

**Low Female Employment  
in a Period of High Growth:  
Insights from a Primary Survey  
in Uttar Pradesh & Gujarat**

**Institute of Applied Manpower Research  
(IAMR)**

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## Preface

Amartya Sen has noted that women can become agents of change if four conditions are fulfilled: they acquire more than basic education; they have legal rights of ownership of property; they have an independent source of income; and finally they can work outside the home. In India, most rural and perhaps the majority of urban women have begun to enjoy only the first of these conditions, and that too only in recent decades. The remaining three conditions still remain absent. Not surprisingly, India ranks very low on any indicator of gender equality in the world.

In this regard, labour force participation of women in South Asia is among the lowest of any developing region in the world. Not only does India's female labour force participation rate (LFPR) stand at a low 23 per cent in 2011-12, but it has been declining over time. For an economy that has been growing at an unprecedented rate – GDP growth rate averaged 8.4 per cent per annum between 2003-04 and 2010-11 – the labour force participation of women has been declining. This should be a matter of some concern to policy makers.

At the request of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Institute of Applied Manpower Research (the only research institute of the Planning Commission) undertook the current study. While it does not attempt to directly examine at length the decline in female LFPR in recent decades, it does examine on the basis of a primary survey in two Indian States (relatively developed Gujarat and relatively backward Uttar Pradesh) in both rural and urban areas, the constraints women face in working outside the home and acquiring an independent source of income. The study has also undertaken a systematic analysis of data from the National Sample Surveys of 1999-2000, 2004-05, 2009-10 and 2011-12 and the trends in rural and urban areas for women labour force participants.

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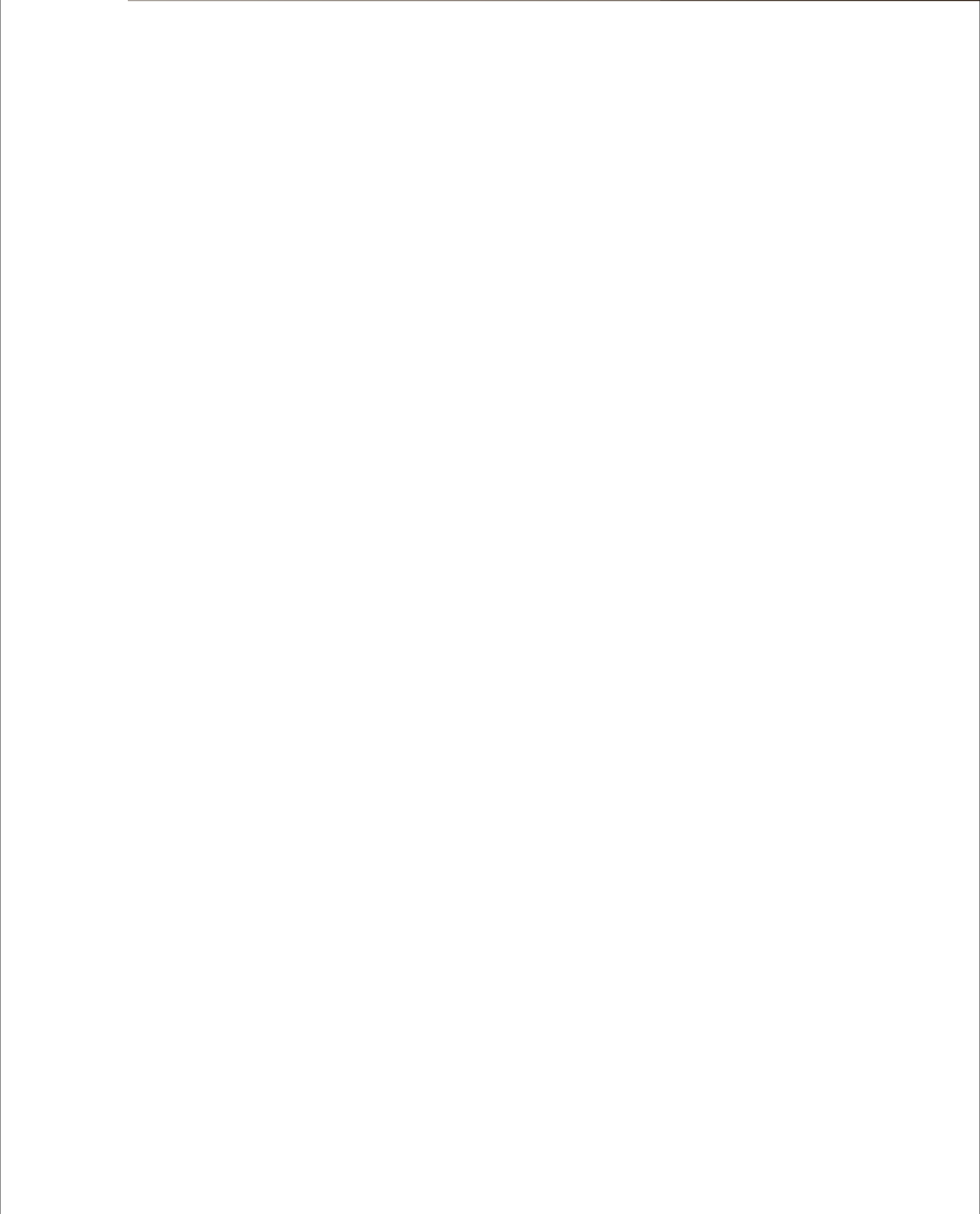
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# Executive Summary

*This report, Low Female Employment in a Period of High Growth: Insights from a Primary Survey in Uttar Pradesh & Gujarat*, has been prepared by The Institute of Applied Manpower Research (IAMR), as a study commissioned by the International Labour Organization (ILO), warranted by the steep and continuous fall in female labour force participation rate in India since 2005. This study has been completed under the leadership of Dr Santosh Mehrotra, Director General, IAMR. The lead authors are Partha Saha, Ankita Gandhi, Kamala Devi and Sharmistha Sinha.

There was a sudden spurt in the number of women labourers in India during 1999-00 to 2004-05, with rural women increasing their participation in paid work. Since then, however, there has been a drastic and persistent fall in female labour force, particularly when the economy was experiencing unprecedented growth. Several studies have shown a U-shaped relationship between economic development and women's economic activity (Goldin 1994; Tansel 2002), hypothesizing that female labour force participation declines initially with economic development, plateaus and then rises again, a phenomenon reflective of structural shifts in the economy, changing influence of income and substitution effects, and an increase in education levels of women in the population (Goldin 1994).

Creating productive non-farm jobs is crucial for any growth process to sustain. In India, even though the economy grew at a very high rate during second half of the 2000s, it was not translated to a concomitant increase in employment – a phenomenon described as jobless growth (Mehrotra et al. 2012). The problem of insufficient jobs was more pronounced in the case of females who experienced a sharp decline in employment during this period, more in the case of rural women.

The sharp decline in female employment has raised concerns among policy-makers regarding gender equality, women's empowerment, and their livelihood strategies. Women's employment is a critical factor in their economic empowerment and their overall status in society. This study has been undertaken as a response to the growing concern over declining female employment in India, with the objective of understanding some of the reasons behind this phenomenon. The study revolves around determinants behind declining female employment, and also focuses on problems and constraints, which women face related to their participation in the labour market.

Reproductive roles, household and care responsibilities, cultural sanctions, patriarchal hierarchies, and factors like continuing in education and migration after marriage, can explain the withdrawal of females from the labour force. On the push side, female participation in workforce is linked to the availability of opportunities, household income, migration, and distress in the economy.

It also needs to be understood whether this withdrawal is in the nature of the discouraged worker phenomenon; that is, whether the decision to withdraw from the labour force was voluntary or a forced one due to lack of suitable employment opportunities. This study was undertaken to explore some of the determinants of female participation in the labour market in selected locations in both rural and urban areas, and also to explore other possible reasons for the declining trend in female employment.

This study was conducted in **Gujarat** (a relatively better-off state in terms of per capita income and other economic indicators), and in **Uttar Pradesh** (a state that lags in most socio-economic indicators vis-à-vis the national average). The selection of states was on the basis of work participation rate, socio-economic profile, incidence of poverty, and change in the absolute number of female employment between 2004-05 and 2009-10. Preliminary analysis of NSS data reveals that in 2009-10, Gujarat had a higher labour force participation rate (LFPR) of 25.6 per cent and workforce participation rate (WFPR) of 25.3 per cent for females than the national average of 23.3 per cent and 22.8 per cent respectively, while Uttar Pradesh has lower LFPR of 15.6 per cent and

WFPR of 15.5 per cent as compared to the national average. The data for 2011-12 (NSS 68th Round) reveals a similar situation.

There are rural-urban differences in female employment. During 2004-05 to 2009-10 both these states experienced a decline in female workers. In rural Gujarat, female LFPR declined from 43 in 2005 to 32 per cent in 2010, falling further to 28 per cent in 2011-12. Urban Gujarat witnessed a consistent decline, albeit marginal over this period. Uttar Pradesh also saw a decline in rural areas; however, in urban locales there are signals of a revival with an increase from 8.3 per cent to 10 per cent. Female work participation, the incidence and the nature of job in which they are employed varies with social groups in India. 6.3 million women belong to socially-deprived groups among 30 million women in Gujarat, wherein most are scheduled tribes in rural areas (Census of India, 2011). In Uttar Pradesh, 21 per cent out of 100 million women are socially deprived with the majority being rural scheduled castes.

This study was based on a primary household survey, where the focus was not only on measurement of quantitative variables, but also on the interactions between various qualitative, socio-economic dimensions, which have an implication on female participation in the labour market. Further, this study also analyses through a time-use survey of adult females, whether the burden of household responsibilities has any bearing on participation in labour market. In addition to household surveys, focus group discussions were held with various stakeholders to get a larger picture of constraints, opportunities, and aspirations of females in selective study locations. The survey collected information on basic amenities, demographic particulars, occupational pattern of adult household members, problems and constraints faced by adult female members regarding participation in the labour force, participation of females in various skill training programmes, participation of females in household decision-making, and time-use of adult female members in both economic and non-economic activities. 500 households were surveyed in each state in both rural and urban areas.

The report starts with an analysis of Employment and Unemployment Survey data, conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO). The focus of this analysis is on the change in female employment particularly during the period 2004-05 to 2009-10 and then in the next two years 2009-10 to 2011-12 (Chapter 2). The trends indicated by the analysis of secondary data were carried forward for further analysis through the household survey in selective locations. The selection of the study locations along with a detailed methodology is discussed in the following chapter (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 provides a broad macro setting for this study and presents the research questions, which are addressed in the following four chapters. The dominant factor impacting female employment in the study locations (education) is analysed in Chapter 5. Employment opportunities in the study locations are discussed in Chapter 6. Problems faced by working women (both at the workplace and in households), and constraints faced by those non-working women in order to participate in the labour market, are discussed in Chapter 7. The following chapter (Chapter 8) examines the time use of females and analyses time disposition of working females (in different occupations) in non-economic activities. The last chapter (Chapter 9) provides some broad conclusions and suggests some policy recommendations.

The National Sample Survey (NSS) data reveals that, in India, there has been a consistent decline in female labour force participation rates both in rural and urban areas since the 1970s, with the period 1999-2000 to 2004-05 being the only exception. During 2005 to 2010, there had been a decline in female employment by 21.2 million (according to usual principal and subsidiary status). This decline is primarily attributed by the 19.8 million fall in female employment in rural India. Post 2010, employment opportunities for women in rural areas further declined by 2.7 million. In urban areas, however, there has been an increase in female employment of 4.5 million during 2010-2012. The decline in the rural female labour force participation rate during 2005 to 2010 was much sharper in the case of principal and subsidiary status taken together as compared to only principal status, thus implying that a larger share of fall could be attributed to a decline in subsidiary status. In the next two years, female employment by subsidiary status increased by 6 million coupled with a continuing decline in principal status in rural areas. Focusing on rural India, the bulk of the decline in female employment was on account of a

fall in self-employment that is primarily attributed to a decline in unpaid family work (Chapter 2).

A comparison across states indicates that Karnataka, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat experienced a decline in female employment to a significant extent between 2004-05 and 2009-10 in both principal and subsidiary status. In order to understand the possible determinants of declining female employment, two among the four states had been chosen for the study. Two districts from each state had been studied, based on the work participation rates for females, one above the all-India average and one lower. Along with the trend in declining female employment, national level surveys indicate an increase in real wages, and greater participation along with increasing continuation of females in education. Therefore, could it be the case that the positive income effect of higher real wages and positive outcomes of educational programmes are responsible for withdrawal of females from the labour market? Also, there had been an absolute decline in the number of workers in agriculture, a phenomenon witnessed for the first time in the history of independent India, which reflects a shift out of low productivity jobs in agriculture. Since 80 per cent of the women workers are in agriculture, an optimistic interpretation could be that with the lowering of poverty, the excess workers who got absorbed into agriculture are now withdrawing. Given the wide range of information provided by these large-scale national surveys, broad patterns and trends of employment and unemployment across different states and regions of India can be analysed. However, these trends and patterns are outcomes of fairly complex socio-economic relations, which often work within the broad framework of social hierarchies, traditional norms, and social, political and economic setting in the neighbourhood. The survey, therefore, is intended to understand the activity pattern of females along with their possible determinants, the nature of constraints and problems that females face.

The primary research attempts to capture some of these qualitative determinants that influence female participation in the labour market:

- Work history of females to find out whether certain social phenomenon had any influence on their participation in the labour market;
- Kinds of support/disincentives that females received/encountered from their families and neighbours resulting in their participation/withdrawal from the labour market;
- Difficulties and constraints faced by females in their pursuit of economic activities;
- Extent to which females participate in household decision-making;
- Social norms and customs that go into decision-making regarding female participation in the labour market;
- Women's own perception about improving their employability; and
- Daily time disposition of females in different activities which might have a bearing on their labour market participation.

## **Key findings**

Major findings from the survey are as follows. The incidence of illiteracy was quite high among females both in rural and urban areas of both the states despite significant improvements in literacy rates in the last two decades. There was a gradual decline with age in the proportion of females educated at successively higher standards, the sharpest being from secondary to higher secondary level. Socially deprived groups fare extremely poorly in education, thus ending up doing low-end marginal jobs.

In urban Uttar Pradesh, the relationship between the level of education and proportion of females working was U-shaped. Illiterates have to work for their survival and, with improvement in educational attainment; females tend to continue in education provided there are opportunities. Such opportunities exist in urban areas and those

attaining a slightly higher educational level continue to remain in education with the hope of getting a better job. This is certainly a positive phenomenon as it could possibly ensure better quality jobs for the educated females in future. Also, females with post-graduate and above level of education have greater opportunities of work in urban areas particularly in the service sector. The survey revealed that participation of poorly-educated women in the labour force was driven by necessity, while employment opportunities determined the participation of highly-educated females in the labour force. There is an interplay between social stigma (of participating in a low-end job with relatively better education) and, to some extent, a positive income effect (females who can attain more years of education generally belong to well-off families, which are not in dire financial need of female members earning). On attaining a higher level of education their participation in the workforce increases in relatively well-paying, decent, and service sector jobs (with some career goals in mind).

The perception of work is different in the two states. In Gujarat, females not economically active identified themselves as unemployed (implying they were potentially looking and available for work), while in Uttar Pradesh such females generally reported household chores as their primary responsibility (and hence did not see themselves even looking for work). This does not mean that women in Gujarat had less domestic responsibilities. It is how women identify themselves. Thus, the reporting about perceptions of employment status differs in two states.

The study revealed that, in Uttar Pradesh within the age group of up to 14 years, a relatively higher share of children were too young (and were yet to start going to school) as compared to that in Gujarat. For the next two age cohorts (15 to 29, and 30 to 59) the proportion of females who were working was much higher in Gujarat compared to that in Uttar Pradesh (underlying higher female work participation in Gujarat compared to that in Uttar Pradesh). In other words, a higher proportion of working-age women was gainfully employed in Gujarat compared to that in Uttar Pradesh. In rural areas where the majority of population is still dependent on agriculture, higher agricultural growth in Gujarat provided more employment opportunities for the working age females. In urban areas, growth of industries has ensured higher working-age female participation in the workforce. In Gujarat, one-fifth of working-age females reported to be unemployed implying improving workforce participation rates for females would require greater creation of employment opportunities in the non-agricultural sector.

In Uttar Pradesh (both rural and urban areas), the proportion of females in the age group of 15 to 29 years who were in education was one-third, which was much higher than that in Gujarat (one-fifth). Therefore, the contribution of this factor towards low female WFPR was much stronger in Uttar Pradesh than in Gujarat. There exists segregation in the nature of employment based on social group, and to a large extent this segregation was determined by educational attainment. Further, an improvement is seen in the nature of employment (higher participation in the service sector) once females attained more years of schooling, at least to higher secondary level. Broadly speaking, attainment of higher education was essential for getting better quality employment. However, benefits of education vary across regions and to a large extent were dependent on the local economy. However, one over-arching policy conclusion suggested by the survey could be extending financial support (scholarship) to female students at least up to the higher secondary level.

The study further noted that workers with less education were more likely to experience a transition in the opposite direction – from non-farm work to agriculture. In order to ensure better employment for females it is necessary to increase their enrolment at college and university level. One way of achieving this is to establish more women colleges at the district level with special emphasis on technical and vocational education.

The survey clearly indicates occupational segregation as well as gender-based wage disparities in most of the occupations except in construction works in the selected study locations. In the vast majority of cases, female workers did not have any social security benefits to fall back on. Household responsibilities, social obligations, and security concerns often forced females to accept rather unfavourable work conditions in terms of low wage

and long working hours. Further, in many occupations their economic contribution was not even factored in, despite putting in no less effort compared to males. This was particularly true in the case of home-based work where men were also involved but the men dealt mainly with traders. There is a complete lack, and often open violation, of decent work conditions, mainly in the unorganized sector of the economy, which is out of reach of any legal entity.

Conveyance-related security problems seem to be an important hurdle to accessing jobs for most of the women in both Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. This is coupled with long working hours, which hinders women's active participation in the labour market. Household responsibility was considered to be a major hindrance in female work participation.

Another important factor, which dampens female employability, was the lack of skill training. The record of formal skill training in India is such that only 2-3 per cent of the workforce receives formal training (based on NSS data). Female participation in skill training programmes in Uttar Pradesh was particularly low, and mostly not related to the demand from the market. On the other hand, participation in training was reasonably high in Gujarat, and almost half of the females participating in such programmes were able to avail themselves of employment opportunities (either as piece-rate workers or as home-based workers).

The importance of the time-use analysis in the survey lies in the fact that it clearly brings out certain qualitative aspects about women work and time disposition and the hardship that they face in day-to-day life without much recognition in labour statistics or in the society. In India, goods produced and consumed by the households are not being covered in the System of National Accounts (SNA). Women are generally involved in these activities. Time spent by males is higher in SNA activities in both rural and urban areas. The trend reverses with respect to extended-SNA and non-SNA activities. Therefore, at one point, women also contribute indirectly to the income-generating activities of males. Second, their participation in the labour market is greatly constrained by their responsibilities in households, which also restrict them from looking for jobs in areas beyond their immediate neighbourhood.

There is reasonably good awareness among the people in the study regions of various government programmes and schemes (with the exception of tribals in Gujarat who have been excluded from the main stream of the society for several centuries). Even if the tribals were aware of certain schemes, they were denied access at the local level through the practice of caste hierarchy. The real problem lies in programme implementation, which often became complicated by the caste hierarchy at the local level. Among all government programmes, in both the states, benefits mainly accrue from nutrition programmes. In Uttar Pradesh, 64 per cent and 26 per cent of households report that they are aware of employment programmes and social security programmes respectively but had not benefited from the government programmes for the same. The corresponding figures for Gujarat are 16 per cent and 45 per cent respectively.

In a nutshell, the most pressing problems that females faced were related to conditions of work (low wages, long work hours, physical exhaustion, and health hazards), and that of physical infrastructure (roads and conveyance). Household members are not averse to the idea of females participating in the workforce, even though this willingness in most of the cases was distress-driven. Apart from economic stability, an important indirect consequence of female work participation was their increasing involvement in household decision-making, particularly regarding children's education and household savings. The most fundamental problem that persists is the mentality of male dominance at the workplace, with females being treated as inferior. Social mobilization and creating awareness are some of the means of addressing the problem. One practical and visible solution lies in facilitating skill-training programmes for females in a meaningful way. Skill-training programmes, particularly for women, remain a major concern not only in the study locations, but throughout the country.

Finally, work opportunities for females are indeed limited, particularly in rural areas with shrinking employment opportunities in agriculture and insufficient employment opportunities being created in the non-farm sector. Due

to various socio-economic and cultural factors along with security reasons, females prefer to find employment opportunities in the vicinity. This only adds to the problem of female participation in the labour market. Creating employment opportunities in small towns that can be easily accessed by females in both rural and urban areas, and improving employability of females should be the foremost agenda for policy-makers. Further, in order to protect the quality of employment in terms of decent work conditions, women's associations and self-help groups should be promoted both in rural as well as in urban areas.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

One of the structural transformations that any developing economy desires to undergo is a declining share of agriculture in output and employment over time, and corresponding rise in share of industry and services. India has been experiencing this phenomenon, albeit partially. Even though the share of agriculture in gross value added (GVA) has declined to 13.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) during 2011-12, about half of the workforce (49 per cent) is still dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. The share of industry and services in output has increased sharply within the last 20 years but their share of employment still remains low, at 24.3 per cent and 26.7 per cent respectively in 2011-12. The shift in workforce towards non-agricultural employment has been rather sluggish compared to the rising share of non-agricultural output in gross value-added. Therefore, creating decent and productive employment outside agriculture is a major challenge and needs to be the over-arching priority for strong and sustainable economic growth.

