



Dattopant Thengadi Foundation

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The effect of Pandemic on Female LFPR in India and Way Forward

While speaking of the development of the country, it is not possible without the equal participation of women in the society, politics and economy. In India, women participation in the labour force has seen a continuous decline since 2011- 12 with 27.2% in comparison to 1999- 00 where this rate was 34.1%. In the contemporary time, this participation rate is hovering around 19%. The decline in women's economic participation has become rapid after the pandemic struck and the complex interplay between economic and social factors at macro and household level has played a crucial role in it. According to the Mckinsey Global Report in 2020 women jobs became 1.8 times more vulnerable than men during the Covid crisis. During the pandemic, women have not only quit their job at the fast pace primarily because of their care responsibilities back at home but even after the country is recovering from the pandemic, the [women are still not likely](#) to return at the same pace of their male counterparts. This picture of women dis-empowerment in India is an aggregated phenomenon where women participation is continuously being evaporated equally in rural and urban areas. The traditional '[aam aurat](#)' is still considered to be married off in their late teens or early 20s and expected to be limited to the household chores in most parts of urban and rural areas.

Along with these stark realities, women who are participating in the workforce are not equipped with the necessary environment such as toilets, creches, flexible working hours to create a balance between their house and work life balance. In the absence of these facilities, [women are moving out of the workforce](#) from both the formal and informal sector. While looking into the formal sector, the new normal in the form of remote work has led women in the white-collar jobs difficult to sustain. The report from freelancing platform 'Flexing It' shows that [women are](#)

[stepping back from registering themselves](#) into freelancing consultant jobs as well. After the pandemic, the women around the world struggling with the added care work responsibilities and the structural and societal barriers of Indian women have further pushed them into the four walled houses. This scenario further puts emphasis on the role of the employers and government to provide a flexible environment for women to get back to the job market. India's women workforce participation is among the lowest in the world and in order [to improve the gendered workforce participation](#), it is crucial to provide better sanitation facilities, drinking water, clean work environment and creches to ensure the safety of their children.

It is important to note that [the recent PLFS data](#) released in May- 2022 showed that there is a marginal increase has been observed in full-time work by women in India whereas unemployment is going down. The [government has also introduced various schemes](#) to promote women employment and entrepreneurship. With the Unique Identification Number (Aadhar), the government has denied the male- guardianship of women that has been established by the ration-card scheme by the previous government. Along with that, with PM-JAY has been redesigned the RSBY in a way that it becomes more women- centric. With Mudra loans and Stand- up India, women led start- ups have been encouraged by the government. Along with these schemes, Ujjwala Yojana has empowered women in the household as well. The self- help groups (SHGs) and business correspondent Sakhis are working to provide financial independence to women in rural areas as well.

The government is working on the atma-nirbharta of Indian women from promoting their education to financial independence, digital literacy, sanitation, security and old age as well but there are still many miles that government and Indian women needs to be covered together to bridge the gender gap in the literacy, labour force participation and access to basic amenities. In order to achieve these milestones, it is further important to understand the issues of women from a gender- sensitive perspective and then provide customized benefits and support to the women from different arenas. It demands collective effort and active participation of society, political parties, employers and trade unions as well. Before that the gap between symbolic representation of women in society and their actual position is still there and there is a long road that needs to be covered to bridge this!

Our Publications:

- 1) Democracy, Capitalism, Labour Movement: In Quest of Decent Work:
<https://www.suruchiprakashan.com/democracy-capitalism-labour-movement>
- 2) Decent Wage : It's not Just About Workers :
<https://www.suruchiprakashan.com/decent-wage>
- 3) Industry 4.0 and the Future of Work(er) :
<https://www.suruchiprakashan.com/industry-4-0-and-the-future-of-work-er>

DTF Events:

Upcoming: Panel Discussion on Changing Contours in the World of Work: The Tussle between Work from Home and Return to Office

Attached herewith a poster:

Changing contours in the world of work: The tussle between Work From Home and Return to Office



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