

# Impact of Covid-19 on Women Workers in India

Dr. Devvert

Department of Economics Govt. Degree College Dewal Chamoli (Uttarakhand)

---

## ABSTRACT

India is considered a male-dominated country. The educated Indian woman has a long way to go to get equal rights in society. For any country to develop, it is necessary to empower its women, who are the future entrepreneurs. We have to accept that our country's indomitable women are not only looked upon as housekeepers, teachers, tutors, etc., but also that it is very necessary to transform them into supervisors, business managers, etc. So that our country can utilise its full human resource power, compete with other countries, and successfully stand with them in every field. But many skilled women are facing a lack of finance when it comes to starting innovative production. The lockdown period has been one of the most challenging times during this COVID-19 pandemic. A new challenge has emerged for working women to maintain the distinction between work and non-work, as domestic work has often been termed invisible work. In women's lives, their domestic responsibilities often go uncredited as a major part of their lives and are often seen as non-work. Although before the lockdown, women had to work outside; their roles at work and home were mostly separate, and they had to struggle between these two fronts. COVID-19 has had a lot of impact on women workers. In the present paper, an attempt has been made to study the impact of COVID-19 on women workers.

**Keywords:** Women, COVID-19, Innovative, Entrepreneurs

---

## INTRODUCTION

India's labour market is the second-largest in the world after China. India is expected to be the world's largest market in 10 years, as China's population aged 15 to 64 has fallen by 20.5 to 18.3 percent. This positive demographic growth should be beneficial to business, but only a small part of India's working-age population is engaged in the formal workforce. As per the reports one in four women is part of the country's workforce. India has the lowest female labour force participation rate as compared to its neighbouring countries. Such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal. In rural India, women's employment is high in the form of low-paid and temporary labour, but the rate of participation is declining here too. Women Entrepreneurs can be defined as the women who initiate, organise, and operate any business or enterprise.

The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as "An enterprise owned and controlled by women having a minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital and giving at least 51 percent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women". Women were already facing the burden of educating children along with their employment before the lockdown, but the lockdown saw a sudden increase in their responsibilities and domestic labour. This led to family conflict and was more pronounced for women (Alone et al., 2020). This is likely to reduce engagement with paid employment, necessitating that women increase their overall workload to meet these emerging demands (Wang and Inoue, 2020). Research indicates that having children is an important precursor to a change in workload. The impact is widespread, leading to reduced psychological well-being and health difficulties, as well as limited career development and progression (Yildirim and Eslen-Zia, 2020).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Papiseti Rama and Mohana Rao (2004)**, in their study, found that inadequate infrastructure, high labour mobility, a lack of electricity, and delayed recovery of debtors were the main problems faced by women entrepreneurs.

**Damvad (2007)**, in his study, describes the experiences and barriers to women's entrepreneurship in five Nordic countries, namely Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. It identifies some of the barriers, such as a lack

of knowledge and skills in professional life, market and entrepreneurial activity, a lack of development, and most importantly, women, as other groups are heterogeneous. The study compared male and female early-stage entrepreneurial activity in Nordic countries to that in the United States. It also compares the various programmes and plans developed by the Nordic countries and the agencies providing aid to them.

**Lal and Sahay (2008)** made a comparative assessment of the multidimensional issues and challenges of women's entrepreneurship and family business. The study identified psychographic variables such as degree of commitment, and future planning for entrepreneurial challenges based on demographic variables. Data were collected from women entrepreneurs working in an urban area of Lucknow through stratified random sampling and convenience sampling. The study identified business owner characteristics as self-perception, self-esteem, and operational concern for plans for growth and expansion.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To find out the impact of COVID-19 on women workers.
2. To find out the trends in the female labour force participation rate.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study is based on secondary data that is collected from the research papers and articles of different scholars and researchers, different journals, periodicals, conference papers, working papers, websites, surveys, etc.