The workforce increased by 60 million during the first half of the last decade (from 399 million in 1999-2000 to 459 million in 2004-05), while the second half of the decade (2004-05 to 2009-10) experienced only a marginal increase in workforce by 1.1 million. In other words, despite registering unprecedented economic growth, employment has not shown a concomitant increase during the second half of the decade (clearly indicating a phenomenon of jobless growth). A resurgence is observed since 2010; in the next two-year period, employment increased by 14 million to reach 474 million in 2012. The problem of insufficient jobs during 2005 to 2010 was more pronounced in case of females who experienced a sharp decline in employment. The considerable decline in female employment resulted in a rather insignificant rise in overall employment during this phase. While male employment increased by 22.5 million during 2004-05 to 2009-10, female employment declined by 21.4 million, resulting in overall increase of only 1.1 million work opportunities during 2005-10. Of this decline of 21 million, 90 per cent was accounted for by withdrawal of around 20 million rural females from the workforce. Post 2010, there is a further decline in female employment by 2.7 million in rural areas. In urban areas, however, there was an increase of 4.5 million female workers.

India's labour market is highly dualistic in nature, with a small minority of the organized formal workers (7% of the total work force) (Mehrotra et al., 2013) and a vast majority in unorganized informal sector including those engaged in agriculture as low-paid subsistence workers. Female workers largely belong to the latter group, which is more susceptible to economic shocks. The decline in female employment in the second half of the decade has been accompanied by declining numbers of those engaged in agriculture, those engaged as self-employed and in the unorganized sector.

Out of 131 countries, India ranks 11th from the bottom in female labour force participation (ILO, 2012). Out of 135 countries, the Global Gender Gap data shows that women's economic participation and opportunity is worse in India than in 95 per cent of all other countries studied. The UN Gender Inequality Index has ranked India below several sub-Saharan African countries. The Global Gender Gap Index<sup>1</sup> ranks India 105 out of 135 countries. India ranks 123rd in gender gaps in economic participation and opportunity, and gaps in labour force participation rates for males and females, 121st in gender gaps in educational attainment, and the worst, rank 135th in differences between women's and men's health (WEF 2012). Clearly, India has a long way to go in order to enhance women's

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<sup>1</sup> The Global Gender Gap Index, introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006, is a framework for capturing the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress. The Index benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, political, education- and health-based criteria, and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across regions and income groups, and over time.

empowerment, and achieve gender equality. Ensuring economic independence for women by creating decent and productive employment and entrepreneurship opportunities is needed for a larger and more meaningful role for women in the society.

The gradual decline in female labour force and workforce participation rates has been a phenomenon for the last three decades. But the sharp decline in the second half of the last decade of rapid economic growth has raised concerns among the policy-makers regarding gender equality, women empowerment, and women livelihood strategies. It has also raised concerns whether women have been left out of the growth process. In his speech to the Indian Labour Conference on 14 February 2012, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated that: “One of the most under-utilized resources in our country is our women. Female labour force participation rates are extremely low in our country and have remained more or less constant over the past decades. In order to bring more women into the work force, it is necessary to understand the constraints that they face in balancing their family and work responsibilities.”

This study has been undertaken as a response to the growing concern over declining female employment in India, with the objective of understanding some of the reasons behind this phenomenon. Further decline in the female workforce participation rate adds to this necessity. It might be mentioned at the outset that findings of this study cannot be generalized beyond specific study locations. However, the insights brought out by qualitative and quantitative analysis in this study are not exclusive to the study locations, and various shades and patterns of the phenomenon described in this study are likely to hold true in other similar locations.

## **1.2 Why is female employment declining? Possible explanations provided by literature**

The literature on female employment revolves around different factors from both a demand- and supply-side perspective, explaining women's participation in labour force. There are certain factors like participation in education, social norms and household responsibilities, which pull back or deter female participation in the labour market. On the other hand, the non-availability of appropriate employment opportunities keeps females out of the labour market. The net effect on female employment is determined by the relative magnitude of these factors. In addition to these, some authors have also pointed out measurement issues in capturing and estimating female employment. The following three subsections provide a snapshot of studies that have attempted to explain the phenomenon of declining female employment through the prisms of different factors, and measurement issues.

### *1.2.1 Determinants of female labour force participation*

Reproductive roles, household and care responsibilities, cultural sanctions, patriarchal hierarchies (Sudarshan and Bhattacharya, 2009), and factors like continuing into education and migration after marriage or family's transfer can explain the withdrawal of females from the labour force. On the other side, female participation in the workforce is linked to the availability of opportunities. While 80 per cent of men in the South Asia region are either employed or searching for a job, the proportion of women is a lot lower at 32 per cent. These low rates are suggested to be largely due to cultural attitudes and social norms about women in the workplace (ILO, 2013).

While labour force participation rate for males (all ages) was 56 per cent, that for females had fallen from 29 per cent in 2004-05 to 23 per cent in 2009-10, and further to 22 per cent in 2011-12. Various studies have cited different reasons for the declining labour force participation of women. Rangarajan et al. (2012) using the NSS 66th round for 2009-10 estimate that about 707 million people did not offer themselves for work as against 625 million in the 61st round (2004-05). The largest share at 44 per cent was that of people who opted out of the labour force to pursue education, 31 per cent opted out for attending to domestic activities, 15 per cent were in the 0-4 age group and the remaining categories (disabled, pensioners, etc.) added up to a 10 per cent share. In 2009-10, about 137 million women opted out of the labour force to educate themselves as against 176 million men. The second largest category was of those who opted out of the labour force to attend to domestic duties including

activities like weaving, tailoring and gathering firewood for free for the household. In 2004-05, this category constituted 170 million persons, which rose quite sharply to 220 million in 2009-10 growing at a CAGR of 5.3 per cent. These withdrawals were almost completely by females, particularly rural females.

Increasing participation of women in education cannot fully explain the massive decline in labour force and workforce participation rates during the second half of the decade. Some economists have argued that a larger proportion of females are opting out of the labour force to attend to 'domestic duties only' – a reflection of the greater pressure on females for household and caring responsibilities (and a potential changed in preferences). Different factors govern their entry and withdrawal from the labour force: domestic duties and care work; ideology of the marital household and the environmental construct created in the household; and mobility and safety of women (Sudarshan and Bhattacharya, 2009).

Social norms restrict women's availability and location of work leading to lower labour force participation (NCEUS, 2007). This may be reflected in the U-shaped relationship between women's education and labour force participation in India. Kingdon and Unni (2001) attribute the downward sloping part of this U-shaped relationship to the process of Sanskritization: social restrictions on the lifestyles of women tend to become more rigid as households move up in the caste hierarchy (see also Chen and Drèze (1992)), which would be reinforced by the negative income effect of rising incomes of family members particularly of husbands (Klasen and Pieters, 2012).

Participation of women in the labour force is more often led by poverty concerns rather than by choice. They supply their labour or withdraw depending upon various other socio-economic dynamics, such as family income, and migration. Female work participation in the Indian context is clearly seen as responsiveness to economic stimuli, better described as the 'income effect'. Women move into the labour force during crisis or distress and withdraw when economic conditions are better. Various studies have also shown that the females tend to cross their household boundary (they may earlier still be doing unpaid family work) and into the labour force if there is a perceived fall in the reservation income of households (Unni 1989; Srivastava and Srivastava 2010). This is particularly true for lower income households. This was tested by Mukhopadhyay and Tendulkar (2006) using NSS data for 2004-05 that a lower probability of the wife entering the labour force, by 6 per cent in rural and 4 per cent in urban areas, if their husbands had a regular or salaried employment. That is, a wife will have a lower probability of entering the labour force if the husband earns a regular income. They also found that, *ceteris paribus*, the farther apart the husband and the wife are in terms of educational levels, the lower is the inclination of the wife to enter the labour force. Therefore, higher household incomes pull back females from participating in the labour market, contributing to the trend of falling female employment.

As propounded by Goldin (1990), over time women's workforce participation behaviour is expected to reflect the impact of industrial and economic growth. As the economy grows, people shift from low-productive agricultural economy to an industrial and service-based economy; as women were moving into agriculture it is likely that female labour force participation is expected to fall. But with structural changes, rising education levels, decline in fertility rates, female economic activity increases with development (Gaddis and Klasen 2012). Analyzing employment patterns in the United States, Goldin (1990) suggested that there is a long run 'U-shaped' pattern of female work force participation mainly due to urbanization. However, female participation depends upon other factors as well. For instance, with male out-migration, females staying back might take up agricultural work and take care of family farm activities. Or, when females migrate with their husbands, it might also lead to their withdrawal from the labour force.

However, Gaddis and Klasen (2012) have demonstrated with the help of econometric modelling, that this U-shaped relationship is not a robust empirical finding. Female labour force participation is determined by differential dynamics generated in different sectors like agriculture, manufacturing and services. Therefore, depending on the relative shifts in these sectors, countries might or might not end up tracing a U-shaped

relationship between economic development and female labour force participation.

Analyzing the factors determining the female labour force participation in urban India for the time period 1987 to 2004, Klasen and Pieters (2012) find that, at lower levels of education, female labour force participation is driven by necessity rather than economic opportunities. Using NSS unit level data estimation, they confirmed that participation of poorly-educated women was mainly determined by economic push factors and social status effects. It was only at the highest education levels that the results show an evidence of pull factors drawing women into the labour force at attractive employment and pay conditions.

The 2.8 per cent growth of employment between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 was largely due to the increase in self-employment, especially in the case of females in agriculture, due to rural distress. Most of the increase, 49 million of the 60 million (82 per cent), during 2000-2005, in the number of workers was in the category of self-employed workers. More than 90 per cent of the incremental workforce in the case of rural females was employed in self-employment in agriculture. As noted by Himanshu (2011), female labour supply, particularly for the bottom 40 per cent of females in rural and urban areas, is largely driven by the compelling need to augment low levels of income. While females account for over 60 per cent of the total increase in self-employed in agriculture, males account for almost 75 per cent of the entire increase in those engaged as self-employed in non-agricultural sectors.

Not only were females trapped in low productivity agriculture, even their non-agricultural sources of income were characterized by a high degree of informality. Raveendran (2010) estimated the contribution of women to the gross domestic product (GDP) of India. By compiling categories between informal and formal sectors using the estimates of labour inputs and productivity differentials of the respective categories, and then between male and female workers by using their proportions in each category and sector, the contribution to GDP can be imputed. Women constituted 32.2 per cent of the total workforce in 2004-05 and among them 72.8 per cent were employed in agriculture as against 48.8 per cent men. With a share of about 91.2 per cent, women workers were mainly in the informal sector. Women contributed 23.4 per cent of the GDP in the informal sector and 16.2 per cent in the formal sector as of 2004-05. It was estimated that the overall contribution of women to GDP was about 19.8 per cent. It is often argued that women are twice as disadvantaged by virtue of being engaged in traditional sectors or the lower end of the value chain where productivity is low and informality is high. Therefore, lack of alternative non-agricultural employment opportunities deters female participation in the labour market.

Analyzing the urban employment trends in India, Chen and Raveendran (2012) found that, compared to men informal workers, the percentage of women informal workers was twice as high in waste picking and 1.6 times higher in domestic work. A higher percentage of men (75%) than women (59%) were employed in informal enterprises; but a far lower percentage of men (1%) than women (9%) were hired as domestic workers by households. The percentage of men informal workers who were unpaid contributing family workers (9%) was less than half that of women (20%). The last finding has implications for estimating the contribution of women in the labour force as well as GDP.

Sudarshan and Bhattacharya (2008) argue that financial crisis was one of the factors slowing down employment growth in manufacturing and services, accompanied by a decline in employment opportunities for women, as they faced increased competition from men for scarce jobs.

### *1.2.2 Measurement issues*

Many economists have argued that a large part of the missing labour force (especially female workers) is missing only from the NSSO data estimation but is very much part of the labour force. It appears 'missing' because of the inability of the NSSO surveys to capture it adequately. As highlighted by Hirway (2012), with the incidence of poverty as high as 40 per cent, it is not feasible that 85 per cent of rural women and 89 per cent of urban women are not engaged in economic activities. There are two ways in which labour force surveys are likely to

underestimate or underreport the workforce in a developing country: first, they are not able to estimate the total United Nations System of National Accounts (UN-SNA) work, particularly informal and subsistence work, as they are not designed to collect certain activities covered under the production boundary of the UN-SNA. Second, they are not equipped to capture some important characteristics of the workforce.

According to the NSS Employment-Unemployment Survey, those outside the labour force are classified under categories: 91 (attended educational institutes); 92 (attended domestic duties only); 93 (attended domestic duties and were also engaged in (a) free collection of goods such as vegetables, roots, firewood, cattle feed, etc., and (b) sewing, tailoring, weaving, etc.; 94 (pensioners, remittances recipients, etc.); 95 (not being able to work because of disability); 97 others (beggars, prostitutes); 98 (did not work due to sickness); and 99 (children under 4 years of age). Categories 92 and 93 are specifically relevant for women. While NSS considers those engaged in category 93 as non-workers (asked of only those reporting as being out of the labour force), the UN-System of National Accounts (UN-SNA) considers them as engaged in economic activities under the production boundary. As Mukhopadhyay and Tendulkar (2006) state that seeking information on code 93 from only the 'out-of-the-labour Force' women suggests the survey assumes that female participants do not engage in code 93 activities. This, as argued by them, is a patently wrong assumption given that a large percentage of 'working women' belong to very poor households. This bifurcation of data precludes the analysis over various issues related to women's employment such as multiple and simultaneous work, whether low participation of women in the labour force is due to demand or supply side factors, differences in characteristics between those women in the labour force and those who choose to be out of the labour force. Thus, canvassing the question for code 93 to all women can solve some part of the problem of inadequate estimates of female work participation.

Comparing the results from the pilot Time-Use Survey of 1998-99, Hirway (2012) showed that 6.5 per cent of men and 24.2 per cent of women participate in only one of the unpaid SNA activities, namely, collection of free goods such as fetching water, collection of fruits, vegetables, fuel wood/twigs, collection of raw material for crafts, collection of fodder, collection of minor forest produce like bamboo, leaves, etc. Further, it was found that workforce participation rates for both men and women in rural as well as urban areas are higher under the time-use survey compared to NSS Employment-Unemployment Surveys. Also, gender gaps in WPR were much less under the time-use survey, so are the interstate variations in women WPR.

Chen (2004) describes the heterogeneity of informal work as a pyramid, where the top tier of workers – namely employers and micro-entrepreneurs – is overrepresented by men, and the bottom tier – which includes industrial outworkers and subcontracted home workers – is overrepresented by women. Informal employment, therefore, is sometimes scattered and intermittent, temporary, or short-term, and is home-based. This way it frequently gets captured with unpaid household work. It is, therefore, necessary to include all of these activities within labour force data systems. But the major problem in measuring informal employment is that it is not always easy to distinguish between informal and household work at a conceptual level (for example, cooking for hired farm workers and cooking for the family are not easy to separate from each other, though the former is informal work and the latter is domestic unpaid work), with the result that women's production activities are frequently hidden behind their household work.

Another issue is that informal workers performed multiple tasks/jobs spread in an irregular manner, and sometimes simultaneously. Without much probing, the surveys might only capture the main activity of the worker. This is a much critical aspect in the case of women. For instance, a rural female worker may: collect water from the village or outside well; clean the animal shed, milk the animal, and feed it; and work at her own farm as a helper or go to an outside farm as a hired worker. Also, she may be involved in two economic (captured under SNA) activities such as animal grazing and collecting fuel wood, or economic and non-SNA activities simultaneously, such as animal grazing and cooking for the household. Labour force surveys are likely to capture the main job (sometimes there are no main jobs, just many small jobs), and one or two secondary jobs. But it is not likely to properly measure the small multiple and simultaneous jobs carried out for short durations as

a hired worker, own-account worker, or family worker (Hirway and Jose 2011).

Due to such inadequacy in the usual labour force surveys, time-use surveys are advocated for the correct estimation of labour force participation. Therefore, adopting time-use surveys, and asking more follow-up and probing questions to those engaged in these activities can give a better estimation of their work participation in economic activities. Also, there is a need to re-examine the definition of the production boundary in line with the broader definitions as per the UN-SNA.

Misperception around women's work by both investigator and respondent also results in underestimation of women's work and their participation in the workforce. Most females, especially in rural areas, work on their own farmland or in a household business on an irregular/part-time basis, and do not recognize it as doing some economic activity, but consider it to be a part of their household responsibility. Unless asked probing questions over their participation in these activities, their contribution to that work cannot be imputed. Thus, there is a need to sensitize both the women and the statistical agencies and investigators about the nature of women's work. SEWA's intervention in this regard in the 1990s, where they demonstrated through a video on how one should answer such questionnaires, proved to be successful. It was noted that the Census estimates reported a 67 per cent increase in women participation in Gujarat post this intervention.

Sudarshan and Bhattacharya (2009), in their analysis based on a primary survey of urban women in Delhi found that the female workforce and labour force participation rates are registered at 21 per cent and 24 per cent respectively. The corresponding estimates for men are 84 per cent and 87 per cent. These numbers are considerably higher than the NSSO estimates for Delhi. The main reason they attribute to this difference is the extensive probing, use of female investigators, and the inclusion of all paid economic activities as "work" in their primary survey. Another aspect, which they think is critical, is the inclusion and extensive focus on home-based, piece rate work and discussions with investigators on the varied forms of work in which women participate. They found that familial objection and a pre-existing household workload are key constraints for women in joining the workforce. Mobility and safety concerns were the next frequently cited hurdles for working women in their sample. The authors highlighted that, in terms of perception, neglecting children and conflict over domestic chores emerge as the two most negative aspects attributed to joining the workforce for both working and non-working women in their survey. Issues relating to masculinity and women's work have an integral role to play in the reporting and repercussions of women's work.

In summary, possible determinants for the decline in female employment as pointed out in the literature include different factors along with possible measurement errors (or misclassification) of women's work. Determinants mentioned in the literature are the following:

- Education
- Social / cultural norm
- Household responsibilities
- Household income
- Access to suitable jobs

Thus, from 2005-04 to 2009-10, the actual reasons for the withdrawal of around 21 million women in India from the labour force are yet to be explored because there are both supply – as well as demand-side factors that can explain the withdrawal. It also needs to be understood whether this withdrawal is in the nature of the discouraged worker phenomenon. That is, whether the decision to withdraw from the labour force was voluntary or forced due to the lack of suitable employment opportunities. This study has been undertaken to explore some of the determinants of female participation in the labour market in selected study locations in both rural and urban

areas, and also to explore other possible reasons for the declining trend in female employment.

To investigate the different dimensions highlighted above, this study was conducted in Gujarat (a relatively better-off state in terms of per capita income and other economic indicators), and in Uttar Pradesh (a state that lags behind in most of the socio-economic indicators vis-à-vis the national average). This study was based on a primary household survey, where the focus was not only on the measurement of quantitative variables, but also on the interactions between various qualitative socio-economic dimensions, which have an implication for female participation in the labour market. Further, this study also analyses through a time-use survey of adult females whether the burden of household responsibilities has any bearing on participation in the labour market. In addition to household surveys, focus group discussions were held with various stakeholders to get a larger picture of constraints, opportunities, and aspirations of females in selective study locations.

### **1.3 Structure of the report**

The report starts with an analysis of employment and unemployment survey data (conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization), and the focus of this analysis is on the change in female employment particularly during the period 2004-05 to 2009-10 (Chapter 2). The trend indicated by an analysis of secondary data was carried forward for further analysis through the household survey in selective locations. The selection of the study locations along with a detailed methodology is discussed in the following chapter (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 provides a broad macro setting of this study and charts out the research questions, which are addressed in the following four chapters. The dominant factor impacting the decision of women to participation in the labour market in the study locations (education) is analysed in Chapter 5. Employment opportunities in the study locations are discussed in Chapter 6. Problems faced by working women (both at the workplace and in the household), and constraints that non-working females faced in order to participate in the labour market are discussed in Chapter 7. These problems and constraints cut across different determinants. The following chapter (Chapter 8) looks into the aspect of time disposition of females and analyses time disposition of working females (in different occupations) into economic and non-economic activities. The last chapter (Chapter 9) provides some broad conclusions and suggests some policy recommendations based on this study.

