for different age groups, 2020-23, all India



³ Govt. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Annual Report Periodic Labour Force Participation Survey (PLFS) July 2022 - June 2023
https://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/AR_PLFS_2022_23N.pdf?download=1

In 2023, Parliament of India, passed “Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam”, fostering equal representation of women in public life at all levels of the federal structure. As a result, out of 31 lakh elected representatives in local governments nearly half (46%) comprising of 14.5 lakh women. This scale of representation is unparalleled anywhere else in the world [15].

The impact of socio-economic factors on the buying roles of women has undergone significant changes. This has impacted Indian society, creating more opportunities for women and marginalised groups. The impact of socio-economic factors on the buying roles of women portrays role reversal for women in the family, as well as in public places. Urbanisation led to socio-structural changes, providing more employment to women, raising the family income [16].

Products	F-Ratios					
	Age	Marital Status	Education	Occupation	Income	Location
High priced durables	3.38*	8.44**	8.24**	6.13**	8.12**	1.98
Clothing	3.24*	5.32**	3.67*	3.82*	3.62*	1.56
Financial products	2.78*	6.71**	4.43**	7.14**	8.22**	1.36
Groceries	0.78	2.21	1.88	1.56	1.24	0.34
Daily consumables	0.37	2.14	1.84	1.36	1.72	1.14
Toiletries and Cosmetics	2.45	2.10	2.89*	2.98*	3.92*	1.30
Embarrassing products used by females	3.21*	6.34**	4.46**	5.23**	5.12**	2.91*
Embarrassing products used by males	2.82*	1.13	3.22*	3.26*	3.11*	2.89*

Significant at 0.05 level of significance. **Significant at 0.01 level of significance.

Influence of Socio-economic Factors on the Buying Roles of Women due to globalized economy has given rise to a new market section called the ‘new women’ having a huge potential. The need for women empowerment makes clear that women are to be treated with respect and dignity. Indian women have

achieved significant progress in empowerment between 2020 and 2025. This has resulted in increased financial inclusion, enhanced political representation at grassroots levels along with government initiatives focusing on welfare and education, like 218.8% increase has been seen in the budget for schemes for the welfare and empowerment of women [4]. However, challenges persist in different areas like workplace inequality, crimes against women, gap in health and nutrition etc.

Crimes against Women

Year-Wise Data on Crimes Against Women in India		
Year	No. of Crimes Against Women	Rate of Increase in Crimes Against Women
2018	378,236	(+) 5.1%
2019	405,326	(+) 7.1%
2020	371,503	(-) 8.3%
2021	428,278	(+) 15.2%
2022	445,256	(+) 3.9%

Source: NCRB Crime in India Report 2022

States and UTs with Highest Rate of Crimes Against Women	
State/UT	Rate of Total Crime Against Women in 2022
Delhi	144.4
Haryana	118.7
Telangana	117
Rajasthan	115.1
Odisha	103.3
India	65.4

Source: NCRB Crime in India Report 2022

Ensuring physical safety is one of the most important indicators of women empowerment. In India, gender-based violence against women is a continuing social problem. On an average, 1,219.8 crimes per day were Committed against women in 2022.

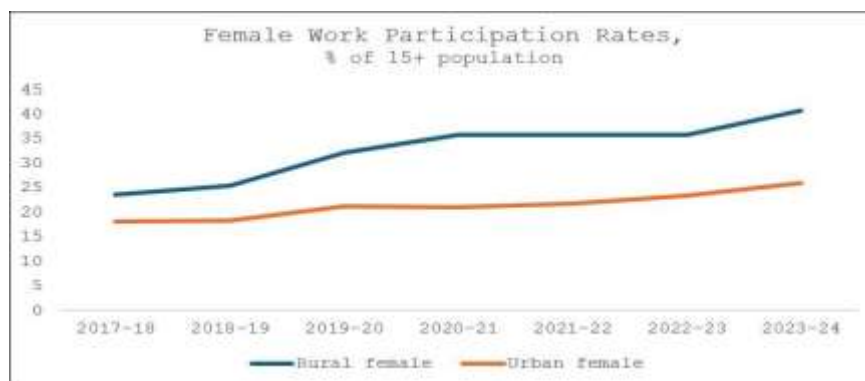
Among the states and union territories, Delhi, Haryana, Telangana, Rajasthan, and Odisha reported the highest rate of crimes against women when adjusted toe number of crimes committed against per a lakh of women population is evident from the chart.