**FINDINGS**

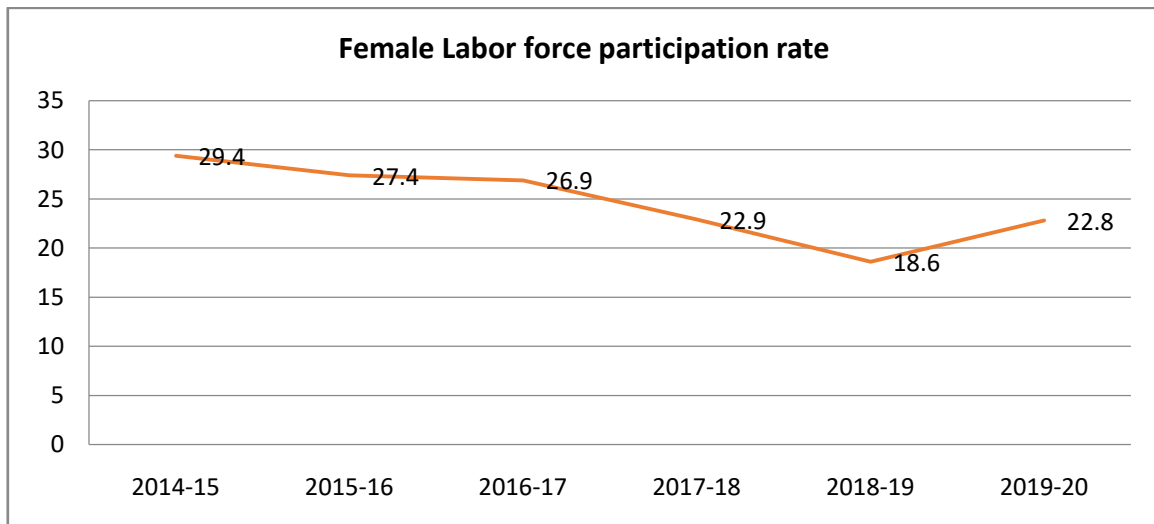
LFPR refers to the proportion of all working-age people in India who are either employed or engaged in job search. Currently, overall, the workforce participation rate of women in India is 20.3–18.2 percent in urban India. Based on the available data, the employability of women was 41.25 percent in 2021 and 51.44 percent in 2022. The female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) has registered a decline over the past three decades.

Union Budget 2021: "As per government data, both the industrial sector and the services sector have registered growth in GVA (Gross Value Added). In the first quarter of FY 2021–22, the GVA of the industrial sector grew by 67%, and the GVA of the services sector grew by 18% during this time frame. More than 1.84 crore women are currently employed in urban India. According to data collected by Avatar, employable and available female talent is expected to increase to 74 million in 2022. Nearly 3.8 lakh companies are expected to offer remote work in 2022 (this is almost double the number of companies offering the same in 2016). The Female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) is expected to fall from 21.9% to 21.2% in 2021. The same female unemployment rate increased from 10.6 percent to 11.8 percent. India's capital, Delhi, recorded a low labour force participation rate (LFPR) of 33% and the fourth highest unemployment rate (23.3%) during the first three phases of unlock since May. (CMIE)

**Table: 1. Female Labour Force Participation Rate in percentage**

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
29.4	27.4	26.9	22.9	23.4	30.0