## Chapter 2

# Female Labour Force Participation – Analysis of Secondary Data

### 2.1 Introduction

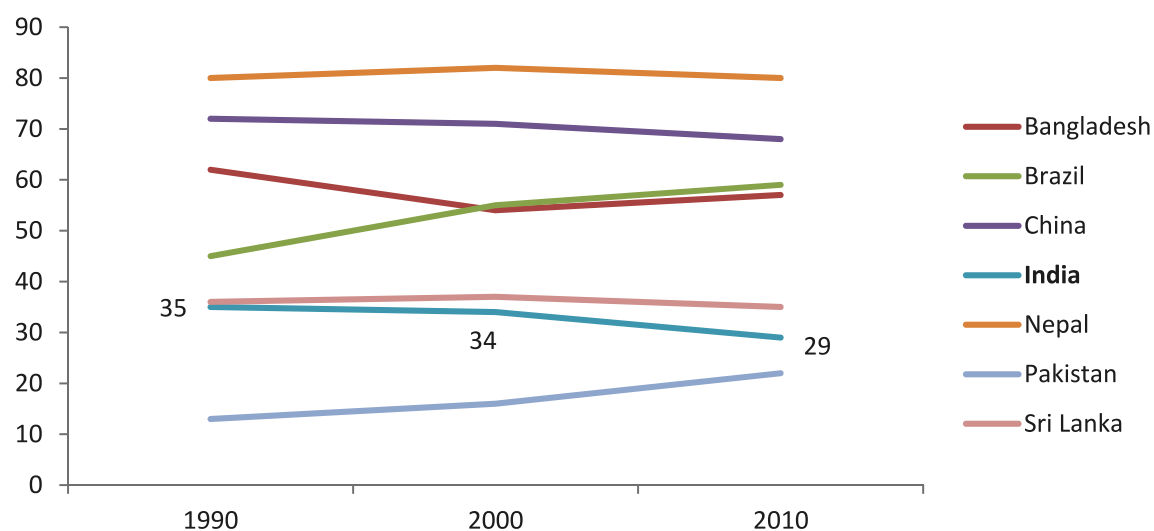
The quinquennial rounds of the Employment and Unemployment Survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) are the most comprehensive and reliable database on the labour market situation in India. This large sample survey of households was initiated in 1972-73 and, since then, this large sample survey has been conducted once in every five years in both rural and urban areas. The genesis of this study can be attributed to the declining trend of female labour force participation rate (LFPR), and workforce participation rate (WFPR) as indicated by NSSO data. Even though the employment and unemployment surveys suggest very little as to the causality of such outcomes, they do play an important role in planning and policy-making by indicating patterns and trends in employment and unemployment situation at the national and state levels, which can be taken up for further enquiry and policy-making exercise by the researchers as well as policy-makers. Without such broad patterns and trends it is almost impossible to arrive at any starting point in policy making.

Hence, this chapter focuses on a detailed analysis of unit level records of Employment and Unemployment Survey conducted by NSSO for the two rounds, 2004-05 and 2009-10. The sharpest decline in female LFPR and WFPR was observed during this period and, therefore, the focus of this analysis will be on trends and patterns as observed during 2004-05 and 2009-10. The labour force data for 2011-12 released by the NSSO reinforces the need for the study. Rural LFPR continued to decline further from 2009-10 to 2011-12; however, there are signs of resurgence in urban India. Section 2.2 looks into trends and patterns of female LFPR and WFPR at the national level, and brings in some international comparison. Section 2.3 extends the national level analysis to the states, and tries to capture variations in trends and patterns across states. Section 2.4 provides some broad conclusions.

### 2.2 National trends in female LFPR and WFPR

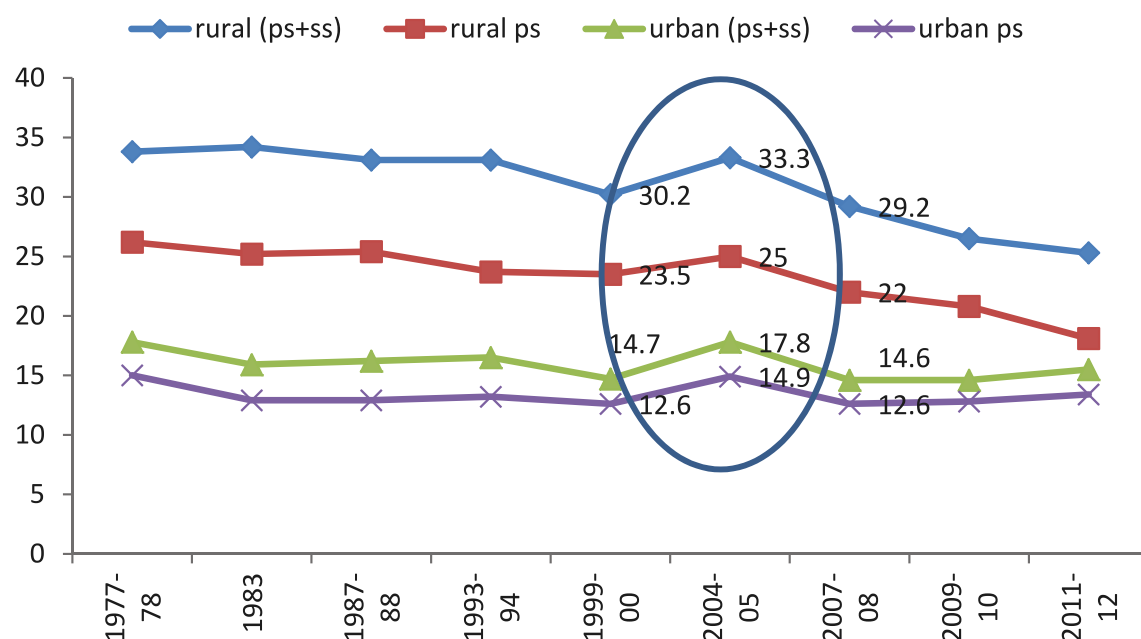
Higher participation of females in the labour force has been cited in literature as an important factor for higher output and economic growth. Most often it is the nature of gender relations in the society and gender discrimination that constrain women's participation in the labour force. Women account for 40 per cent of the world's labour force. However, along with the Middle East and North Africa, female labour force participation rates are much lower in South Asia (with the exception of Nepal). In South Asia, women account for just 27 per cent of the labour force. Figure 2.1 shows the trends in female labour force participation, defined as a proportion of the population aged 15 years and above who are available for work, i.e. all those who supply labour for the production of goods and services during a specified period in developing countries using ILO's database, the Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM). The graph shows that the participation rates for women have been declining except for Brazil and Pakistan. The fall in female LFPRs seems most dramatic in the case of India. It is surprising to note that, among South Asian countries, LFPRs for women in Nepal are as high as 80 per cent compared to 16 per cent for Afghanistan. Analysis of female LFPR of these countries along with Brazil and China revealed that, not only was India's female LFPR declining rapidly, it has been one of the lowest consistently for the last two decades. But, even more worrying than the low and declining female LFPR in India is the pace of decline during the second half of the 2000s.

**Figure 2.1: Trends in female labour force participation rates in selected developing countries (%)**



Source: International Labour Organization; Key Indicators of the Labour Market database

**Figure 2.2: Female labour force participation rates in India (%)**



Source: NSS various rounds

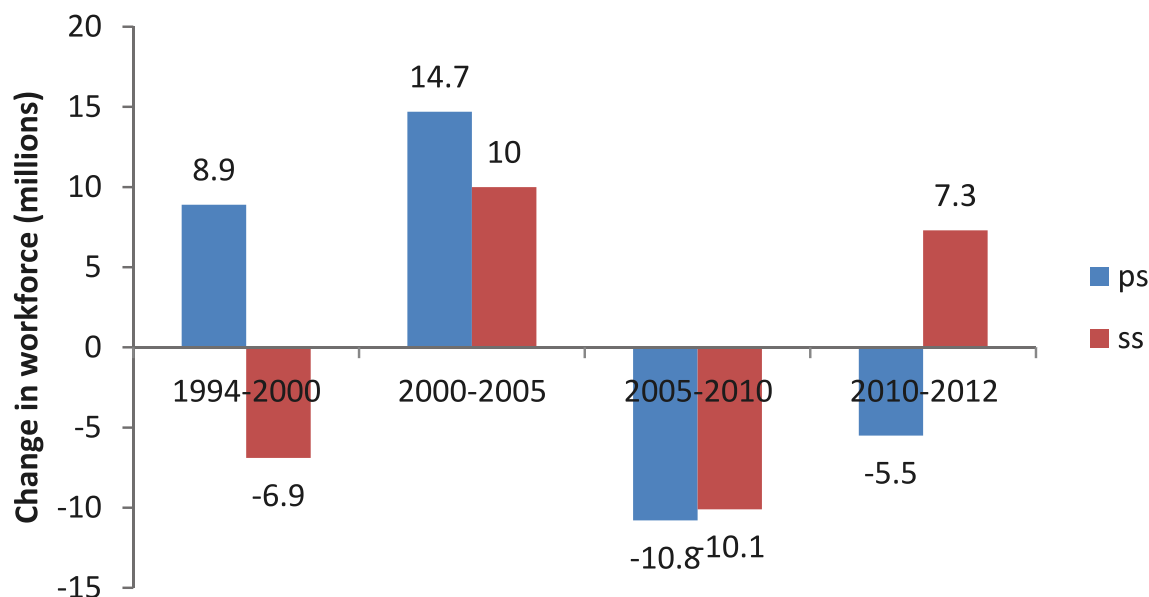
Note: PS= Principal Status; PS+SS= Usual Principal and Subsidiary Status

In India, there has been a consistent decline in female labour force participation rates both in rural and urban areas since the 1970s; 1999-2000 to 2004-05 being the only exception (Figure 2.2). A decline in the labour force participation rate was, however, more pronounced in the case of rural females. Also, the decline in the rural female labour force participation rate was much sharper in the case of principal and subsidiary status taken together compared to only principal status, thus implying that a larger share of decline could be attributed to a decline in subsidiary status.

In terms of workforce participation during the second half of the 2000s, while there has been an increase of 13 million principal status employment, subsidiary status employment has declined by about 11.9 million, as a result of which the absolute increase in employment as per usual principal and subsidiary status has been a mere 1.1 million (between 2004-05 and 2009-10). The decline in subsidiary status employment is sometimes considered to be a positive development because people, especially females, resort to subsidiary employment as

an additional source of household income. But what is a matter of concern is that, in the case of females, the decline has been both in principal as well as subsidiary status employment (Figure 2.3). The decline in female workforce participation rate is a phenomenon the country has witnessed since the late 1970s. Increasing participation in education to some extent has contributed to the declining female workforce participation rate (Mazumdar and Neetha, 2011; Rangarajan et al., 2011). Based on various rounds of the Employment and Unemployment Survey there is evidence of a growing absence of those under 25 from the workforce, and it is possible that increasing school enrolment might provide an explanation to this phenomenon. Further, the enactment of Right to Education for 6-14 years old provides some explanation to this phenomenon of a declining female work force participation rate.

**Figure 2.3: Changes in female workforce by principal and subsidiary status (millions)**



Source: NSS various rounds

Note: ps = principal status; ss = subsidiary status

If female employment is disaggregated into rural and urban sectors, the decline in principal and subsidiary status employment is observed in both rural and urban India, even though the magnitude of decline was much greater in rural India (Tables 2.1 and 2.2). In rural India, the decline in principal status employment was 12 per cent between 2004-05 and 2009-10, while that in subsidiary status employment was as much as 25 per cent over the same period. In urban India, the respective declines in principal and subsidiary status employment were 1.4 per cent and 31 per cent respectively. Therefore, even though in absolute numbers, the decline was much sharper in rural India, urban female subsidiary workers lessened at a faster rate.

**Table 2.1: Status of female employment (millions), rural India**

Status	Principal status		Subsidiary status	
	2004-05	2009-10	2004-05	2009-10
Own account worker	12.6	11.3	6.3	5.2
Employer	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2
Unpaid family worker	38.2	29.3	20.8	12.3
Regular/salaried wage employee	4.3	4.4	0.2	0.1
Casual wage labour in public works	0.1	0.7	0.1	1.7
Casual wage labour in other types of works	35.0	33.9	4.8	4.2
All female workers	90.7	80.1	32.4	23.7

Source: Calculated from NSS Database, Employment and Unemployment Surveys, 61st and 66th Rounds

**Table 2.2: Status of female employment (millions), urban India**

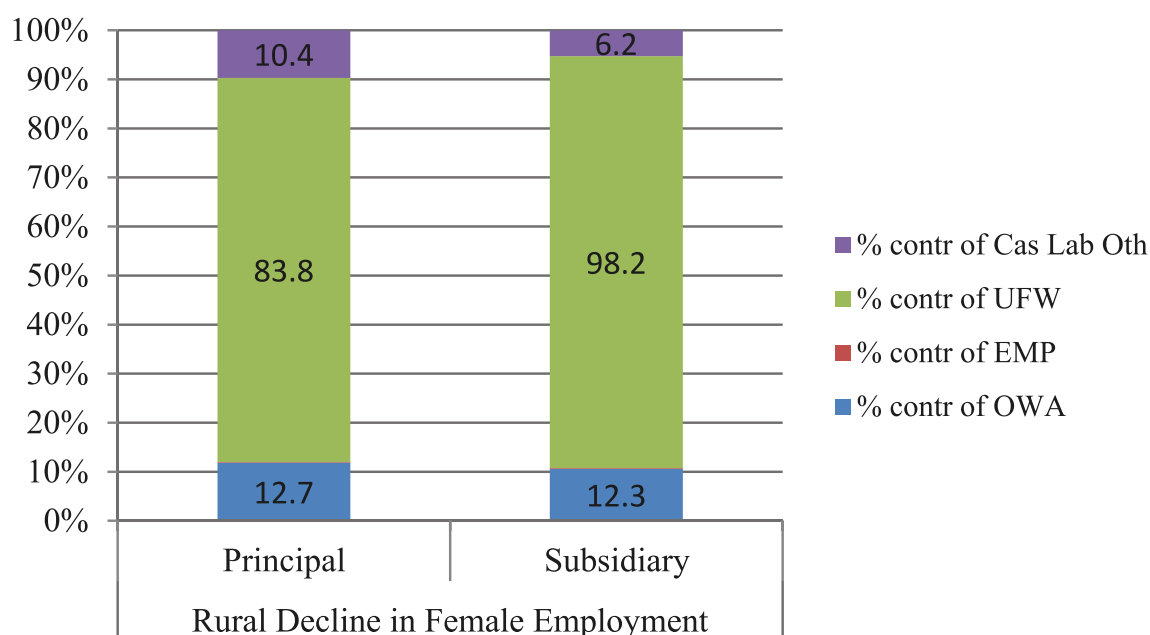
<i>Status</i>	<i>Principal status</i>		<i>Subsidiary status</i>	
	<i>2004-05</i>	<i>2009-10</i>	<i>2004-05</i>	<i>2009-10</i>
Own account worker	3.9	4.2	1.9	1.4
Employer	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0
Unpaid family worker	4.0	2.7	1.7	1.0
Regular/salaried wage employee	8.6	9.0	0.3	0.2
Casual wage labour in public works	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Casual wage labour in other types of works	3.5	3.8	0.6	0.4
All female workers	20.2	19.9	4.5	3.1

*Source: Calculated from NSS Database, Employment and Unemployment Surveys, 61st and 66th Rounds*

Focusing on rural India, the bulk of the decline in both principal and subsidiary status female employment was on account of the decline in employment opportunities in unpaid family work. In terms of decline in principal status employment, unpaid family work contributed to 84 per cent of the decline between 2004-05 and 2009-10, while in the case of subsidiary status employment, the decline in employment opportunities in unpaid family work contributed to 98 per cent of the decline (Figure 2.4).

Despite all the declines in female employment, the only silver lining seems to be the casual wage employment in public works where employment opportunities increased not only in subsidiary form, but also in principal status as well. Employment programmes like MGNREGA might have played an important role in boosting female employment in rural areas, and this clearly underlines the importance of public works programmes in ensuring a decent livelihood for the rural population.

**Figure 2.4: Percentage contribution to decline in female employment in rural India between 2004-05 and 2009-10 (%)**



*Source: Calculated from NSS Database, Employment and Unemployment Survey, 61st and 66th Rounds*

*Note: Cas Lab Oth = Casual wage labour in other types of works, UFW = Unpaid family work, EMP = Employer, OWA = Own account worker*

## 2.3: Trends in female employment across states

From the analysis at the all-India level, there is evidence of a decline in female employment primarily in rural India, while in urban India, even though there was some decline, the magnitude of decline was not that significant. More than 90 per cent of the decline in female employment (principal and subsidiary status together) between 2004-05 and 2009-10 happened in rural India. In 2011-12, the female labour force participation in rural areas continued to decline (Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3: State-wise female labour force participation rates (usual principal and subsidiary status) (%)**

	Rural			Urban		
	2004-05	2009-10	2011-12	2004-05	2009-10	2011-12
Andhra Pradesh	48.5	44.7	44.8	23.2	18.6	18
Arunachal Pradesh	41.3	29.5	28.2	15.1	15.3	13.9
Assam	21.6	16.8	12.9	12	10.7	9.7
Bihar	13.8	6.6	5.8	6.8	5.6	5.4
Chhattisgarh	45.5	37.2	41.6	18.5	14.3	25.2
Delhi	4.7	2.8	14.6	9.4	6	10.9
Goa	22.2	14.1	21.2	21.4	10.8	17.4
Gujarat	42.8	32.2	27.9	15.5	14.8	13.5
Haryana	32.1	25.2	16.4	14.3	13.5	10.2
Himachal Pradesh	51.6	47.4	52.9	26.8	17.8	23.6
Jammu & Kashmir	27.1	30.3	26.3	12.6	15.5	14.5
Jharkhand	31.3	16.1	20.4	13.7	9.7	7.3
Karnataka	46.2	37.2	28.9	19.2	17.7	17.1
Kerala	32.1	26	25.8	30.1	23.3	22.2
Madhya Pradesh	36.6	28.4	23.9	15.6	13.6	11.9
Maharashtra	47.5	39.7	38.9	19.8	16.7	17.2
Manipur	35.4	22.1	27	23.6	15.2	20.4
Meghalaya	48	37.3	39.2	31.4	23.5	21
Mizoram	44.1	41	40.5	28.8	29.8	26.7
Nagaland	51.1	36.2	37.1	27.7	16.4	22.4
Odisha	35.1	24.9	25.1	20.2	12.6	15.8
Punjab	33.8	24.6	23.7	15.5	13.2	14.1
Rajasthan	40.7	35.7	34.9	18.8	12.6	14.4
Sikkim	32.3	32	49.2	17.7	15	27.4
Tamil Nadu	46.7	41.1	38.6	25.3	20.2	21.1
Tripura	12.5	23.5	28.7	23	18.6	26
Uttarakhand	42.9	39.9	31.5	14.2	11.6	10.8
Uttar Pradesh	24.1	17.5	17.8	12	8.3	10.6
West Bengal	18.4	15.6	19.4	16.9	15.1	18.6
A & N Islands	27.7	24.5	30	18.8	24	24.8
Chandigarh	5.6	18.8	4.7	15.4	14.3	13.5
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	49.5	4.2	16.1	21.4	1.7	11.5
Daman & Diu	16.8	20.2	3.4	23.3	8.6	15.2
Lakshadweep	11.4	32.6	17.7	23	27.6	17.8
Puducherry	33.4	35.4	22.3	19.1	21.6	15.3
India	33.3	26.5	25.3	17.8	14.6	15.5

Source: Calculated from NSS Database, Employment and Unemployment Surveys, 61st, 66th and 68th Rounds

Across states, it is observed that the majority experienced a decline in principal status employment as indicated at the national level. The few exceptions were Assam, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh, which experienced a minor increase in female principal status employment (Table 2.3A). Among the states experiencing a decline in female principal status employment, the magnitude of decline was the highest in Bihar, followed by Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu.

**Table 2.3A: State-wise change in female principal employment, rural (millions)**

<i>States experiencing <b>rise</b> between 2004-05 and 2009-10</i>	<i>States experiencing <b>fall</b> between 2004-05 and 2009-10</i>
Himachal Pradesh (0.1 mn)	<b>Uttar Pradesh (0.4 mn)</b>
Haryana (0.2 mn)	Rajasthan (0.7 mn)
Assam (0.2 mn)	Odisha(0.7 mn)
	Karnataka (0.8 mn)
	<b>Gujarat (0.9 mn)</b>
	Jharkhand (1.2 mn)
	Tamil Nadu (1.2 mn)
	Bihar (1.7 mn)

*Source: Calculated from NSS Database, Employment and Unemployment Surveys, 61st and 66th Rounds*

*Note: Figures in brackets imply change in employment millions*

In terms of female subsidiary status employment, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat experienced the maximum decline during the second half of the decade (Table 2.4). Rajasthan and Tripura, on the other hand, experienced a minor increase in female subsidiary status employment.

**Table 2.4: State-wise change in female subsidiary employment, rural (millions)**

<i>States experiencing <b>rise</b> between 2004-05 and 2009-10</i>	<i>States experiencing <b>fall</b> between 2004-05 and 2009-10</i>
Rajasthan (0.3 mn)	Karnataka (0.5 mn)
Tripura (0.1 mn)	Punjab (0.6 mn)
	Haryana (0.6 mn)
	Assam (0.7 mn)
	Bihar (0.7 mn)
	<b>Uttar Pradesh (0.9)</b>
	<b>Gujarat (1.0)</b>

*Source: Calculated from NSS Database, Employment and Unemployment Surveys, 61st and 66th Rounds*

*Note: Figures in brackets imply change in employment millions*

A comparison across states indicates that Karnataka, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat experienced a decline in female employment to a significant extent between 2004-05 and 2009-10 in both principal and subsidiary status. From among these four states, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat were selected for the purpose of this study, and a primary household based survey was conducted to analyse factors determining female work participation. As was observed in the case of rural India as a whole, in rural Uttar Pradesh too, the major component of the decline in female employment was the decline in unpaid family worker in both principal as well as subsidiary status (Table 2.5). In Gujarat, even though the major component of the decline in female subsidiary employment was the fall in employment opportunities in unpaid family work, the decline in principal status employment was primarily due to the fall in employment opportunities in casual works other than public works (Table 2.6).