Working Hours

In urban India, data from 2020-2025 indicates a complex picture of female working conditions and hours. While there's been a rise in female labor force participation rate (LFPR), women still are doing significantly more housework, childcare, and eldercare than men, often without getting paid for it, impacting their participation in the formal economy. Women in India spend significantly more time on unpaid work (351.9 min/day) compared to men (51.8 min/day), according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Report. As per working regulations, women cannot be made to work for more than 5 hours at a stretch, only between 6 in the morning and 7 in the evening. State government can grant exemption to any factory or group or class of factories, but no woman can be permitted to work during 10 PM to 5 AM. India's most recent labour statistics show that while eight in ten men are in the labour force, only four in

ten women are [17]. India's female labour force participation rate (people who are either working or looking for work as a share of the population) is lower than in many countries at comparable levels of income and development, although it has seen an improvement in recent years. There are women who work in a household enterprise that is engaged in crop cultivation, milk and livestock production, retail sale of food, or small-scale manufacturing, but do not get paid for their work. In Indian labour statistics, they are termed as "unpaid helpers in household enterprises." While some men do such unpaid work as well, women are twice as likely to be unpaid helpers.

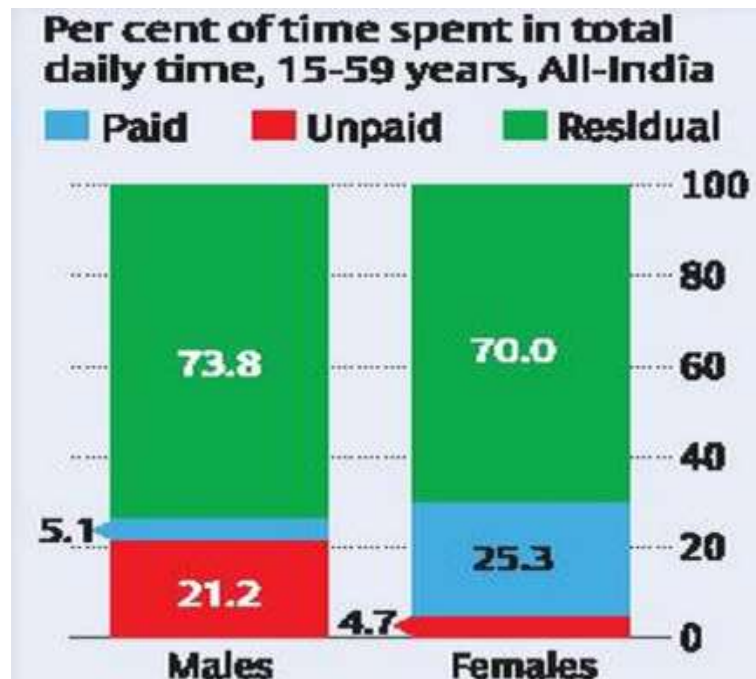
In comparison, less than half as many women are in salaried work. While access to education for females has increased, many economists have theorized that as education empowers women, employment choices for them become more stringent. Both social norms and lack of quality employment opportunities have an impact on the employment options for women with secondary and higher education. The Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Act 2017 provides a policy framework to make industries more women-friendly, helping in urban female employment. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is the major government initiative that provides a platform to women for employment opportunities. The MGNREGS reserves minimum 33 percent for women participation and provides 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural households. All these have attributed to an increase in women participation significantly and perceived it giving them a sense of independence and security.



This increase was evident in both rural and urban areas, with the increase in women's work participation particularly sharp in rural India. The last two years of this period showed the biggest increases. In urban India, women's working hours are regulated by laws that limit night work and specify maximum daily and weekly hours, with overtime provisions. Exemptions on working hours exist for certain commercial establishments like IT companies, with stipulations for safety and transportation. Maximum permissible working hours are typically 9 per day and 48 per week, with overtime paid at twice the ordinary rate (India Employer Forum, 2025). Nearly 80 percent of urban women are married by the age of 25-29, while only 29.2 percent of them remain employed. This can be a result of increased domestic burdens, reversing the balance that unmarried women have with their work. It suggests that married working women spend 5.3 hours per day on domestic and care work, three times that of single women, and only 4.7 hours in paid work. The impact of motherhood is severe for women as employment among the 24-29 age group drops dramatically from 44.3 percent for single women to 32.9 percent for married women without children and to 18.9 percent for mothers [18]. Despite increasing employment opportunities, structural issues such as post-marriage relocations and inadequate public transport continue to hinder women's workforce

participation. A 2025 LinkedIn survey, revealed that while 52.7 percent of working mothers found Work from Home (WFH) increased their productivity, nearly half of them felt they had fewer promotion opportunities compared to office-based colleagues.