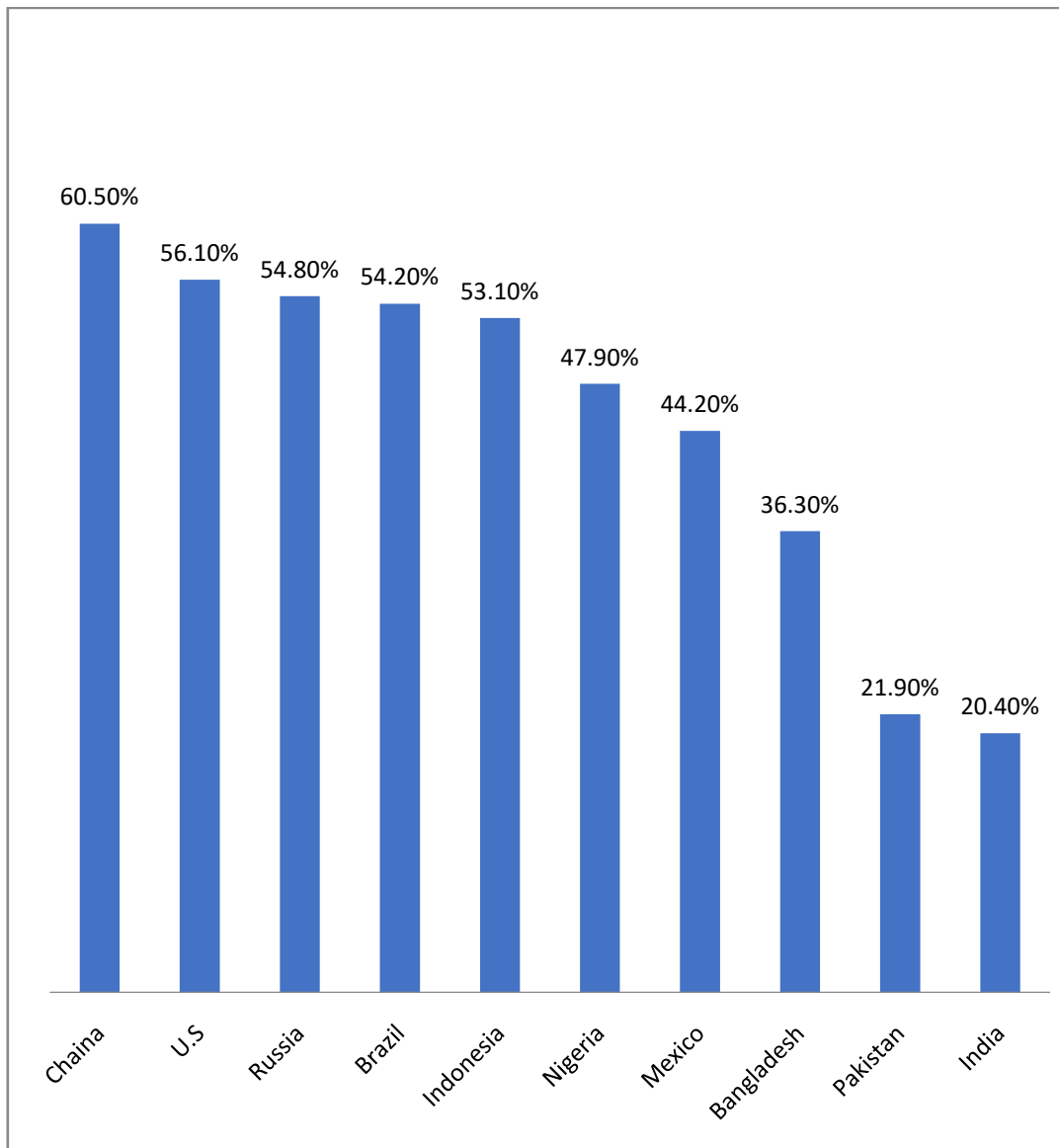
Source: Periodic labour force survey



Source: Periodic labour force survey

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey 2018–19, India’s LFPR was 50.2%. The pandemic put people out of work. According to CMIE, between May and August 2020, the LFPR declined to 40.2%. The labour participation rate was 67.4% for men and 9.3% for women. The unemployment rate among urban males was 11.7 percent, while the urban female unemployment rate stood at 21.9 percent. As per the latest available Annual PLFS Reports, the estimated Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) on usual status for women of age 15 years and above in the country was 32.5% and 32.8% during 2020–21 and 2021–22, respectively, which shows an increasing trend.

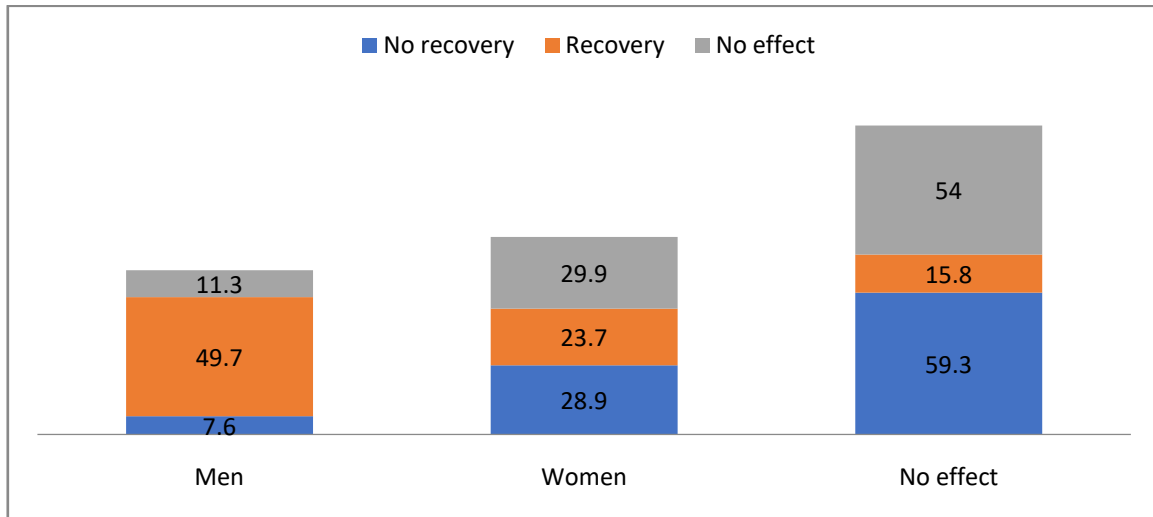
The 2020–21 PLFS shows some unusual trends, namely, an increased workforce participation rate (WPR) as well as a decline in the unemployment rate for both men and women. Because of the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, a strict and prolonged lockdown was suddenly imposed. The increase in WPR over the last four years and during the pandemic was driven by rural women's employment. The overall WPR increased from 49.6% to 55.3% between 2017–18 and 2020–21, with a greater increase in rural areas and for women. The WPR of women increased by 50% in rural areas, while it increased by 17% in urban areas.