## 2.4 Broad conclusions

Low female labour force participation is a common phenomenon in most South Asian countries, though participation of women has increased in Bangladesh and, to a lesser extent, in Pakistan. In India, there has been a consistent decline in the female labour force participation rate and the workforce participation rate, both in rural and urban areas since the 1970s (with the period between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 being the only exception). This decline in female WFPR was much sharper in rural India as compared to urban India, and was principally driven by the fall in employment opportunities in unpaid family works. Among the major states, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, along with Bihar and Karnataka experienced a significant decline in female employment in both principal as well as subsidiary status. In order to understand the possible determinants of declining female employment, a primary household-based survey was conducted in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat in both rural and urban areas. The following chapter discusses the methodological issues in connection with the primary survey conducted in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat.

**Table 2.5: Change in female employment (millions), rural Uttar Pradesh between 2004-05 and 2009-10**

<i>Status</i>	<i>Principal status</i>	<i>Subsidiary status</i>
Own account worker	-0.03	-0.38
Employer	-0.01	0.03
Unpaid family worker	-0.83	-0.96
Regular/salaried wage employee	0.12	-0.01
Casual wage labour in public works	0.02	0.01
Casual wage labour in other types of works	0.34	0.43
All female workers	-0.39	-0.89

*Source: Calculated from NSS Database, Employment and Unemployment Survey, 61st and 66th Rounds*

**Table 2.6: Change in female employment (millions), rural Gujarat between 2004-05 and 2009-10**

<i>Status</i>	<i>Principal status</i>	<i>Subsidiary status</i>
Own account worker	-0.15	0.00
Employer	-0.02	0.03
Unpaid family worker	-0.09	-0.91
Regular/salaried wage employee	-0.08	0.01
Casual wage labour in public works	0.04	0.00
Casual wage labour in other types of works	-0.60	-0.13
All female workers	-0.90	-1.00

*Source: Calculated from NSS Database, Employment and Unemployment Survey, 61st and 66th Rounds*

## Chapter 3

# Objective and Methodology

### 3.1 Objective

The broad pattern that emerged from the analysis of Employment and Unemployment Survey conducted by NSSO indicated to a significant decline in female employment during the second half of the last decade. The decline of female employment was observed across rural and urban India, in both usual principal and usual subsidiary status. This trend of decline in female employment was common across states, and exceptions were rather few. Possible explanations as to this phenomenon pointed out, on the one hand, to the increasing participation of females in education, and the effect of rising household income – both of which can be classified as pull factors; and on the other, constraints and non-availability of adequate jobs – which can be classified as push factors. In other words, just as increasing participation of females in education is one positive effect on declining work participation, there can be other positive effects as well (increasing family incomes on account of which females are voluntarily withdrawing from the workforce).

However, declining work participation due to increasing school attendance has a flip side. On completion of education, the educated females will join/re-join the labour force (in another 5 – 10 years) and, therefore, providing decent and productive employment to higher educated females must be a major policy issue. Not giving due attention to declining female work participation, considering it to be a positive outcome, might soon lose favour and pose a demographic nightmare for the policy-makers in the near future. On the negative side, non-availability of suitable employment opportunities might be responsible for declining female employment. India, being a vast country with a lot of regional variations, it is impossible to capture all the pull and push factors determining female employment across different states. Nonetheless, the broad over-arching objective of this study is to identify determinants of female work participation (push and pull factors) in rural and urban areas of the study locations. The sub-components of this broad over-arching objective are:

- To map the major activities of females and their occupations based on different levels of education in the study locations
- To analyze female work opportunities and conditions of work in the study locations
- To analyze the constraints that deter female participation in the workforce
- To reflect upon the problems that women encounter as a result of their participation in the workforce and
- To get a sense of the daily time schedule of females and its possible implication for their participation in paid employment

### 3.2 Methodology

#### 3.2.1 Selection of states

As mentioned in Chapter 2, among the major states, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, along with Bihar and Karnataka, experienced significant decline in female employment in both principal as well as subsidiary status. In the process of selecting states, two broad classifications have been used viz., states with low poverty and above average work participation rate (in short well-off states), and states with high poverty and below average work participation rate (in short, economically backward states). For this study, Gujarat has been selected as the well-off state and Uttar Pradesh has been selected as the economically backward state. Analysis of NSS data on female

workers already pointed out significant decline in 2009-10 as compared to 2004-05 in both these states as per usual principal activity status as well as usual subsidiary activity status. It may be noted that Gujarat has a higher labour force participation rate (LFPR) and workforce participation rate (WFPR) for females than the national average, while Uttar Pradesh has lower LFPR and WFPR as compared to the national average (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: Female LFPR and WFPR (UPSS), 2009-10**

<i>Female LFPR/WFPR</i>	<i>Gujarat</i>	<i>All India</i>	<i>Uttar Pradesh</i>
LFPR (15-59 Years) (%)	37.1	34.5	24.4
WFPR (15-59 Years) (%)	36.5	33.6	24.3
LFPR (All Ages) (%)	25.6	23.3	15.6
WFPR (All Ages) (%)	25.3	22.8	15.5

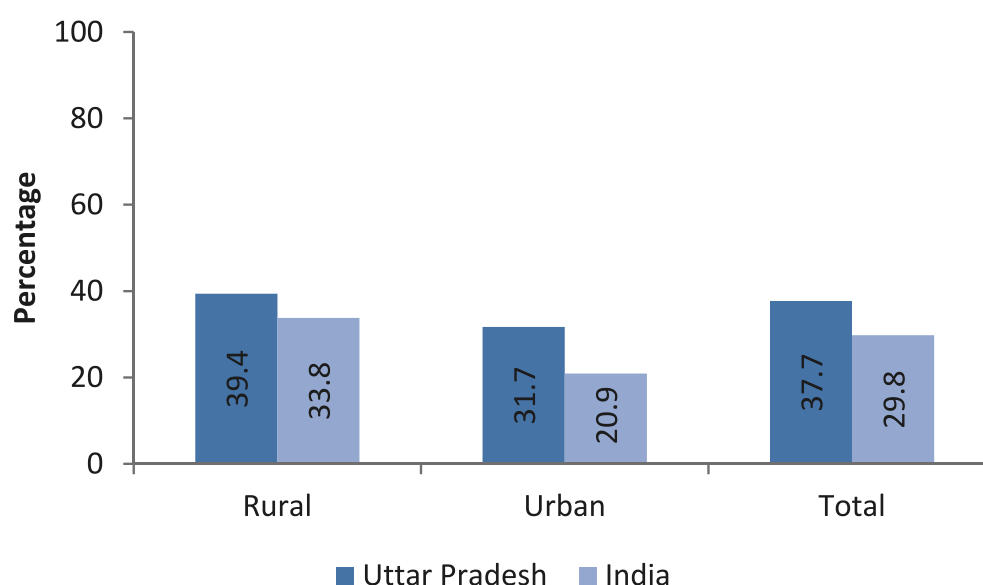
*Source: NSS 66th Round, Employment & Unemployment Survey, 2009-10*

Analysing the causes of decline in female work participation in these two states is expected to provide some important insights as to why female work participation is declining in both well-off and economically backward states.

### *3.2.2 Socio-economic profile of the two states*

Uttar Pradesh (UP) is the most populous state of India and has an economy that is primarily agriculture-based. More than 60 per cent of its population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. It is one of the fastest developing states in India and has shown a healthy growth path during the last decade (PHD Research Bureau 2011). However, the percentage of population below poverty line in UP remains greater than the all India average for both rural and urban areas (Planning Commission, 2013). The percentage of population below poverty line in the state in comparison with that of India is illustrated in the charts below.

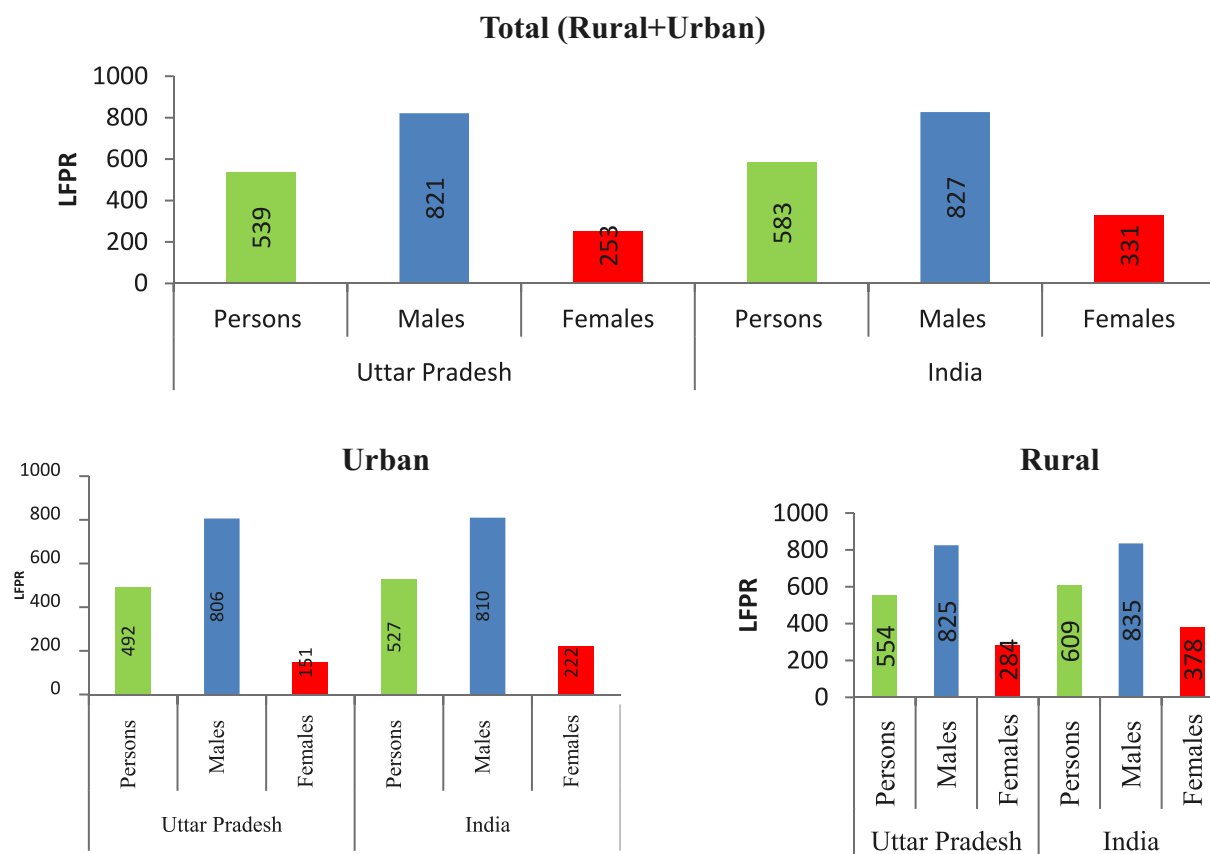
**Figure 3.1: Percentage of population below poverty line in Uttar Pradesh as compared to national average, 2009-10 (%)**



*Source: NSS 68th Round, Employment & Unemployment Survey, 2011-12*

Furthermore, the labour force participation rate (LFPR) and the worker population ratio (WPR) are lower for Uttar Pradesh than the national average. Here both usual principal and subsidiary economic activity are considered.

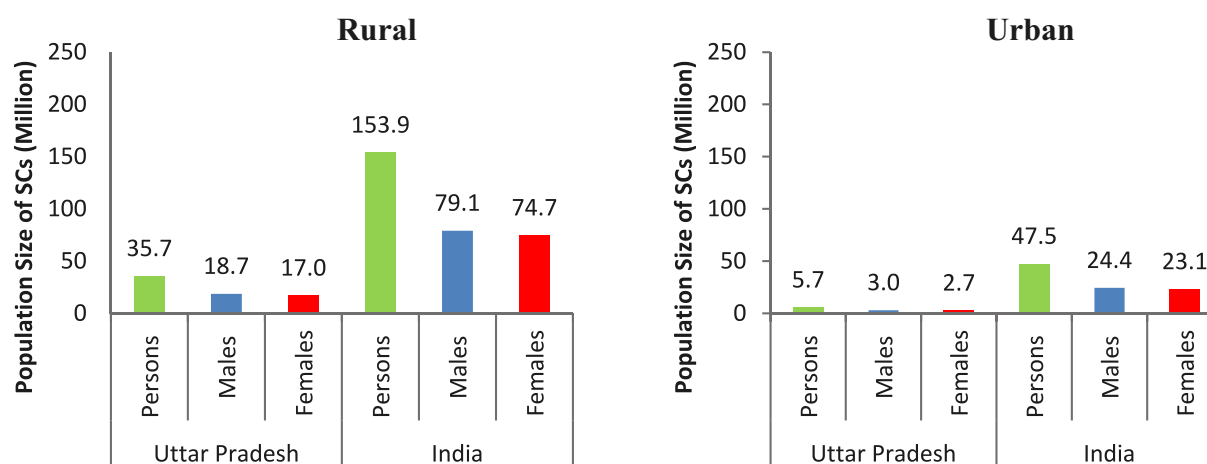
**Figure 3.2: Labour force participation rate for total, rural, urban Uttar Pradesh vis-à-vis India, 2011-12 (persons per 1000 working-age population)**

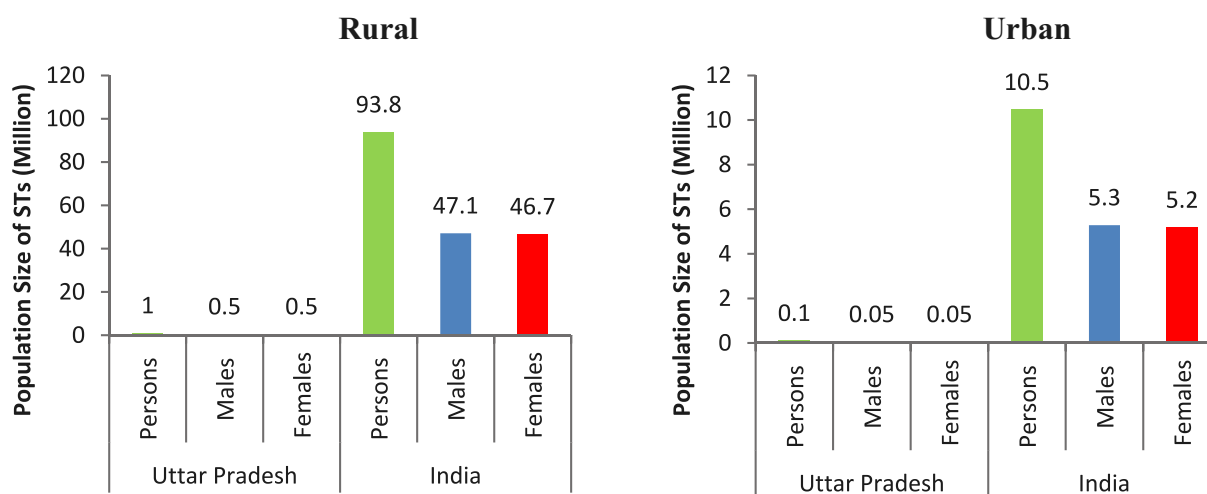


Source: NSS 68th Round, Employment & Unemployment Survey, 2011-12

The female worker participation ratio, the number of workers and the nature of jobs vary with social groups. In Uttar Pradesh, 21 per cent out of 100 million women are socially deprived with majority being rural scheduled castes (Census, 2011).

**Figure 3.3: Population size of scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) for rural/urban Uttar Pradesh vis-à-vis India, 2011 (persons per 1000 working-age population)**

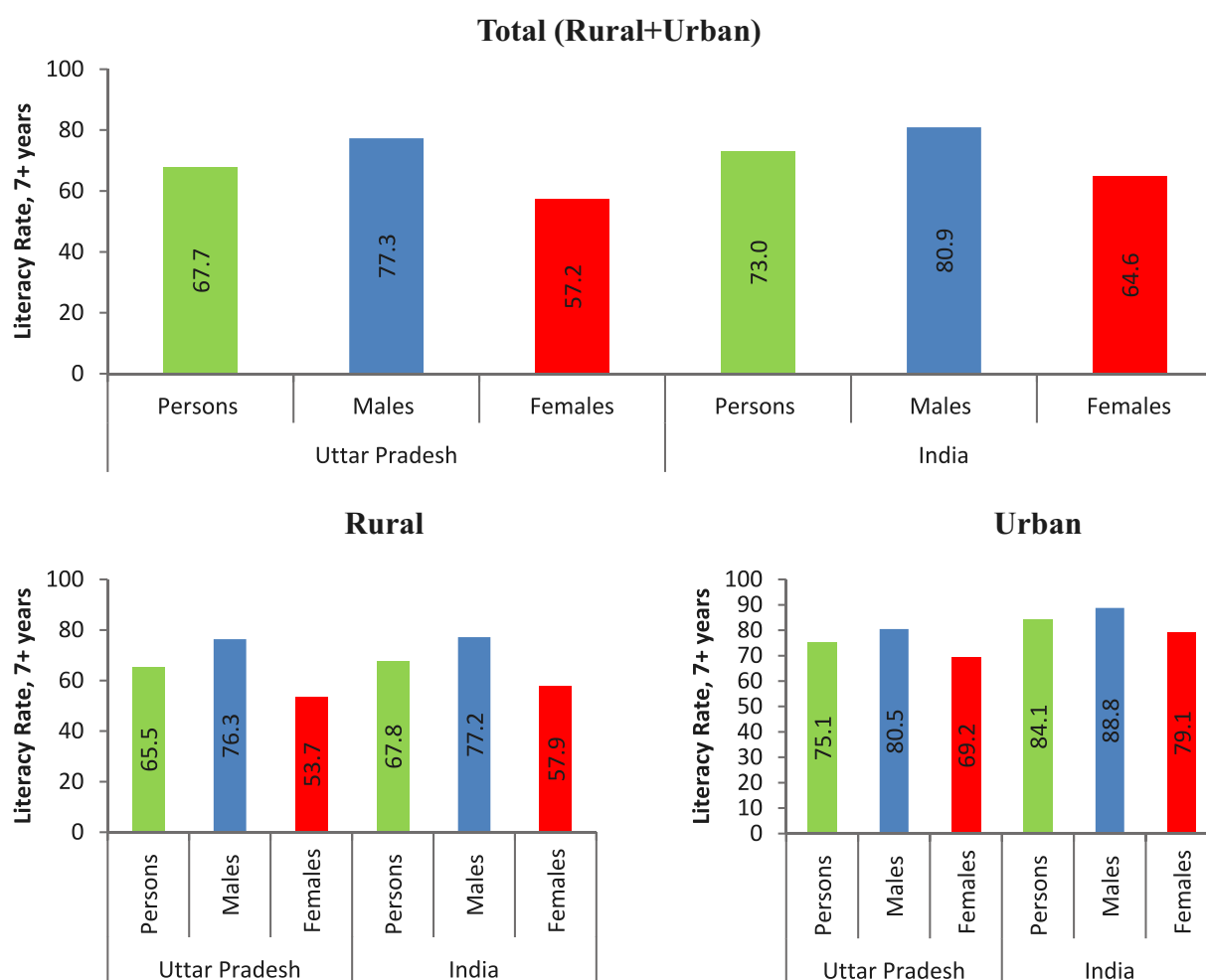




Source: Census of India, 2011

Further, it can be seen from the charts below that the percentage of literates is lower in UP than the national averages for both rural and urban areas and across gender.

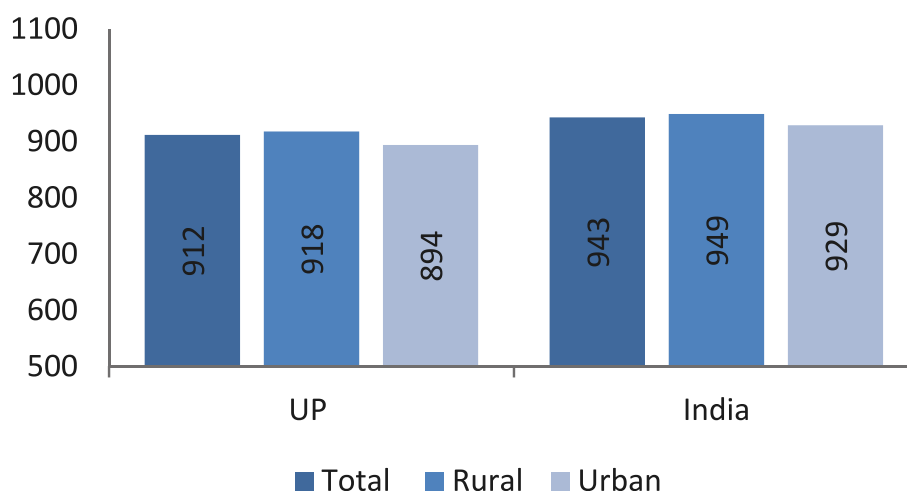
**Figure 3.4: Literacy rate (7+ years) total/rural/urban Uttar Pradesh vis-à-vis India, 2011 (%)**



Source: Census of India, 2011

Finally, the chart below shows the sex ratio. The sex ratio is indicative of the composition of the population. It is defined as the number of females per 1,000 males. It can be seen that in UP the sex ratio is lower than the national average. However, the rural areas have a better sex ratio than the urban areas.