It is observed that, while women's employment trends in urban India show promising signs, hidden barriers still persist and addressing these challenges will require collaborative actions in the part of government and workplace flexibility.



Working Conditions

Sexual harassment at the workplace is a serious violation of women's rights, dignity, and equality. In India, the effort to create legal protections against harassment has been a slow process, evolving over time through the country's constitution, important court decisions, and social movements. Since independence in 1947, India has evolved from having no specific protections to a well-defined legal framework aimed at preventing and redressing workplace sexual harassment (Vakeellaw,2018). The data collected is analysed with the aid of simple growth rate to understand the comparison in the female work participation rate(FWPR) over time. As per the study results, it was understood that the FWPR has increased at a growth rate of 12.50 percent. Although it has been very much tough for the women in India, to survive after facing many hurdles, exploitation and discrimination still they are being steady in their efforts and constantly trying to make their existence noticeable in the male dominated Indian society. Women in urban areas comparatively have relative social freedom from families and have scope for getting prestigious job due to their level of education when compared with women in rural areas who are still bounded to daily household works and are employed as incompetent labourers. But life of a working woman is not easy both in urban and rural areas as occupational stress plays an important role in the working women's life. Working women have to balance between family and work where she faces many personal and social turmoils. There are numerous problems and difficulties faced by working women in India, like difficulties in the workplace, remuneration issues, security problems, gender biases, assaults and exploitations, work and personal life balance etc.

A major problem faced by the working women is sexual harassment at the work place. As a working woman steps out, she is subjected to sexual abuses and harassment directly or indirectly while travelling, within office, on field, in canteen, in outdoor meetings etc. She is abused verbally, physically as well as symbolically by her colleagues, higher authorities, subordinates, etc. Women employees working in night shift are more vulnerable to such incidents. Due to these sexual harassments' women are faced with psychological pressure and sometimes forces a woman to resign from her job.


Problems Faced by Working Women in India: An Obstacle for Women Work Participation


Assam	22.46	14.2	-36.78
Bihar	19.07	9.4	-50.71
Chhattisgarh	39.7	52.1	31.23
Goa	21.92	24.9	13.59
Gujarat	23.38	30.7	31.31
Haryana	17.79	14.7	-17.37
Himachal Pradesh	44.82	63.1	40.79
Jharkhand	29.1	35.2	20.96
Karnataka	31.87	31.7	-0.53
Kerala	18.23	27.1	48.66
Madhya Pradesh	32.64	37.2	13.97
Maharashtra	31.06	37.7	21.38
Manipur	38.56	26.8	-30.50
Meghalaya	32.67	44.1	34.99
Mizoram	36.16	34.9	-3.48
Nagaland	44.74	31.1	-30.49
Odisha	27.16	31.8	17.08
Punjab	13.91	21.8	56.72
Rajasthan	35.12	37.6	7.06
Sikkim	39.57	58.5	47.84
Tamil Nadu	31.8	38.3	20.44
Telangana	NA	41.8	NA
Tripura	23.57	23.5	-0.30
Uttar Pradesh	16.75	17.2	2.69
Uttarakhand	26.68	30.1	12.82
West Bengal	18.08	23.1	27.77
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	17.81	25.9	45.42
Chandigarh	16	18.8	17.50
Daman & Diu	14.89	34.8	133.71
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	25.25	52.3	107.13
Delhi	10.58	14.5	37.05
Jammu and Kashmir	NA	33.1	NA
Lakshadweep	10.96	23.1	110.77
Puducherry	17.63	28.4	61.09
Ladakh	NA	51.1	NA
India	25.51	28.7	12.50

Source: Census of India 2011 and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation. Note: * represents estimated female work participation rate.

This shows that, women need to be more assertive and aware of their own rights at home as well as at workplace.