Source: World Bank, International Labour Organization

**Figure 2. Participation of Indian Women in Labour force is among lowest in the World**

29.4% of women (aged 15–59) were part of India's labour force in 2021–22, as compared to 29.8% in the preceding year. In contrast, men's LFPR improved from 80.1% in 2020–21 to 80.7% in 2021–22. These numbers reflect the labour force participation rate (LFPR) based on the current weekly status (CWS).



Source: Author calculation from CMIE-CPSH consumer pyramid household survey data.

**Figure: 3. Women affected more than men in terms of job loss and re-employment.**

Women were two times more likely, compared to men, to lose employment either during the lockdown or afterward. And, having lost jobs, men were nearly eight times more likely to regain employment post-lockdown compared to women.

**COVID-19 impacted women’s employment in India.**

Pay inequality and the burden of unpaid care have pushed women out of employment and into poverty. Before the pandemic, women’s earned income in India was just one-fifth of that of men. More women lost jobs during COVID-19. The condition of women in the informal sector in India is even worse. This year, between March and April 2021, rural Indian women accounted for 80 percent of job losses in informal jobs. Indian women are more engaged in unpaid care work at home than men. They spend an average of 9.8 times more time on unpaid household chores than men and 4.5 hours a day caring for children and the elderly. During the pandemic, the share of women in unpaid care work increased by almost 30 percent. Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ABRY) was launched on October 1, 2020, to encourage employers to create new jobs and restore jobs lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rs. 744.9 crore was provided to 4.3 lakh beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh. Rs 2562.7 crore has been provided to 15.8 lakh women beneficiaries, and Rs 167.3 crore has been provided to 83.9 thousand women beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh.

During the peak of the lockdown, around 4.3 crore women lost their sources of income. About 43 percent of women who lost their jobs still have not found paid work. An estimated 87 lakh women who were working before the pandemic were out of work as of October 2020. Women in India are already a minority in the paid workforce. Women experienced greater losses in paid work and a slower recovery than men. Women made up only 24% of those in work before the pandemic, and yet, 28% of all people who lost jobs were women, and 43% of them still haven’t gotten their paid work back. India’s labour force participation rate stood at 20% as of January–October 2020. Source: International Labour Organisation, ILOSTAT database.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

According to the Economic Survey for 2022–2023, the economy is forecast to grow at a strong 8–8.5%. Make in India has been spurred by the pandemic, which emphasised a self-reliant India that is also expected to create 6 million new jobs. Much attention should be paid to micro and small enterprises, and the employability of women should be promoted through skilling. New data released by WHO shows that 9.3 percent of youth (18–24 years) in India suffered from depression in the first months (May 2020) of the lockdown, rising to 16.8 percent by March 2022. WHO data shows that the proportion of women with anxiety and depression is higher than that of men. The government has taken several steps to improve the participation of women in the labour force and the quality of their employment. Several protective provisions have been incorporated into labour laws to ensure equal opportunities and a conducive work environment for women workers. The 2020 Social Security Code has provisions for increasing paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks, providing a mandatory crèche facility in establishments with 50 or more employees, allowing women to work night shifts with adequate safeguards, etc. A study shows that COVID-19 has a lot of effects on women workers.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Damwad ( 2007), Women Entrepreneurship – A Nordic Perspective, August 2007, Nordic Innovation Centre.
- [2]. Lall, Madhurima, & SahaiShikha, :( 2008), Women in Family Business, presented at first Asian invitational conference on family business at Indian School of Business, Hyderabad.
- [3]. UNECE .(2004). “Women’s Self Employment and Entrepreneurship in the ECE region”, background paper prepared by the secretariat for the Regional Symposium on Mainstreaming Gender into Economic Policies, Geneva
- [4]. Bhadra, S. (2017). Women in disasters and conflicts in India: Interventions in view of the millennium development goals. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science*, 8, 196–207. 10.1007
- [5]. Del Boca, D. , Oggero, N. , Profeta, P. , & Rossi, M. (2020). Women’s and men’s work, housework and childcare, before and during COVID-19. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 18(4), 1001–1017
- [6]. <http://www.unece.org/indust/sme/ece-sme.htm.pdf>
- [7]. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/271320/distribution-of-the-workforce-across-economic-sectors-in-india/>
- [8]. <https://www.business-standard.com/content/press-releases-ani/budget-2022-india>