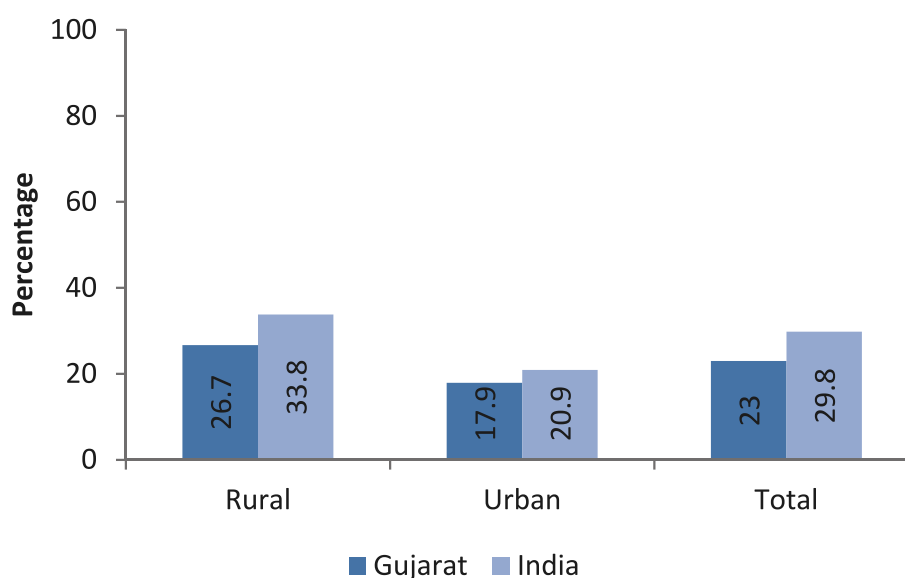
**Figure 3.5: Sex ratio in Uttar Pradesh vis-à-vis India, 2011 (females per 1000 males)**



*Source: Census of India 2011*

Gujarat is a state where economy has always performed better than the national average (Government of Gujarat, 2013). The economy of Gujarat has expanded by almost 17 times in the duration of 52 years between 1960-61 and 2011-12. During the ten-year period between 2001-02 and 2011-12, the gross domestic product of the state at 2004-05 prices increased at an annual average rate of more than 10 per cent per year. This massive expansion of the economy has largely been a result of the growth in the output of the service and manufacturing sectors of the economy. The output of the manufacturing and service sectors increased by around 28 times over the period 1960-61 to 2011-12 at 2004-05 prices (Government of Gujarat, 2013). It can be seen from the chart below that the percentage of population below the poverty line in Gujarat is lower than the percentage of population below the poverty line for India.

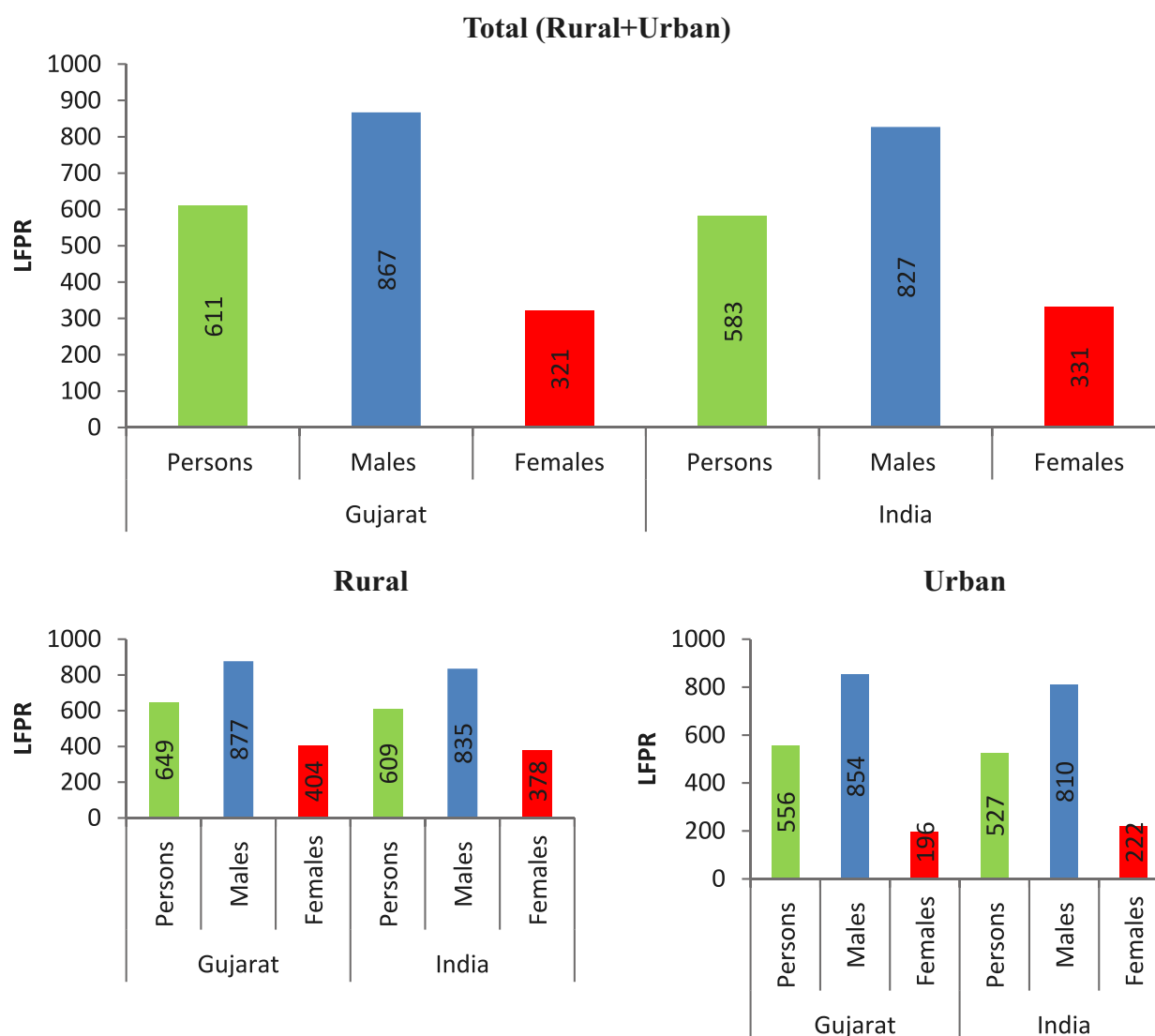
**Figure 3.6: Percentage of population below poverty line in Gujarat as compared to national average, 2009-10 (%)**



*Source: NSS 66th Round, Employment and Unemployment Survey, 2009-10*

Furthermore, it can be seen from the charts below that both the labour force participation rate (LFPR) and the worker population ratio (WPR) are higher for Gujarat than the national average.

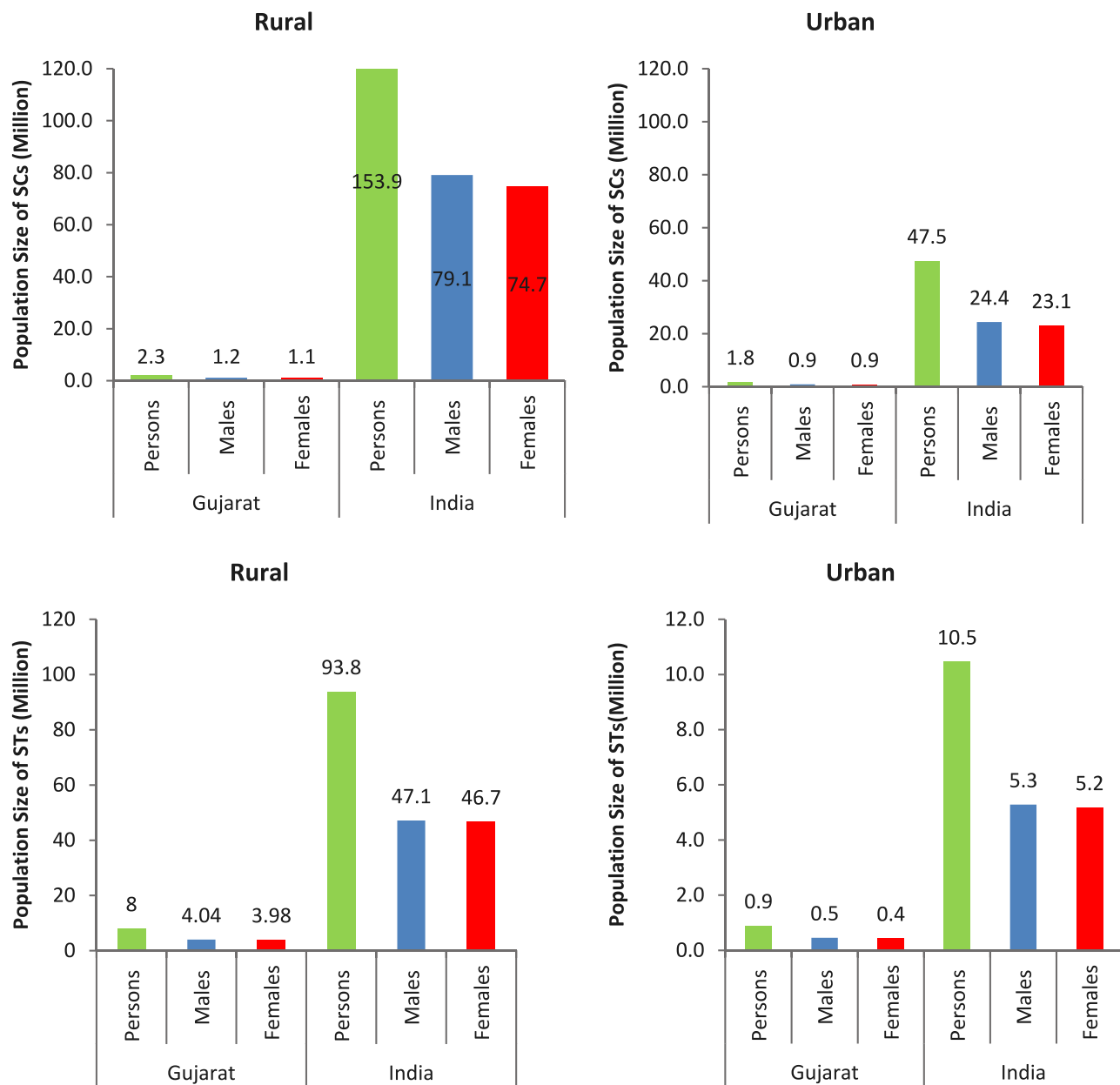
**Figure 3.7: Labour force participation rate for total, rural, urban Gujarat vis-à-vis India, 2011-12 (%)**



*Source: NSS 68th Round, Employment and Unemployment Survey, 2011-12*

The population size of state, population sizes of SC, STs, literacy rate and sex ratio versus all India are illustrated below (Census of India, 2011). Gujarat accounted for 4.99 per cent of India's population at the 2011 population census whereas the geographical area of Gujarat is 5.96 per cent of the geographical area of India. Gujarat ranks 10th amongst the states and union territories of the country with regards to population size (Government of Gujarat, 2013)

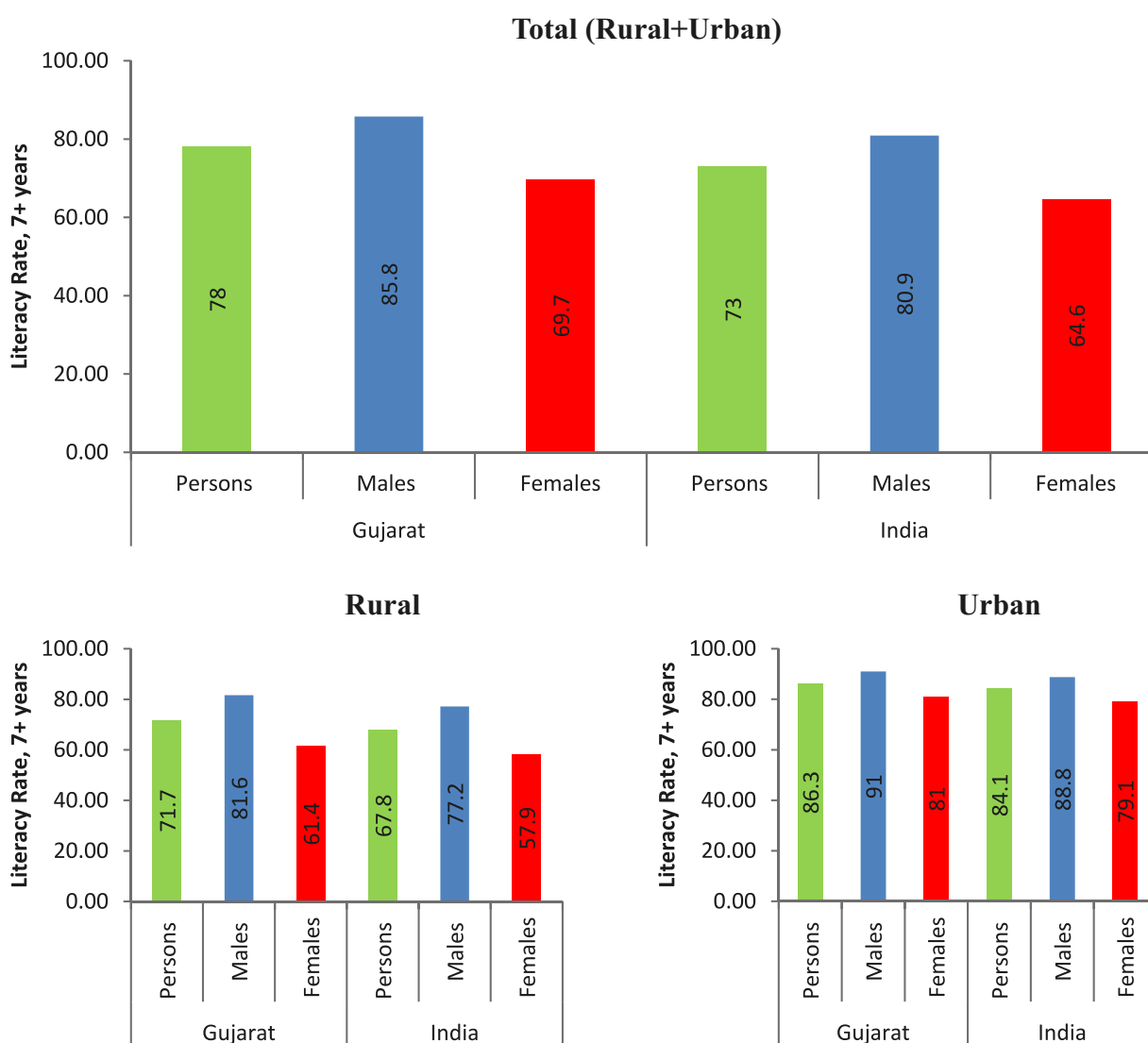
**Figure 3.8: Population size of scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) for rural/urban Gujarat vis-à-vis India, 2011(persons per 1000 working-age population)**



Source: Census of India, 2011

Further, it can be seen from the charts below that the proportion of literates is higher in Gujarat than the national averages for both rural and urban areas and across gender.

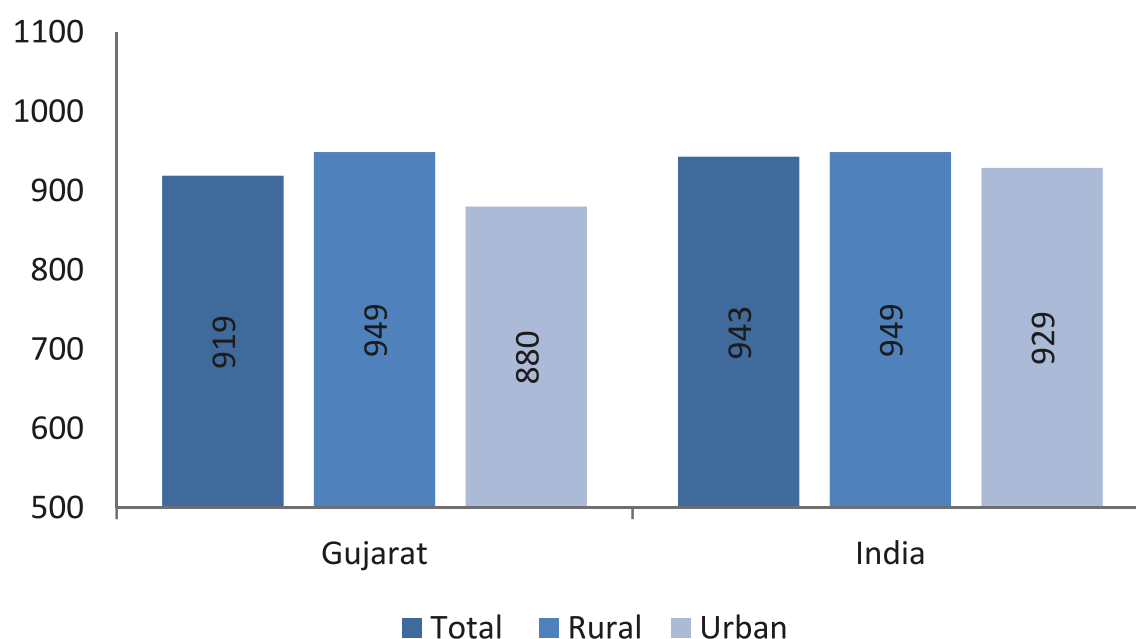
**Figure 3.9: Literacy rate (7+ years) total/rural/urban Gujarat vis-à-vis India, 2011(%)**



*Source: Census of India, 2011*

Finally, the chart below shows the sex ratio. The sex-ratio is indicative of the composition of the population. It is defined as the number of females per 1,000 males. It can be seen that in Gujarat the sex ratio is lower than the national average. However, the rural areas have a better sex ratio than the urban areas.

**Figure 3.10: Sex ratio (females per 1000 males) in Gujarat vis-à-vis India, 2011**



Source: Census of India, 2011

### 3.2.2 Selection of districts

Due to the time-frame and other constraints, it was decided that the study would be undertaken in two districts from each state. For the selection of districts, work participation rates for females have been used (Census, 2001). In each district, work participation rates for females have been calculated separately for rural and urban areas. One of the districts chosen had higher work participation rates for females in both rural and urban areas compared to the state average. The other district selected had lower work participation rates for females in both rural and urban areas as compared to the state average. Further, the districts were chosen from different agro-climatic regions so as to capture regional variations across households. The two districts chosen from each of the two states are mentioned in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Selection of districts for the primary survey in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh**

State	District	Agro-climatic region	Female work participation rate (urban) (%)	Female work participation rate (rural) (%)	Degree of urbanization (%)	Share of district in state's total population (%)
Gujarat	-	-	9	39	37	100
	Surat (higher)	South - Eastern	9	43	60	10
	Bhavnagar (lower)	Saurashtra	8	30	38	5
Uttar Pradesh	-	-	7	19	21	100
	Varanasi (higher)	Eastern UP	10	21	40	2
	Lucknow (lower)	Central UP	7	16	64	2

Source: Calculated from Census, 2001

### 3.2.3 Selection of urban locations / villages

In each district, urban locations were selected on the basis of the population (Census, 2001). In each district, two towns were selected – one relatively small with population less than 100,000, and the other with population greater than 100,000. The following is the list of towns selected in Gujarat (Roughly 10 – 15 households in each location were surveyed):

**Table 3.3: Selection of urban location, Gujarat**

District	Urban centre	Location
Bhavnagar (lower FWPR)	Bhavnagar Municipal Corp. (more than 100,000 population)	Masat Nagar (slum)
		Bharat Nagar (poor but not slum)
		Radheshyam Society (middle class, service)
		Shivnagar (middle class, service + business)
		Kalanala (Muslim area)
	Sihore City (less than 100,000 population)	Ram Nagar (poor but not slum)
		Balaji Nagar (middle class, service + business)
		Rajiv Nagar (large locality, middle class business + slums)
		LeelaTir (Muslim)
Surat (higher FWPR)	Surat Municipal Corp. (more than 100,000 population)	Shivaji Park Society (middle class, service + business)
		Shivaji Nagar (middle class but migrant from other States)
		Bhatar (Muslim)
		DeenDayal Nagar (lower middle class, mostly factory workers)
		Jada Bava Natekro (slum)
	Olpad Block Town (less than 100,000 population)	Wahiabad (middle class + slum)
		Kota Nagre (middle class + slum)
		Desai Sew (middle class + slum)
		Kasba (Muslim)
		Karsanpura (middle class)
		Motaharpatibas (slum)

The details of urban locations surveyed in Uttar Pradesh are as follows (approximately 10 – 15 households in each location were surveyed).