A recent analysis of annual reports by ETHR World has revealed a significant increase in sexual harassment complaints in India over the past five years. The data shows a 79% rise in complaints from FY20 to FY24, highlighting the growing awareness and reporting of such incidents in the workplace [19]. In FY24, information technology (IT) bellwethers reported one of the highest numbers of complaints as well as pending cases, with TCS registering 110 complaints, of which 17 were pending. This was followed by HCLTechnologies with 87 complaints and 11 pending cases, and Infosys with 64 complaints and 13 pending cases. It is worth noting that HCL also reported the highest increase of 866 percent in the number of complaints registered, from 9 in FY20 to 87 in FY24.

Sexual Harassment Complaints on Rise | 79%  since FY20

COMPANY	FY20			FY21			FY22			FY23			FY24			% 
	C	R	P	C	R	P	C	R	P	C	R	P	C	R	P	
RELIANCE INDUSTRIES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NIL
TCS	86	77	9	27	19	8	36	20	16	49	41	8	110	93	17	28%
HDFC BANK	52	48	4	47	35	12	51	48	3	68	61	7	77	65	12	48%
BHARTI AIRTEL	10	9	1	10	3	7	9	9	0	17	17	0	17	17	0	70%
ICICI BANK	52	52	0	33	33	0	46	46	0	43	43	0	133	133	0	155%
INFOSYS	60	59	1	16	15	1	11	11	0	31	NA	NA	64	51	13	6%
ITC	9	6	3	2	1	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	5	5	0	-44%
HUL	3	3	0	5	5	0	2	2	0	7	5	2	7	7	0	133%
LARSEN & TOUBRO	0	0	0	3	3	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	3	1	2	+3
HCL TECHNOLOGIES	9	9	0	11	10	1	23	21	2	55	39	16	87	76	11	866%
TOTAL	281	263	18	154	124	30	182	161	21	273	209	33	503	448	55	79%

Source: Annual Reports Note: (C) Complaints; (R) Resolved; (P) Pending | Includes complaints reported under the POSH Act, 2013

Health and Nutrition

It is extremely relevant to examine the health status of urban working women in India, to explore the various factors influencing their physical, mental and reproductive well-being. This vital segment of India's workforce face occupational hazards, work-life balance challenges along with healthcare issues. It is necessary to address the specific health needs of urban working women. As India has less than half of a decade to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals(SDG), the Government needs to focus on these segments to achieve gender parity, providing them with fitting medical and healthcare. Gender inequality is one of the major problems faced by the human society. It refers to unequal and biased treatment towards female. Fortunately, over a period of time, things have slowly changed. However, this is still a very serious and widespread problem in the society. National Family Health Survey -3 (NFHS-3) was released recently by the Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare published by International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS)[20]. The root causes and repercussions of gender disparity, particularly in India, filling a vacuum in the literature by including a wide range of healthcare, labor market, and economic issues throughout the country(Ved. R. et al.,2019) highlighting the need to reform economic policies to promote gender equality. Healthcare services are needed to be extended to society's most disadvantaged sector.

Under-5 female mortality rates are one example of the severe increases caused by a lack of equitable healthcare opportunities in rural areas compared to metropolitan areas.

Variables	Symbol	Measurement	Expected Sign	Theoretical Support
Model -I: Factors influencing women's empowerment				
Women business and law index score (represented by women's autonomy)	WABL	Index Scale, 1 indicating low autonomy and 100 indicating maximum autonomy.	-	-
Independent variables				
Female under-5 mortality rate	FU5MR	Per 1,000 live births	Negative	Healthcare modernization theory
Female vulnerable employment	FVE	FVE as % of total female employment	Negative	Labor market stringent theory
Female labor force participation rate	FLFPR	% of female population, 15+ years old (ILO estimates)	Positive	
Inflation, consumer price index	INF	Annual %	Negative	Social aspect theory
Domestic credit to the private sector (represented by financial development)	FD	% of GDP	Positive	Financial inclusion/support theory
Model -II: Women's empowerment and economic growth				
GDP per capita	GDPPC	Constant 2010 US\$	-	-
Independent variables				
Women business and law index score (represented by women's autonomy)	WABL	Index Scale, 1 indicating low autonomy and 100 indicating maximum autonomy.	Positive	Feminist Solow growth theory
Female under-5 mortality rate	FU5MR	per 1,000 live births	Negative	Health-led financial growth theory
Female vulnerable employment	FVE	% of female employment	Negative	Labor market stringent theory
Female labor force participation rate	FLFPR	% of female population, 15+ years old	Positive	
Inflation, consumer price index	INF	Annual %	Positive	Societal growth theory
Domestic credit to the private sector (represented by financial development)	FD	% of GDP	Positive	Finance-led growth theory

Source: World Bank

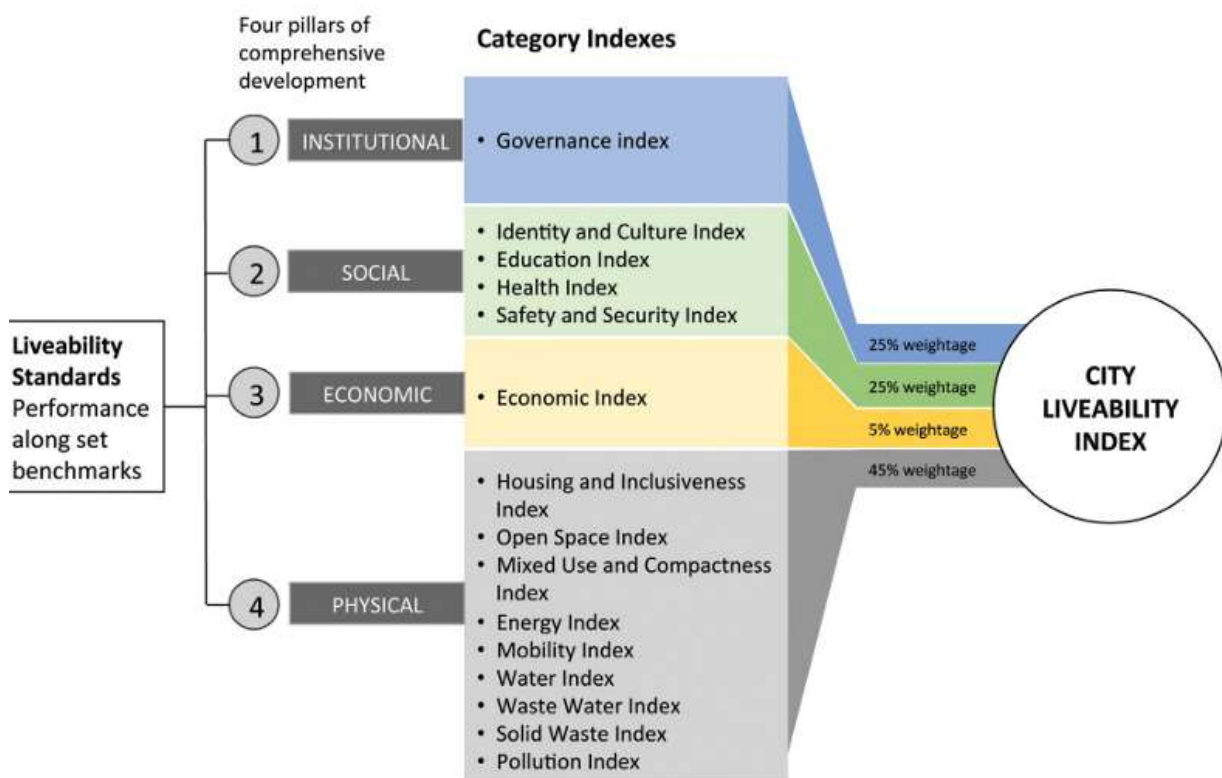
The healthcare modernization theory advocates equitable and straightforward access to healthcare facilities to all people, particularly women and children, who are largely excluded from the healthcare sustainability agenda due to insufficient healthcare spending. Opportunities for gender-equitable healthcare, violence prevention, elimination, and leadership development are likely to help the United Nation SDGs' goal and vision, changing for a gender-equitable growth model. Food insecurity is particularly high in India, as it is ranked 80 out of 104 countries on the Global Hunger Index. Furthermore, India is 130 out of 155 countries on the Gender Inequality Index, and it is clear that, there are existing gender disparities in different sectors, including food insecurity [21].