**Table 3.4: Selection of urban location, Uttar Pradesh**

District	Urban centre	Location
Lucknow	Lucknow Municipal Area (more than 100,000 population)	Daliganj (middle class, mostly into business)
		Aliganj (middle class, mostly into service)
		Vinayak Puram (slum)
		Kashmiri Mohallah (Middle and upper middle class, lot of home-based workers)
	Kakori (less than 100,000 population)	Pathangari (middle class, mostly into service)
		Takia (poor but not slum)
		Durgaganj (middle class, mostly into self-employment)
		Bhattatola (slum)
Varanasi	Municipal Corporation	Godalia (middle class, mostly into service)
		Lallapur (poor but not slum)
		Parde Kothi (middle class, mostly into self-employment)
		Anapurna Colony (middle class and upper middle class)
		Baldia (slum)

In each district, for survey of rural households, villages were selected based on number of households (Census, 2001). In each district, two categories of villages were selected – villages with number of households in the range of 500 – 600 (smaller village), and villages with number of households in the range of 1000 - 2000 (larger village). From each district, one smaller village and one larger village were selected. From each village, 75 households were surveyed. The 75 households surveyed belonged to different social groups. The number of households surveyed from each social group was in proportion to the overall distribution of households belonging to different social groups in the village. Details of villages surveyed in Gujarat and the social groups of the households surveyed are as follows:

**Table 3.5: Selection of villages and households, rural Gujarat**

District	Name of village	Social group	No. of households surveyed
Bhavnagar	Mota Khokhara (less than 500 - 600 households)	Muslim	1
		SC	9
		OBC	57
		Others	18
Total			75
	Sanarasa (number of households in the range of 1000 - 2000)	Muslim	3
		SC	4
		OBC	31
		Others	37
Total			75
Surat	Manekpor (less than 500 - 600 households)	ST	36
		SC	8
		OBC	5
		Others	26
Total			75
	Kim (number of households in the range of 1000 - 2000)	Muslim	17
		ST	9
		SC	6
		OBC	22
		Others	38
Total			75

Details of villages and households surveyed in rural Uttar Pradesh are as follows:

**Table 3.6: Selection of villages and households, rural Uttar Pradesh**

District	Name of village	Social group	No. of households surveyed
Lucknow	Basaha (less than 500 - 600 households)	Muslim	2
		SC	29
		OBC	38
		Others	6
Total			75
	Khushalganj (number of households in the range of 1000 - 2000)	Muslim	20
		SC	25
		OBC	17
		Others	13
Total			75

Varanasi	Rohania (less than 500 - 600 households)	Muslim	17
		SC	30
		OBC	20
		Others	8
Total			75
	Sharnath (number of households in the range of 1000 - 2000)	Muslim	13
		SC	15
		OBC	30
		Others	17
Total			75

The total sample size for the primary survey was 1000 households – 500 households from each state. Out of 500 households, 300 households were selected from rural areas, and 200 households were selected from urban locations (given that two-thirds of the population reside in rural areas). In each state, four villages were surveyed, implying a sample size of 75 from each village. These 75 households from each village belonged to different social groups, and the sample proportion was similar to the distribution of households across social groups in the village.

In each state, the primary household survey was conducted in both rural and urban locations. A household level questionnaire was prepared to collect information on basic amenities, demographic particulars, occupational pattern of adult household members, problems and constraints faced by adult female members regarding participation in the labour market, participation of females in various skill training programmes, participation of females in household decision-making, and time-use of adult female members in both economic and non-economic activities. This household questionnaire was canvassed in both rural and urban areas, and a conscious effort was made to ensure that the primary respondent was an adult female member of the household who was willing to cooperate with the investigators. Even though basic information (demographic particulars, occupational pattern) was collected for all members of the household, the focus of the questionnaire was on adult female members for whom additional information was collected related to problems and constraints faced by them regarding participation in the labour market, participation in various skill training programmes, participation in household decision-making, and their time allocation into different activities (economic and non-economic).

## Chapter 4

# Primary Survey: The Broad Setting and Research Questions

### 4.1 The setting

Female employment not only has a positive effect on individual quality of life, but it also significantly improves the living standard of the entire household (Subbarao and Rainey, 1993; Dreze and Sen, 1989). Further, drawing women into the labour force by imparting necessary skill training is important for the country as a whole in order to reap the benefits of demographic dividend. In some respects, increasing participation of females in the labour force and workforce is a signal of rising women empowerment. However, growing female employment might also be the outcome of an adverse economic shock.

As noted above, female employment in India has been declining since the mid-eighties and this process has quickened in the second half of the last decade. This, in a sense, was unusual because this was the period of fastest economic growth ever. In order to investigate the factors behind this trend, various authors have suggested reasons, which have been summarized in Chapter 1 in the form of pull factors, push factors, and measurement errors. In a vast country like India where there are considerable regional variations, there are likely to be a multitude of factors determining outcomes in the labour market. The primary survey was conducted to unearth some of the factors determining female participation in the labour market in the selected regions.

Some policy-makers have raised apprehensions regarding the validity of NSS Employment and Unemployment Survey results. However, the intention of this study is not to go into the measurement issues or any other technical aspect of the NSS employment and unemployment survey. Rather this work is intended to understand activity pattern of females along with their possible determinants, the nature of constraints and problems that females face, and what the policy measures for improving female employment can be. In order to find plausible explanations to the abovementioned questions, primary surveys were undertaken in certain specific locations (the detailed methodology was already discussed in Chapter 3). It is important to note that this study is by no means nationally representative. The findings that emerge from this study are specific to the locations where the primary surveys have been conducted.

As already pointed out, one of the primary motivations behind this study is the evidence thrown up by national level sample studies (NFHS, NSSO) indicating a decline in female employment over the years, and more so in the second half of the first decade. This finding is clearly contrary to the persistence of high incidence of poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. Though the incidence of poverty has come down (with 22 per cent of the population living below the poverty line according to the NSS 68th Round Survey on Consumption Expenditure), in terms of absolute number almost 270 million people are living below the poverty line. The incidence of poverty was significantly higher in Uttar Pradesh with 60 million people living below the poverty line (which accounted for 30 per cent of the population in the state), while it was lower than the national average in Gujarat (17 per cent of the population in Gujarat resided below the poverty line). It must be pointed out that poverty estimates are subject to a lot of criticism on methodological grounds, and it is argued that actual estimates of poverty are much higher than what is reported on the basis of the poverty line. In fact, it is argued that the poverty line itself is a flawed one.

As per the Global Hunger Index (GHI), India's rank was 65 out of the 79 countries for which this index was calculated (IFPRI, 2012). This was a marginal improvement over the 66th position which it held in 2008. Across states in terms of hunger index, Uttar Pradesh ranked 9 and Gujarat ranked 13 out of 17 States

for which this index was calculated (IFPRI, 2009). This result is clearly surprising for a state like Gujarat, which is industrially one of the most advanced states in the country and is often depicted as a model state in the media.

The analysis of secondary data shows that, in Gujarat, growth has not resulted in more employment opportunities for females, while in Uttar Pradesh the lack of employment opportunities for females can be attributed to the general backwardness of the state. Further, there seems to be a contradiction between poverty and other measures living standard, implying that a considerable section of above the poverty line population might have a poor overall standard of living as indicated by various indices of livelihood (including GHI, HDI). The immediate question is how do women withdraw from the workforce despite such economic hardships?

## **4.2 Research questions**

Along with the trend in declining female employment, the same NSSO surveys and other national level surveys indicate an increase in real wages, and greater participation along with increasing continuation of females in education. Therefore, could it be the case that the positive income-effect due to higher real wages and positive outcomes of educational programmes (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in particular) are responsible for withdrawal of females from the labour market? This leads to a hypothesis that there are enough work opportunities for females and they enter the labour market only at times of economic distress, and choose not to work under the influence of a positive socio-economic effect. This broad hypothesis leads to a series of questions that motivated this work. Some of the research questions investigated were:

- What are the major activities of females with different levels of education?
- Does attainment of education ensure better work opportunities for females?
- If they are working, what are the occupations in which they are employed?
- Do women get adequate remuneration in the occupations in which they are employed?
- What problems do women encounter as a result of their participation in the labour market?
- Does household responsibility deter female participation in the workforce?

Understanding the types of work women are involved in, the problems they face in the labour market, and the factors constraining their participation in the labour market, are important in diagnosing the factors leading to poverty and inequality. Also, such an understanding would help policy-makers in promoting policies aimed at improving the living standards. The primary household survey was designed to find a possible explanation for these questions.

The following section tries to explain why such a study could not have been possible purely based on a large-scale dataset that primarily captures quantitative variables.

## **4.3 Necessity of a primary survey**

In addition to the demographic characteristics of the individuals, the Employment and Unemployment Survey conducted by the NSSO provides information on employment status, occupational characteristics, wages and salaries, and participation in any association or union. Given the wide range of information provided by these large-scale national surveys, broad patterns and trends of employment and unemployment across different states and regions of India can be analysed. However, these trends and patterns are outcomes of fairly complex socio-economic relations, which often work within the broad framework of

social hierarchies, traditional norms, and social, political and economic settings in the neighbourhood. For instance, whether a female will remain in the workforce will not only depend on her educational status and skill training, but will also be influenced by her household responsibility, traditional customs and norms, hierarchies prevalent in her society, availability and work opportunities in suitable jobs (as approved in the larger social context) and a host of qualitative dimensions that have both a socio-economic setting as well as a historical precedence. The objective of undertaking this primary research was to capture some of these qualitative determinants (in addition to the quantitative measures) that influence female participation in labour market.

In this study, in addition to the quantitative dimensions of employment, certain qualitative factors were analysed:

- Work history of females to find out whether certain social phenomenon had any influence on their participation in labour market
- Kinds of support/disincentives that females received/encountered from their families and neighbours resulting in their participation/withdrawal from the labour market
- Difficulties and constraints faced by females in their pursuit of economic activities
- Extent to which females participate in household decision making
- Social norms and customs and other socio-economic considerations that go into decision making regarding female participation in the labour market
- Females own perception about improving their employability
- Daily time disposition of females into different activities that might have a bearing on their labour market participation

In summary, a detailed understanding of both qualitative and quantitative information is necessary to understand outcomes that are indicated by large-scale surveys. Large-scale surveys by various government agencies can, at best, provide estimates of certain well defined quantitative variables. However, these are, typically, inadequate to capture the interactions, particularly between qualitative variables. One of the primary objectives of this field-based study was to capture the interactions between the qualitative variables that influence female participation in the labour market.

#### **4.4 Organization of primary survey findings**

The findings of the primary survey are presented in the following four chapters. Chapter 5 analyses major activity of adult female members based on their level of education. The motive is to see if there is any pattern to female participation in the workforce depending on their level of education. The following chapter (Chapter 6) analyses employment opportunities and conditions of work in the study locations. The objective is to see if attaining a certain level of education helps in getting better quality jobs. Chapter 6 also analyses remunerations that females in different occupations received. Women are often burdened with multiple responsibilities and, therefore, Chapter 7 discusses the problems that women encounter at the workplace and at home regarding their participation in the labour market. Finally, the next chapter (Chapter 8) looks into the aspect of time disposition of females, and analyses time-use of working females (in different occupations) into economic and non-economic activities. The last chapter (Chapter 9) provides some concluding remarks along with policy recommendations.

# Chapter 5

## Education and Major Activity of Females

### 5.1 Introduction

Education, identified in the literature as one of the important pull factors restricting female employment, is the subject of analysis in this chapter. As Rangarajan et al. (2011) observed that of the total decline in workforce between 2004-05 and 2009-10, 44 per cent was on account of people who opted out of the labour force to pursue education. In this chapter, educational attainment of females belonging to different social groups in the study locations (Section 5.2) is analysed, followed by an analysis of major economic activities of females with different educational levels belonging to different social groups (Section 5.3). The next section analyses age group-wise classification of females into different occupations (Section 5.4). The last section summarises some broad findings of the analysis presented in this chapter.

### 5.2 Educational attainment of adult females

The incidence of illiteracy was still quite high among females both in rural and urban areas despite significant improvements in literacy rates in the last two decades. There was a gradual decline in the proportion of females educated at successively higher standards. This decline was, however, the sharpest from secondary to higher secondary level (Table 5.1). Informal discussion with the villagers revealed that attaining secondary education was an important factor for girls in getting married. It is a kind of invisible benchmark loaded with social value, even though there was not much expectation of an economic gain in terms of better quality employment (as will be seen later).

With better educational facilities in the urban areas, as can be expected, the proportion of females with higher educational attainment was greater in the urban locations of both the States.

**Table 5.1: Proportion of females (15 years and above) by level of education**

Education	Rural Uttar Pradesh	Rural Gujarat	Urban Uttar Pradesh	Urban Gujarat
Illiterate	38.6	36.8	33.2	28.6
Literate up to primary level	23.3	12.5	23.4	13.0
Secondary	21.5	34.9	19.5	36.9
H. secondary	10.1	8.0	16.5	10.6
Graduate and above	6.4	7.8	7.4	10.9
All	100	100	100	100

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Across social groups, the incidence of illiteracy was much higher in scheduled caste (SC) and scheduled tribe (ST) females and comparatively higher in rural compared to urban areas (Table 5.2). Studies have demonstrated that literate women generally have better understanding of nutrition and health care practices and, therefore, contribute significantly towards a healthy society. Mother's literacy was crucially linked to child's health. The correlation between female illiteracy and incidence of poverty was quite strong both in an economic sense and a broader sense of deprivation (UNESCO, 2006).<sup>2</sup>

At the other extreme, the proportion of females with higher educational attainment was higher in the case of other (general category) females. The sharp decline in the proportion of females with higher-secondary education relative to those with secondary education was a common phenomenon across all social groups (more pronounced in case of SCs and STs) and as mentioned before, it has more to do with the psychological and social norm of improving the chances of marriage for a girl.

<sup>2</sup>UNESCO 2006. Literacy for Life. EFA Global Monitoring Report. UNESCO, Paris

**Table 5.2: Percentage distribution of females (15 years and above) by education level, by social group (%)**

Social group	Level of education	Rural Uttar Pradesh	Urban Uttar Pradesh	Rural Gujarat	Urban Gujarat
Scheduled Caste					
	Illiterate	53.3	45.3	25.8	43.5
	Primary or below	22.2	17.0	6.5	11.6
	Up to secondary	17.8	22.6	38.7	31.9
	H. secondary	2.2	3.8	12.9	4.3
	Graduate & above	4.4	11.3	16.1	8.7
Other Backward Classes					
	Illiterate	39.4	32.5	43.3	27.5
	Primary or below	23.0	24.8	13.1	12.3
	Up to secondary	25.3	22.2	31.8	38.2
	H. secondary	4.5	7.7	7.0	11.8
	Graduate & above	7.8	12.8	4.8	10.3
Others (General)					
	Illiterate	31.1	26.3	18.0	13.3
	Primary or below	22.0	25.7	13.2	16.8
	Up to secondary	19.5	17.3	42.3	40.7
	H. secondary	10.4	8.9	11.6	14.2
	Graduate & above	17.1	21.8	14.8	15.0
Scheduled Tribe (ST)					
	Illiterate	26.3	40	56.7	54.1
	Primary or below	47.4	46.7	11.1	8.1
	Up to secondary	5.3	13.3	28.9	27.0
	H. secondary	21.1*	0.0	2.2	5.4
	Graduate & above	0.0	0.0	1.1	5.4

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

Note: \* - There are very few STs in UP

### 5.3 Major activity of adult females by educational attainment

On the basis of the primary survey, poor living conditions pushed women to seek employment, and widespread illiteracy particularly among SCs and STs, implied that a higher proportion of females belonging to these two social groups ended up doing low-end jobs. Therefore, the proportion of illiterate females working was much higher compared to females attaining relatively more education in the study regions of both the states. It is noted that the proportion of females working was much higher than that shown in the NSS data show (although there are some differences in definition). However, there was some difference regarding the recall period between NSSO surveys and the primary survey that was conducted for this study. NSS definition is based on major time criteria for the last one year (and also 30 days in the reference year for subsidiary employment), while the definition used in this study is major time criteria for the last one month from the date of survey. The obvious advantage of the shorter recall period is the better response.

In UP, as per NSS 2009-10, female LFPR (15-59) was 28.2 per cent in the rural area and 11.8 in the urban

area. In the following table, major activity of females 15 years and above from the surveyed villages is considered according to their level of education. Overall, 47 per cent of females in the age group of 14 and above were working in the surveyed villages in UP (Table 5.3). In urban locations, it was 48 per cent (Table 5.4).

**Table 5.3: Major activity of females (15 years and above) by education level, rural  
Uttar Pradesh, 2012**

Education	% working	% hh chores	% edu	% other
Illiterate	55.8	24.1	n.a.	20.1
Primary & below	49.8	19.6	13.7	16.9
Middle	42.6	16.8	26.3	14.3
Secondary	28.1	12.5	43.8	15.6
H. secondary	41.4	17.1	37.1	4.4
Graduate	39.1	17.2	34.4	9.3
Post graduate & above	32.7	16.4	30.9	20
Total	47.3	19.8	16.5	16.4

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 5.4: Major activity of females (15 years and above) by education level, urban  
Uttar Pradesh, 2012**

Education	% working	% hh chores	% edu	% other
Illiterate	53.7	22.7	n.a.	23.6
Primary & below	51.0	19.2	19.9	9.9
Middle	46.8	11.9	33.9	7.4
Secondary	33.9	13.6	39.0	13.5
H. secondary	39.2	12.2	39.2	9.4
Graduate	41.9	20.9	22.1	15.1
Post graduate & above	65.1	14.0	14.0	6.9
Total	48.4	17.9	19.5	14.2

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

In the urban areas of Uttar Pradesh, the relationship between the level of education and the proportion of females working was U-shaped. Illiterates have to work for their survival and, with improvement in educational attainment, females tend to continue in education provided there are opportunities around. Such opportunities exist in urban areas and those attaining a slightly higher educational level continue to remain in education with the hope of getting a better job. Therefore, lower participation of females at higher levels of education is a positive phenomenon as it could possibly ensure better quality jobs for the educated females in future. Also, females with post-graduate and above level of education have greater opportunities of work in the urban areas particularly in the service sector. Analysing the long-term trend of female employment in urban India, Klasen and Pieters (2012) observed that participation of poorly educated women in the labour force was driven by necessity, while employment opportunities determined the participation of highly educated females into the labour force. In other words, higher wages acted as a pull factor for a minority of well-educated females into the labour force.

Gujarat has a higher LFPR and WFPR compared to the national average, and this is reflected in the study regions where two-thirds of females aged 15 years and above were in the workforce (Tables 5.5 and 5.6).

**Table 5.5: Major activity of females (15 years and above) by education level, rural Gujarat, 2012% hh chores% edu**

Education	% working	% hh chores	% edu	% unemp	% other
Illiterate	74.6	0.9	n.a.	17	24.5
Primary & below	80.7	0.0	1.1	17	18.2
Middle	75.7	0.5	6.5	19	17.3
Secondary	60.5	0.4	21.5	32	17.6
H. secondary	45.6	0.0	35.0	26	19.4
Graduate	38.8	0.0	53.8	17	7.4
Post graduate & above	44.9	0.0	34.7	30	20.4
Total	66.8	0.4	13.6	19	19.2

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 5.6: Major activity of females (15 years and above) by education level, urban Gujarat, 2012**

Education	% working	% hh chores	% edu	% unemp	% other
Illiterate	70.2	0.6	n.a.	19	10.2
Primary & below	76.0	0.0	0.0	20	4
Middle	73.6	0.6	8.6	16	1.2
Secondary	61.2	2.4	21.4	14	1
H. Secondary	65.0	0.0	25.0	8	2
Graduate	62.3	0.0	31.1	7	0
Post Graduate & above	53.3	0.0	26.7	15	5
Total	67.5	0.8	13.3	17.4	1

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

There was a very crucial difference between the two states regarding the activity status of women as reported by them. It is noted that the proportion of females who reported domestic responsibilities as their major activity was quite low in Gujarat. This does not mean that women in Gujarat had less domestic responsibilities. It signifies an important characteristic about how women identify themselves. Women in the study regions of Gujarat considered themselves to be a part of the labour force and, hence, identified themselves as unemployed even if they were doing only household activities. Household chores were the major activity of such unemployed females. It was primarily due to non-availability of suitable job opportunities or the burden of household responsibilities that kept them out of the workforce. This was in sharp contrast to females in UP who reported household chores as their major activity, and identified themselves not as unemployed but as housewives whose principal responsibility lies within the threshold of domestic boundary.

Effectively, for both sets of females (those reported to be unemployed and those reported to be primarily involved in household chores) the activity status is the same. They were unemployed with household chores as their principal activity. The two separate categories helped in understanding women's own perception about their own activity status. In a way, the category unemployed with household chores as the principal activity is a summation of the two categories (Table 5.7).

**Table 5.7: Proportion of females (15 years and above) reporting as unemployed and primarily involved in household chores in the study regions (%)**

State	Reporting unemployed (%)	Reporting household chores (%)	Unemployed with household chores as the principal activity (%)
Uttar Pradesh	1.3	27	28.3
Gujarat	17	1.2	18.2

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

#### **5.4 Age group-wise classification of females into different activities**

If distribution of females by different activity in specific age groups is considered, it is observed that the majority of children up to 14 years of age were in school, or were too young to go to school. The proportion of children up to 14 years of age in education was higher in Gujarat compared to that in Uttar Pradesh (Tables 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11). The difference between the two states was largely accounted for by age group-wise distribution of females – in Uttar Pradesh within the age group of up to 14 years, a relatively higher share of children were too young (and were yet to start going to school) compared to that in Gujarat. For the next two age groups (15 to 29, and 30 to 59) the proportion of females who were working was much higher in Gujarat compared to that in Uttar Pradesh (underlying higher female work participation in Gujarat as compared to that in Uttar Pradesh). In other words, a higher proportion of working-age females were gainfully employed in Gujarat compared to that in Uttar Pradesh. In rural areas where the majority of the population were still dependent on agriculture, higher agricultural growth in Gujarat provided more employment opportunities for the working age females. In the urban areas, growth of industries has ensured higher participation of working-age females in the workforce. However, in Gujarat, one-fifth of working age females reported to be unemployed, implying improving workforce participation rates for females would require greater creation of employment opportunities in the non-agricultural sector.

Also, in Uttar Pradesh (both rural and urban), the proportion of females in the age-group of 15 to 29 years who were into education was one-third, which was much higher than that in Gujarat (one-fifth). Therefore, the education factor contributing towards low female WFPR was much stronger in Uttar Pradesh than in Gujarat. So, in Gujarat, continuation in education does not seem to be a significant deterrent to workforce participation, and hence, the declining trend in female employment observed in Gujarat (from the national level sample data as discussed in Chapter 2) does not seem to be influenced much by the increasing participation of females in education.

Further it is noted that, in Tables 5.8 to 5.11, the proportion of females under the category “Others” for age groups less than 14 years, and 60 years and above was quite high. For the age group less than 14 years “Others” included those who were yet to join school. For the age group 60 years and above, “Others” included those who were inactive due to illness or old age.

**Table 5.8: Percentage distribution of females by age and by activity status, rural Uttar Pradesh**

Age Group	Working for pay/profit/household gain	Household chores	Education	Others	All
Less than 15 years	1.6	2.9	63.5	32.0	100.0
15 to 29 years	21.8	40.0	32.4	5.8	100.0
30 to 59 years	39.0	49.5	0.9	10.6	100.0
60 years & above	20.0	42.9	0.0	37.1	100.0
All age groups	20.1	30.5	31.9	17.6	100.0

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 5.9: Percentage distribution of females by age and by activity status, urban Uttar Pradesh**

Age Group	Working for pay/ profit/household gain	Household chores	Education	Others	All
Less than 15 years	1.4	2.7	63.9	32.0	100.0
15 to 29 years	35.8	21.9	38.4	4.0	100.0
30 to 59 years	40.4	53.6	0.7	5.3	100.0
60 years & above	15.2	33.3	3.0	48.5	100.0
All age groups	25.3	26.8	32.0	16.0	100.0

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 5.10: Percentage distribution of females by age and by activity status, rural Gujarat**

Age Group	Working for pay/ profit/household gain	Unemployed	Education	Others	All
Less than 15 years	4.6	4.1	71.1	20.3	100.0
15 to 29 years	55.2	21.5	21.1	2.3	100.0
30 to 59 years	77.1	20.3	0.4	2.3	100.0
60 years & above	23.9	19.7	1.4	54.9	100.0
All age groups	47.2	16.6	24.8	11.4	100.0

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 5.11: Percentage distribution of females by age and by activity status, urban Gujarat**

Age Group	Working for pay/profit/ household gain	Unemployed	Education	Others	All
Less than 15 years	1.7	5.1	76.9	16.2	100.0
15 to 29 years	56.9	21.3	19.1	2.7	100.0
30 to 59 years	74.7	20.3	0.0	4.9	100.0
60 years & above	32.4	17.6	0.0	50.0	100.0
All age groups	49.1	17.1	24.2	9.6	100.0

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

## 5.5 Summary

Despite centrally sponsored schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan by the central government, and scholarships for girls implemented by certain state governments, the incidence of illiteracy among females was still quite high and a greater proportion of less-educated females were in the workforce, both in rural and urban areas. This is clearly distress-driven, with the objective of adding on to the family income. The proportion of females working was higher in the case of females with post-graduate qualifications, clearly obtained with the objective of career progression in the service sector. Urban UP seems to be replicating the U-shaped hypothesis – at the lower end of the educational ladder, high female participation in the workforce seems to be driven by distress, at relatively higher levels of education females withdraw from the labour force (or do not enter). This implies an inter-play between social stigma (of participating in a low end job with relatively higher education), cultural obligation and to some extent positive income effect (females who can attain higher education generally belong to well-off families, which are not in

dire financial need of female members earning), and on attaining an even higher level of education their participation in the workforce increases in relatively well paying, decent, and service sector jobs (with some career goals in mind). The determinants of female participation in the labour force vary across different sections of the population. Generally, participation of females from poorer households with low education levels and older women in the labour force was distress driven, while more educated and younger women have discouraged worker effect at times of economic distress (Sabarwal et al., 2011). Therefore, at times of economic slowdown or adverse economic shocks, increasing participation of poor- and less- educated women and withdrawal (forced or voluntary) of well-educated women happen simultaneously. The net effect is usually context specific and very difficult to generalize in a vast country like India. Between the two states, even though Gujarat had a higher female work participation rate, creation of employment opportunities outside agriculture was of vital importance in Gujarat (as in case of Uttar Pradesh) in order to address the issue of youth unemployment.

Among the economically active population, the proportion of females who were working was much higher in Gujarat, indicating greater employment opportunities in both rural and urban areas compared to that in Uttar Pradesh. However, the fact that close to one-fifth of adult females identified themselves as unemployed makes the case for creating more employment opportunities that can provide decent and productive employment, particularly for those who attained a higher education level.

An interesting finding of this survey was the difference in the manner in which females in the two states identified themselves. In Gujarat, females identified themselves as unemployed, while in Uttar Pradesh it was more in an implied manner, generally reporting household chores to be their primary responsibility. In other words, females in Gujarat had a greater stake in identifying themselves to be a part of the labour force rather than being responsible only for household chores. Females in the study locations in Uttar Pradesh had a much more conservative outlook in considering themselves to be a part of the labour force

# Chapter 6

## Employment Opportunities

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the types of employment that adult female members were engaged in in the study locations. In a sense, this chapter provides an analysis of the push factor explaining declining female participation in the labour market.

Even though the connection between choice of occupation and an individual's social group has become blurred over the years with the increasing pace of urbanization and spread of education, some patterns of occupational choice among social groups could be discernible (Section 6.2). With the spread of education, and people moving out of agriculture, educational attainment is increasingly becoming an important determinant of employment. The analysis of educational attainment and choice of occupation is the subject matter of Section 6.3. Section 6.4 looks into remunerations from different occupations and analyses the variation across gender, and rural vis-à-vis urban areas. The last section (Section 6.5) summarizes some major observations of this chapter.

### 6.2 Employment opportunities across social groups

Educational attainment had an impact on occupational pattern across all social groups. SCs and STs were characterized by low educational attainment and, therefore, the majority of working females in these two social groups were employed as daily wage labourers in agriculture, construction and textile factory (Table 6.1). The only exception was in rural Gujarat where the majority of SC females reported to be unemployed.

Females belonging to other social group (general category) had relatively higher level of educational attainment and, therefore, they were generally not in daily wage labour in agriculture or construction. In rural areas of Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, the majority of females belonging to other social groups were primarily working on their own field. Agricultural operations were mainly taken care of by females as male members had to travel outside the village and were employed in various non-agricultural occupations, mostly in the urban centres. Also in many cases even though there was not enough land, females were barred from working outside on account of family/caste obligations. In urban areas, females belonging to other social groups worked as vendors, traders, home-based work where they mostly worked along with other household members. In urban areas, STs mostly worked as domestic workers (one-fourth of ST females in urban Gujarat were working as domestic workers).

Clearly, there was social group-wise segregation of occupation guided by educational attainment and, to some extent, social customs. SCs and STs were deprived in terms of material wellbeing which was manifested in lower human development achievements. Because of economic distress, females in these social groups had to enter the labour force quite early and, as a result, were trapped into physically exhausting and low-paying jobs. In other words, in most cases, the occupational choice for females belonging to SC and ST social groups was restricted to manual wage labour. In the case of other social groups, females were either in non-manual wage employment, or working on their own land (in rural areas), or were barred from working outside due to social customs.

**Table 6.1: Percentage distribution of females (15 years and above) by occupation and social group (%)**

Region	Social group occupation	SC	OBC	Other	ST
Rural UP					
	Agriculture labourer	59.4	41.1	3.2	-
	Construction labourer	0.0	6.2	5.1	-
	Home-based worker	13.0	30.2	24.8	-
	Education sector worker	19.4	17.0	23.5	-
	Unpaid family worker	0.0	5.5	43.4	-
	Others	8.2	0.0	0.0	-
Urban UP					
	Construction labourer	0.0	0.9	0.6	-
	Domestic worker	43.6	41.9	0.6	-
	Education sector	22.2	29.1	19.3	-
	Home-based worker	30.2	21.0	56.6	-
	Others	4.0	0.0	20.0	-
Rural Gujarat					
	Agriculture labourer	16.1	22.6	2.1	61.1
	Diamond Factory labour	3.2	43.3	50.8	0.0
	Textile factory labour	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Education sector worker	21.0	11.0	18.0	3.6
	Farmer at own field	50.0	21.0	28.3	29.6
	Others	6.5	2.1	0.8	5.7
Urban Gujarat					
	Construction labourer	33.3	12.7	0.0	27.0
	Textile factory labourer	30.4	2.7	38.9	13.5
	Home-based worker	7.2	56.4	24.8	0.0
	Diamond factory labourer	23.0	5.4	25.0	0.0
	Others*	6.0	35.2	11.3	59.5

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

\* Note:- Others include street vendor, trader

The majority of females (15 years and above) belonging to SC and ST social groups were in casual wage employment in both rural and urban areas (Table 6.2). In terms of the other social group (general castes), the majority were in self-employment except in urban Gujarat where diamond factory, textile factory and the service sector provided employment opportunities for urban females.

**Table 6.2: Percentage distribution of working females (15 years and above) by work status, by social group (%)**

	Work status	SC	OBC	Other	ST
Rural UP	Self-employed	14.3	38.9	52.2	-
	Regular salary employment	0.0	8.3	13.0	-
	Casual wage labourer	66.7	25.0	8.7	-
	Others	19.0	27.8	26.1	-
	All	100.0	100.0	100.0	-
Urban UP	Self-employed	14.3	41.9	53.4	-
	Regular salary employment	14.3	3.2	3.4	-
	Casual wage labourer	71.4	54.8	8.6	-
	Others	0.0	0.0	34.5	-
	All	100.0	100.0	100.0	-
Rural Gujarat	Self-employed	31.3	34.0	54.8	8.5
	Regular salary employment	6.3	6.8	6.5	0.0
	Casual wage labourer	56.3	48.7	26.9	87.3
	Others	6.3	10.5	11.8	4.2
	All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Urban Gujarat	Self-employed	12.8	31.3	30.3	-
	Regular salary employment	8.5	9.6	19.7	-
	Casual wage labourer	68.1	46.1	30.3	-
	Others	10.6	13.0	19.7	-
	All	100.0	100.0	100.0	-

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

### 6.3 Education and employment opportunities

The occupations in which women with different levels of education were engaged in the study locations were identified. The vast majority of working illiterates in both rural and urban areas were working as casual wage labour (Table 6.3 and 6.4). A small proportion of them were home-based workers (both earning as well as working as helpers to other members of the family without any wage payment). Among the occupational category “Others”, most of them were either street vendors or engaged in unpaid family work.

**Table 6.3: Main occupation of working illiterate (rural Uttar Pradesh)**

Occupation	% of workers
Unpaid family worker in own farm	20.1
Agricultural labourer	23.6
Construction labourer	14.9
Other labourer	12.5
Home-based worker	6.3
Street vendor	2.6
Trader	1.1
Others	8.7

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

**Table 6.4: Main occupation of working illiterates (urban Uttar Pradesh)**

Occupation	% of workers
Construction labourer	28.4
Textile factory labourer	21.6
Home-based worker	8.6
Domestic worker	10.3
Others	31.0

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Among the illiterates in Gujarat, 75 per cent were working in rural areas and 70 per cent were working in urban areas. As in the case of Uttar Pradesh, casual wage employment was the dominant form of employment for the illiterates in both rural and urban areas (Tables 6.5 and 6.6). Gujarat is one of the very few states in India that has demonstrated a significantly high rate of agricultural growth in the last decade, and so higher employment in agriculture (male or female) in Gujarat is not surprising. This, along with considerable boom in the construction sector, was where most of the female illiterate workers obtained employment in Gujarat.

**Table 6.5: Main occupation of working illiterates (rural Gujarat)**

Occupation	% of workers
Own farm worker	27.6
Agricultural labourer	54.8
Others	17.6

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 6.6: Main occupation of working illiterates (urban Gujarat)**

Occupation	% of workers
Construction labourer	39.8
Textile factory labourer	10.2
Home-based worker	10.2
Domestic worker	10.2
Others	29.7

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

As the level of education improves, the proportion of casual wage labourers declines – in rural areas the proportion of home-based workers increases, while in urban areas, some primary-educated females were self-employed as traders/vendors (Tables 6.7 and 6.8). Among the occupation category “Others”, most of them were in unpaid family work, and some were vendors (in rural areas).

**Table 6.7: Main occupation of literates up to primary (rural Uttar Pradesh)**

Occupation	% of workers
Own farm worker	12.4
Agricultural labourer	18.6
Construction labourer	9.7
Other labourer	9.7
Home-based worker	14.5
Others	35.2

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 6.8: Main occupation of literates up to primary (urban Uttar Pradesh )**

Occupation	% of workers
Construction labourer	13.0
Textile factory labourer	40.3
Trader / vendor	15.6
Domestic worker	3.9
Others	27.3

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Females with primary education in rural Gujarat, in addition to own farm work and agricultural labour, were also employed in diamond polishing work within the village itself. Among the occupation category “Others”, most of them were in unpaid family work, and other labour (in rural areas).

**Table 6.9: Main occupation of literates up to primary (rural Gujarat)**

Occupation	% of workers
Own farm worker	30.5
Agricultural labourer	29.8
Home-based (diamond polishing work)	15.9
Others	39.7

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

In urban areas, with primary education, very few females were domestic workers and, hence, they were grouped together as “Others” (Table 6.10).

**Table 6.10: Main occupation of literates up to primary (urban Gujarat)**

Occupation	% of workers
Construction labourer	26.0
Textile factory labourer	24.7
Home-based worker	17.8
Others	31.5

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Historically, diamond cutting and polishing work in Surat can be traced back to the 1950s, when there were around 100 workshops employing about 500 workers. Persistent drought during the mid-sixties led to large scale in-migration of workers in the Surat city from Saurashtra region and, in particular, from the District of Bhavnagar (coincidentally both Bhavnagar and Surat districts were the study locations in Gujarat, though this was not known). Since then, the diamond cutting and polishing industry expanded phenomenally and, during the mid-eighties, the number of units reached 9000 employing around 60000 workers. Some of the migrants returned in Bhavnagar (though the proportion is not known) and established their own workshops in the villages and towns from where they migrated. Setting up a workshop does not require much capital; rather the most important thing is good relation with traders. So, diamond cutting and polishing work provided employment opportunities for a considerable proportion of female workers in the study locations in Gujarat. The females surveyed were involved in diamond polishing work only, which was more of a kind of unskilled work. Diamond cutting required some degree of skill. The females surveyed were not in the diamond cutting activity at all. Even though diamond-polishing work was classified as a part of home-based work, in some cases women went to small workshops (which were a part of some household) within the village and in such workshops not more than 5-6 women worked together.

This trend continues with middle and secondary education. In urban UP, the proportion of females employed in other activities increases – and a large share is continuing in education who also start taking care of household chores (Tables 6.11 and 6.12). They are the ones located at the downward bending part of the U-shaped curve mentioned in Chapter 5. Their non-participation in the workforce was due to their continuation in education (in rural areas of UP, work opportunities for post-graduates were extremely limited and so the U-shaped curve does not exist). Among the occupation category “Others”, most females were in education and unpaid family work.

**Table 6.11: Main occupation of literates with middle and secondary education (urban Uttar Pradesh)**

Occupation	% of workers
Textile factory labourer	23.9
Trader / vendor	21.1
Construction labourer	7.0
Others	47.9

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 6.12: Main occupation of literates with middle and secondary education ( rural Uttar Pradesh )**

Occupation	% of workers
Own farm worker	18.2
Agricultural labourer	10.1
Construction labourer	13.1
Textile factory labourer	12.1
Trader / vendor	10.1
Others	36.4

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

With a higher level of education, a lower proportion of females were working as agricultural labour and those working in diamond polishing work increased (Table 6.13). Diamond polishing work is manual labour and does not require any educational qualification. The shift in favour of diamond polishing work might be out of self-dignity without much change in earning. In urban areas, with a secondary education, females obtained employment in clerical work, and a few of them were also self-employed. Clearly, there was upward mobility in occupation with a higher educational level. Among the occupation category “Others”, most females were in education, unpaid family work, and some were vendors (in rural areas).

**Table 6.13: Main occupation of literates with middle and secondary education (rural Gujarat)**

Occupation	% of workers
Own farm worker	20.8
Agricultural labourer	15.5
Diamond polishing worker	24.6
Others	39.1

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

<sup>3</sup> Breman, J. (1996). Footloose Labour. Cambridge University Press, UK

**Table 6.14: Main Occupation of literates with middle and secondary education  
(urban Gujarat)**

Occupation	% of workers
Diamond factory labourer	12.2
Textile factory labourer	10.2
Home-based worker	19.1
Clerical worker	6.1
Trader / vendor	4.5
Others	48.0

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Females with education beyond secondary level were no longer working as wage labour in agriculture or construction sectors. Some of them were working as casual wage labour in textile factories (Table 6.15). In textile factories, there are different stages of production and it is important to identify at which part of the value chain they are employed. The task involved in each occupation was not really captured in this survey, and so it is not possible to make any statement with certainty. Among the occupation category “Others”, most females were in unpaid family work, and continuing with education.

**Table 6.15: Main occupation of literates with high school and college education  
(rural Uttar Pradesh)**

Occupation	% of workers
Own farm worker	9.3
Trader / vendor	18.5
Clerical worker	16.7
Textile factory labourer	9.3
Others	46.3

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 6.16: Main occupation of literates with high school and college education  
(urban Uttar Pradesh)**

Occupation	% of workers
Clerical worker	13.8
Trader / vendor	12.3
Textile factory labourer	20.0
Home-based worker	9.2
Others	44.6

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

With higher secondary and college education, some females in rural Gujarat obtained employment as an Asha worker or Anganwadi worker, or some clerical position in the local panchayat office (Table 6.17). Some of them also obtained employment as para-teachers in elementary schools. Therefore, a relatively active and well-functioning public delivery system can actually generate employment at the local level. In urban areas, females with college or higher secondary education were employed in home based work – zari work and other decorative items (Table 6.18). This work was available on piece-rate basis, and though there was little remunerative, it gave them an opportunity to get involved in activities other than household chores.

**Table 6.17: Main occupation of literates with high school and college education  
(rural Gujarat)**

Occupation	% of workers
Own farm worker	25.6
Clerical worker	7.7
Diamond factory labourer	7.7
Textile factory labourer	9.0
Trader /vendor	5.1
Others	44.9

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 6.18: Main occupation of literates with high school and college education  
(urban Gujarat)**

Occupation	% of workers
Textile factory worker	10.4
Diamond factory labourer	16.5
Home-based worker	31.2
Clerical worker	9.9
Others	32.0

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Females with a post-graduate degree and above were mostly occupied with household responsibilities in rural UP. In urban areas, on the other hand, due to more employment opportunities they were employed in the service sectors including education (as para-teachers). Among others, some were continuing with their academic pursuit while the rest were occupied with household responsibilities. Among the occupational category “Others”, most of them were in unpaid family work and household chores. Females with post-graduate degree and above were primarily engaged in domestic responsibilities in rural Gujarat and, in urban areas, they were employed in the service sector and also some home-based work (Table 6.19).

**Table 6.19: Main occupation of post-graduate & above (urban Uttar Pradesh)**

Occupation	% of workers
Clerical worker	25.0
Education sector	17.9
Others	57.1

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

In rural Gujarat, majority of females primarily involved in household chores were educated below elementary level. It is interesting to note that, in urban areas, one-fourth of females primarily with household responsibilities were educated at least up to graduate level. Greater household responsibility in nuclear families in the urban areas might have kept them out of the workforce. As mentioned earlier, even though females out of the work force reported domestic responsibilities as their principal occupation, they considered themselves to be a part of the labour force and, therefore, identified themselves as unemployed.

If the educational qualification of females (15 years and above) employed in different occupations is considered, it is noticed that ,except for regular salary employment, the majority of females were educated up to elementary level (Tables 6.20 and 6.21). Most of the females in regular salary employment achieved a university degree.