The urban subset of the third round of Demographic Health Survey of India unmasks intra-urban nutrition disparities. Urban poor habitations like slums and similar underserved settlements are characterized by overcrowding, environmental pollution, and inadequate access to basic water, sanitation, health and nutrition services. Population living in many of the oblivious urban slums are even more vulnerable as these settlements are not recognized by authorities and, hence, usually remain outside the scope of health, nutrition, food allocation, and different other civic services.

Key indicator from NFHS-3	Poorest urban quartile (N=3,095)	Rest of urban population (N=7,531)	Urban aggregate (N=10,626)
Short stature (Height <145 cm)			
Pregnant women	13.9	9.1	10.6
Lactating women	15.1	8.4	10.7
All women	14.5	8.4	9.8
Underweight (BMI <18.5 kg/m ²)			
All women	38.5	21.0	25.0
Mild anaemia			
Pregnant women	25.2	27.7	25.5
Lactating women	46.7	39.3	41.9
All women	38.9	34.9	35.8
Moderate anaemia			
Pregnant women	36.0	24.2	28.0
Lactating women	18.5	13.3	15.1
All women	17.6	12.4	13.6
Women who took a drug for intestinal parasite while pregnant	3.0	4.9	4.4
Women who reported night blindness during pregnancy	7.0	2.4	3.7
Women who consumed milk/curd on daily basis	29.1	52.8	47.4
Women who consume pulses/beans on daily basis	48.2	63.7	60.1
Women from households consuming adequately-iodized salt (15 ppm or more)	48.1	79.7	71.5
Women from households consuming inadequately-iodized salt (>0-<15 ppm)	27.4	11.6	15.7
Women from households consuming iodized salt with nil iodine content (0 ppm)	24.5	8.7	12.8
Women who reported receiving nutrition and health education from the Anganwadi worker			
During pregnancy	15.6	6.0	9.3
During lactation	12.2	4.1	6.7

Given the large proportion of undernourished urban poor women, there is a need to assess undernutrition among women periodically by grassroot-level workers in the nutrition and health programmes as part of the Government or NGO outreach programmes. It is essential to unmask the extent of disparities in nutritional status and access to services of Indian women belonging to the poorest wealth quartile of the country's urban population compared to the rest of the urban population.

The contribution of women to economic growth is expected to be favourable. However, it will be maintained and long lasting provided the country's healthcare infrastructure and female labour force advocates equal growth.



Source: Liveability Standards in Cities by Ministry of Urban Development

The need for Gender mainstreaming in urban infrastructure is realized across various national and international policies. Initiatives have been undertaken in many international cities to make urban spaces more inclusive and women-friendly. In India too gender mainstreaming has been mandated by our national policies. Specific policies for women along with their correct enforcement and organising for change to improve while designing infrastructure would bring about inclusion of women.

Recommendations

1. Reanalysing budgeting processes to ensure financial resources are allocated equitably to causes that affect women, thereby furnishing institutions with the capacity to apply a gender equality in policy implementation.
2. In urban governance systems, openness and participation should be accounted for especially in the context of women, since they have been long regarded as the alternate sex. This will lead to betterment of the processes of urbanisation and policy-making.
3. Education plays a major role in promoting gender equality in sustainable urbanisation and some of the

measures that can be taken to improve the present condition are as follows

Focusing on skill-based learning and vocational training.

Improving the quality of education through training and proper incentives.

4. The role of technology is very important to help women and promote gender equality and sustainable urbanization.
5. To involve women in defining policies and processes at global, national and local levels, and in shaping the institutions to facilitate long-term, sustainable changes in the system.

Conclusion

Recent years have witnessed a shift in policy interventions pertaining to women. Multiple approaches being adopted to address their challenges of different kinds. This has reference to building policies related to women in the future alongwith the existing initiatives. Policies have been adopted to based on insights into the trends depending on various indicators like education, political participation, employment, health and nutrition, crime against women, etc.

Overall, about 37% (25.6 crore) of the 69.2 crore women in India are actively employed. As of 2022-23 constant rise in female employment, employability and LFPR, showcases India's women empowerment and gender equality traits are aligned with the UN's 5th Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). But these gains have not been observed into overall parity across all indicators. World Economic Forum Report, 2025 notes that the global gender gap has been narrowing, but full parity is still a significant distance away. India needs to achieve meaningful progress in gender parity.

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