**Table 6.20: Distribution of females (15 years and above) by level of education for different occupation, Uttar Pradesh (%)**

Occupation	Illiterate	Elementary	Secondary	H. secondary	Graduate & above	All
Own farm worker	54.7	25.0	9.4	1.6	9.4	100
Trader / vendor	25.0	53.6	3.6	10.7	7.1	100
Home-based worker	45.6	36.8	2.1	4.7	10.9	100
Casual wage worker	60.8	38.1	1.0	0.0	0.0	100
Domestic worker	62.5	31.3	6.3	0.0	0.0	100
Regular salary employment	0.0	37.0	3.7	14.8	44.4	100
Others	44.4	30.9	9.9	2.5	12.3	100

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 6.21: Distribution of females (15 years and above) by level of education for different occupation, Gujarat (%)**

Occupation	Illiterate	Elementary	Secondary	H. secondary	Graduate & above	All
Own farm worker	41.5	30.2	17.0	8.5	2.8	100
Trader / vendor	40.0	26.7	26.7	0.0	6.7	100
Home-based worker	14.7	40.0	21.3	16.0	8.0	100
Casual wage worker	54.1	34.7	7.4	2.1	1.7	100
Domestic worker	43.8	31.3	18.8	0.0	6.3	100
Regular salary employment	0.0	5.9	17.6	17.6	58.8	100
Others	20.1	36.6	21.6	10.4	11.2	100

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

From the above analysis, it is noted that the majority of females belonging to SC and ST social groups were in manual wage casual labour and this was primarily due to their lower educational attainment. Females belonging to other social group were mostly into self-employment. Therefore, segregation in the nature of employment based on social group existed and, to a large extent, this segregation was guided by educational attainment. Further, it was clear that the nature of employment (more participation in the service sector) improved once females attained at least higher secondary level. Broadly speaking, attainment of higher education was essential for obtaining better quality employment. However, this process was not continuous and the attainment of a certain minimum threshold standard of education was necessary. In urban Gujarat, the shift away from manual labour happened (at least in some cases) with the attainment of secondary education, while in UP and also in rural Gujarat, this threshold level was at higher secondary level. Therefore, the benefits of education vary across regions and, to a large extent, were dependent on the local economy. However, one over-arching policy recommendation could be to extend financial support (scholarship) to female students at least up to the higher secondary level. The close linkage between education and better job opportunities was highlighted by the World Bank study on employment in South

Asia (World Bank, 2012). The study noted that, in rural India, transition to better jobs was more likely to come with attainment of upper/higher secondary education. The study further noted that “workers with less education were more likely to experience a transition in the opposite direction – from non-farm work to agriculture”. The present study points towards obtaining a university degree as a necessity in obtaining decent regular employment. In order to ensure better employment for females it is necessary to increase their enrolment at college and university level. One way of achieving this is to establish more women’s colleges at the district level with special emphasis on technical and vocational education.

#### **Section 6.4: Days of employment and remuneration**

Section 6.2 observed the segregation of occupation on the basis of educational attainment and social group. SCs and STs with a low level of educational attainment were mostly employed as daily wage labour in agriculture, construction and textile factory. Females belonging to “Other” social group (general category) had a relatively higher level of educational attainment and, therefore, they were generally not in daily wage labour in agriculture or construction. In rural areas of Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, the majority of females belonging to the “Other” social group were primarily working on their own field. Occupational hierarchies were identified and agriculture labour, construction labour, and textile factory labour were located at the bottom of the pyramid. The next layer consisted of home-based worker, and trader/vendor. In urban localities, domestic workers were placed somewhere in between these two groups. On the top of the pyramid were females working in service sector where conditions of employment and wages were comparatively better. An analysis of the days of employment and remuneration in each of these sectors follows.

Though there were variations in terms of work hours, days of employment, and earnings across occupational categories, there were certain common traits that could be observed across all occupations (Tables 6.22 to 6.29). First, average wages for males were higher than that of females. Second, on average, wages in urban areas were higher than those in rural areas. Third, except in agriculture labour and construction labour occupations in rural Uttar Pradesh, there was hardly any difference in days of employment between males and females in other occupations considered here.

The lower wages received by female workers was based on the common mis-conception (without any evidence) of lower productivity. The bargaining power of females vis-à-vis their employers was weakened due to their compulsion to find employment in the vicinity so that they could also fulfil their domestic duties. Also, for security reasons, females avoided travelling far for work. The lower days of employment for females in agriculture and construction labour in rural Uttar Pradesh was due to shrinking employment opportunities in agriculture and non-development of the rural non-farm sector. Locals in the village in Lucknow district, where the focus group discussion was held, pointed to declining agricultural employment over the years primarily due to change in land use. Because of its proximity to urban centres, land value appreciated significantly (Rs. 500, 0000 and above per acre) and large landowners started selling their land to the developers (expectedly for housing units). Therefore, agricultural employment opportunities had reduced, but there has not been a concomitant increase in non-agricultural employment for the villagers. The developers mostly work through contractors who have their own team of workers. Moreover, many construction works were yet to start, even though land transfer had already taken place, leading to a decline in employment opportunities particularly for females in the village.

The decline in agricultural employment opportunities had affected female employment more than male employment. One big advantage of this village was its proximity to urban centres where males could get employment (like construction work, driving, vendors etc.). However, females were left with very little work opportunities other than a few days of employment during transplanting and harvesting seasons in the village. Females in this village preferred not to leave the village for work. This is primarily driven by concerns of household responsibilities and partly by security concerns.

Days of employment and average wages in agriculture for females was higher in rural Gujarat, which is not surprising given Gujarat's significant agricultural growth during the past decade (Table 6.22). But, despite significant agricultural growth, gender differential in wages remained which emphasises the point that growth does not always mean equality. Another important sector that performed well in Gujarat was the textile sector, which was evident from the high wages that workers (both male and female) received compared to their counterparts in Uttar Pradesh (Table 6.23).

**Table 6.22: Average work hours, average days of employment, average earnings for agricultural labourers**

State	Rural / urban	Sex	Avg work hours per day	Avg days of employment Per month	Avg earnings per day (Rs.)
Uttar Pradesh	Rural	Male	7.7	20.0	110.0
		Female	7.6	11.0	65.0
	Urban	Male			
		Female			
Gujarat	Rural	Male	8.5	20.0	125.0
		Female	8.5	16.0	80.0
	Urban	Male			
		Female			

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 6.23: Average work hours, average days of employment, average earnings for textile factory labourers**

State	Rural / urban	Sex	Avg work hours per day	Avg days of employment per month	Avg earnings per day (Rs.)
Uttar Pradesh	Rural	Male	6.2	17.4	93.7
		Female	5.1	22.9	60.5
	Urban	Male	7.3	22.1	94.8
		Female	4.7	22.1	81.4
Gujarat	Rural	Male	10.0	24.8	357.3
		Female	8.0	26.0	115.4
	Urban	Male	9.1	24.9	160.2
		Female	6.9	25.0	94.6

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Gender disparity in terms of wage was lower in the case of construction work. Also, the wage differential between rural and urban areas did not appear to exist. In a way, this points to the boom in the construction sector, both in rural and urban areas, where there is a constant demand for construction workers.

**Table 6.24: Average work hours, average days of employment, average earnings for construction labourers**

State	Rural / urban	Sex	Avg work hours per day	Avg days of employment per month	Avg earnings per day (Rs.)
Uttar Pradesh	Rural	Male	7.7	22.6	188.4
		Female	6.3	16.0	152.5
	Urban	Male	8.2	20.0	160.0
		Female	5.7	26.0	155.0
Gujarat	Rural	Male	7.5	24.7	302.6
		Female			
	Urban	Male	8.7	20.0	184.5
		Female	8.4	15.7	171.4

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Trading was a much more profitable venture for males in urban locations, mostly in the form of small petty shops where females also participated. As the business was in the name of the husband, the contribution of females was in the nature of unpaid family labour. In addition, the distance males could cover on their bicycles was much further than females, increasing the probability of more business and higher incomes (Table 6.25). Among the traders there was wide diversity in terms of capital investment and net returns. In urban Gujarat, average earning of male traders was more than three times their rural counterparts.

**Table 6.25: Average work hours, average days of employment, average earnings for traders**

State	Rural / urban	Sex	Avg work hours per day	Avg days of employment per month	Avg earnings per day (Rs.)
Uttar Pradesh	Rural	Male	8.8	24.6	254
		Female	7.7	25.2	80
	Urban	Male	7.4	25	391
		Female	7.2	25.3	153
Gujarat	Rural	Male	9.8	29.1	304
		Female	7.8	30	138
	Urban	Male	10	26.8	1090
		Female	8	30	215

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Average earning of vendors was relatively lower than the traders and was comparable to daily wage workers. The physical strain in this occupation was somewhat less than manual workers, although earnings were similar. In the case of vendors, significant differences in earnings between male and female as well as between rural and urban areas were observed (Table 6.26).

**Table 6.26: Average work hours, average days of employment, average earnings for vendors**

State	Rural / urban	Sex	Avg work hours per day	Avg days of employment per month	Avg earnings per day (Rs.)
Uttar Pradesh	Rural	Male	7.7	21.6	149
		Female	7.6	26.8	49
	Urban	Male	8.2	24.1	277.5
		Female	7.7	27.3	83.3
Gujarat	Rural	Male	6.2	29	154
		Female			
	Urban	Male	7.6	27.3	206
		Female	30	8.3	94

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

Home-based work for females was quite common in both Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. Household members worked on a piece-rate basis where the trader supplied raw materials and design (chikan work in UP, zari and zardosi work in Gujarat) and involved almost all the members of the household. In cases where males were also involved in the work, it was natural that they would do all the financial dealings with the traders, implying that even though females contributed substantially in terms of time and energy, the economic return accruing to the females was practically zero. In many cases, however, male members of the households were not involved in the work at all (and were working in the urban and peri-urban centres) implying that females had to deal with the traders themselves. Traders on their part took full advantage of women's time compulsion and compulsion to earn a source of living in the household itself by degrading the quality of their work and paying them less.

In the village in Lucknow District of Uttar Pradesh where the FGD was conducted, an important source of employment for females in the village was the *chikan* work (a kind of embroidery work). This is a type of traditional activity, famous all over the country, has survived without any formal training. It was characterised by inter-generational transfer of skill in an informal way. *Chikan* work was carried out on a piece-rate basis where suppliers / traders supply raw material and designs to the households. The work is extremely strenuous and puts lot of pressure on the eyesight. This was one of the reasons why young women carried out this work. But the piece-rate wage was so low that in a day (6 – 8 hours of work) a woman could earn only Rs. 20 to 25 (stitching a design on one square foot of cloth). In fact, the wage rate for this work has not changed during the last 10 years.

In recent years, the problems of chikan workers was aggravated due to the threat of imported designs in blocks from China which have the potential to render the traditional skills in this profession totally inconsequential. Machine-made *chikan* work, using design blocks manufactured in China, has been replacing the hand-stitched traditional work, thus reducing the demand for the traditional *chikan* workers. The possibility of a wage increase in *chikan* work is now rather bleak. Another important point about *chikan* work is that, due to low wage; men do not participate, implying that the lack of employment opportunities forces females to work in low-wage employment. Men, on the other hand, could move into better-paying jobs. Clearly, there was a stark difference between males and females in terms of accessibility of jobs.

In Gujarat, zardosi and zari work was taken up by females at home. However, compared to females in Uttar Pradesh, female home-based workers in Gujarat were relatively less exploited in terms of better pay and less work hours per day. In Bhavnagar District of Gujarat, a water crisis was a major issue, and females

had to spend a considerable amount of time in their daily schedule (2-3 hours) in fetching water, which naturally reduced the time that women could possibly spend in economic activities. Also, in Bhavnagar and in Surat, small diamond polishing workshops (employing 5-6 workers) were set up in the houses of relatively well-off traders. These were extremely small household enterprises within the village and these provided employment opportunities to the local women. The female members in the household were equally involved in this work.

**Table 6.27: Average work hours, average days of employment, average earnings for home-based workers**

State	Rural / urban	Sex	Avg work hours per day	Avg days of employment per month	Avg earnings per day (Rs.)
Uttar Pradesh	Rural	Male	6.4	27.0	92.0
		Female	6.2	27.5	36.0
	Urban	Male	7.0	29.4	122.2
		Female	6.9	28.8	68.0
Gujarat	Rural	Male	8.0	25.0	200.0
		Female	5.3	19.6	65.0
	Urban	Male	7.6	28.0	210.0
		Female	4.2	20.9	66.8

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Service sector employment had better work conditions and higher remuneration compared to agricultural and industrial sectors and, more importantly, the male-female and rural-urban wage differential was not too glaring. In rural areas, health workers, Anganwadi workers, para-teachers, clerks in panchayat and block offices were absorbing the service sector female workers. In urban areas, it was basically constituted of para-teachers in schools and colleges, and workers employed in small private sector offices and shops. It is noted that average male wage was higher in rural areas than in urban areas in Gujarat. This was due to the fact that the workers were residing in rural areas, but were working in urban areas where they received higher wages. This underlines the importance of place of work.

Among all the occupations considered in this study, average earning of domestic workers was the lowest. Even though the domestic workers work for fewer hours in a day as compared to wage labour in other occupations, on an average their hourly wage rate comes around Rs. 12, which is extremely low compared to any international standard (Table 6.29).

**Table 6.28: Average work hours, average days of employment, average earnings for service sector workers**

State	Rural / urban	Sex	Avg work hours per day	Avg days of employment per month	Avg earnings per day (Rs.)
Uttar Pradesh	Rural	Male	7.4	27.6	346.8
		Female	7.0	27.5	230.0
	Urban	Male	8.4	27.0	369.2
		Female	9.3	28.3	328.9
Gujarat	Rural	Male	8.8	26.8	386.4
		Female	8.0	27.5	221.7
	Urban	Male	8.8	26.4	234.2
		Female	7.0	25.0	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

**Table 6.29: Average work hours, average days of employment, average earnings for domestic workers**

State	Rural / urban	Sex	Avg work hours per day	Avg days of employment per month	Avg earnings per day (Rs.)
Uttar Pradesh	Rural	Male	-	-	-
		Female	6.3	27.0	72.0
	Urban	Male	-	-	-
		Female	4.5	28.5	45.0
Gujarat	Rural	Male	-	-	-
		Female	4.3	28.1	46.0
	Urban	Male	-	-	-
		Female	5.8	27.4	96.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

As most of the wage employment was in the informal sector, there was little social security coverage for the workers (Table 6.30).

**Table 6.30: Number of females (15 years & above) employed in wage employment and getting social security benefits**

State / Location	Working	Getting social security benefits			
		Paid leave	Medical leave	PF	All three
Uttar Pradesh	269	15	10	21	6
Gujarat	452	87	55	38	26

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

## 6.5 Summary

Clearly, there is evidence of social group-wise segregation of occupation guided by educational attainment and to some extent social customs. SCs and STs are deprived in terms of material wellbeing, which is manifested in lower human development achievements. Due to economic distress, females in these social groups had to enter the labour force quite early and as a result they were trapped into physically exhausting and low paying jobs. In other words, in most cases, the occupational choice for females belonging to SC and ST social groups was restricted to manual wage labour. In the case of “other” social groups, females were either into non-manual wage employment, or working on their own land (in rural areas), or were barred from working outside due to social customs.

In terms of quality of employment, the analysis pointed out that qualitative improvement in education was related to attainment of higher levels of schooling. However, this process was not continuous and attainment of a certain minimum threshold standard of education was necessary. In urban Gujarat, the shift away from manual labour happened (at least in some cases) with the attainment of secondary education, while in UP and also in rural Gujarat this threshold level was at higher secondary level. Therefore, the benefits of education vary across regions and, to a large extent, were dependent on the local economy.

Despite attaining a certain level of education, females were mostly employed in low-paying jobs, which was a clear indication of lack of suitable employment opportunities in the vicinity (even within the district). This, in itself, was a big disincentive for females towards attaining higher education. Therefore, in the study location in both the states, low female employment was, to a large extent, driven by non-availability of employment opportunities.

In the job market, females were hard pressed both in terms of quantity of jobs as well as quality of jobs. Differences in wage rates could be observed between males and females in most of the occupations except in construction works in the selected study locations. In the vast majority of cases, female workers did not have any social security benefits to fall back on. Household responsibilities, social obligations, and security concerns often forced females to accept rather unfavourable work conditions in terms of low wage and long work hours. Further, on many occasions their economic contribution was not even factored in despite putting in no less effort than males. This was particularly true in case of home-based workers where men were also involved and dealt directly with the traders. Analysing the long-term trend of female employment in urban India, Klasen and Pieters (2012) observed that participation of poorly educated women in the labour force was driven by necessity, while employment opportunities determined the participation of highly educated females into the labour force. In other words, higher wages acted as a pull factor for a minority of well-educated females into the labour force. Improvement in the service delivery system can actually enhance decent female employment particularly in rural areas where services related to health, nutrition, and education sectors are inadequate.

# Chapter 7

## Problems Faced by Women in Urban and Rural Areas

### 7.1 Introduction

Women in the study locations, like in most parts of India, were responsible for running the household. They did all kinds of household activities like washing, cooking, cleaning, taking care of the livestock (in rural areas), taking care of the elderly and the children, and socializing with neighbours and relatives. In addition, women were also expected to contribute to the household income, which in most cases improved their bargaining power in household decision making. For working women, their daily time schedule is packed with household responsibilities in the early morning before going to work, then participating in an income generating activity and then, on returning home, carry out all kinds of domestic activities (cooking, washing, child care etc.). The female is the first person to get up in the morning, and the last person to go to sleep. Women are expected to take up most of the household responsibilities even though they are participating in income-generating activities for the entire day as men do.

Female participation in the labour market is, therefore, not a smooth affair, and females have to face various types of problems as a consequence of their participation in the labour market. Such problems have an impact on their likelihood of participating in the labour market. The objective of this chapter is to assess the types of problems that working women face at home (Section 7.2) and in the workplace (Section 7.3). The following section (Section 7.4) discusses the constraints that females who are presently not working encounter for entering into the labour market. Section 7.5 analyses whether marriage as an institution has any significant impact on female labour market participation or not. The following section (Section 7.6) addresses the issue of skill training and its possible impact on female participation. Participation of females in different government programmes in the study locations is analysed in the following section (Section 7.7). The last section (Section 7.8) summarizes the major findings of this chapter.

### 7.2 Difficulties faced by working women at home

Working women have to bear the double burden of work at home as well as outside. They have to wake up earlier than the rest of the members of the household to prepare meals, care for the children, clean the house and, of course, get ready for work. Back home from work, they are expected to carry out domestic responsibilities as soon as they return. This is expected by the other members of the household expect them to do, and “there is nothing unusual about it”.

In addition to work-related problems, working women face some problems at home. In the study region, one-fourth of working females reported fulfilling domestic responsibilities as a major challenge while being a part of the workforce (Table 7.1). Even though the majority of households reported that they did not face any problem at home about working outside the home, some females did report non-approval of family members.

**Table 7.1: Problems faced by working women at home**

Problems faced	Uttar Pradesh		Gujarat	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
No problem	58.0	42.3	68.0	58.0
Family members do not approve due to caste prejudice	6.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
Domestic responsibilities	20.0	28.0	28.3	30.0
Family members do not approve going out to work	8.3	15.0	0.0	1.0
Other	7.7	10.7	3.7	11.0
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Even though family members were usually supportive of the fact that women were working outside, family members simultaneously expected them to take care of household chores as well, which became extremely physically strenuous for working women. In Gujarat, the response to women working was overwhelmingly positive, even though women had to take the burden of household responsibilities as well.

### 7.3 Challenges at the workplace

Challenges at the workplace were of a different nature. More often than not, the superior was a male. Female harassment took different forms, harassment on sexual lines being the most extreme one. Often females did not report such incidents and, in the survey, very few did so. But almost every female surveyed in rural Uttar Pradesh was of the opinion that incidents of male harassment in the workplace (particularly in agriculture and construction labour) was quite common, though they declined to divulge any such incident happening to them. There might be two possibilities – it might have happened with someone close (in the family or in the neighbourhood) or, even if it had happened to them, they were too scared to divulge it because of the associated social stigma. Other forms of harassment that women have to face include constant criticism about the quality of their work. Attempts are often made to demean the contribution of females and to prove that they are economically insignificant. Apart from harassment, women at work face problems related to workplace infrastructure (the absence of a female toilet being the most common). Women have to tolerate such problems if they want to continue working, or else they have no other option but to withdraw from the workforce.

Slightly less economically vulnerable households do take precautions before sending female members to work. They usually check out the nature of a job and whether or not the workplace is safe before allowing them to work. Women are one of the most vulnerable section of the workforce and they need to show tremendous resilience to continue being in the workforce, and this is particularly so if they are from lower income groups.

In the study locations in both states, lower wages, long hours of work and distance to workplace were common problems faced by females employed as wage labourers in agriculture, construction, and textile factory (Tables 7.2, 7.3, 7.4). In addition, various forms of male harassment were a major problem faced by working women in Uttar Pradesh, while the degree of this problem was much lower in Gujarat.

**Table 7.2: Problems faced by women working as agriculture labour**

Problems faced	% of females facing the problem in rural UP	% of females facing the problem in rural Gujarat
Male harassment	28.9	0.0
Distance	1.0	46.5
Long work hours	33.0	27.9
Lower wages	36.1	25.6
Lack of technical skills	1.0	0.0
Lack of basic facilities at workplace	0.0	0.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

**Table 7.3: Problems faced by women working as construction labour**

Problems faced	Uttar Pradesh		Gujarat	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Male harassment	52.2	50.0	n.a.	0.0
Distance	0.0	25.0	n.a.	43.0
Long work hours	43.5	20.0	n.a.	50.0
Lower wages	4.3	5.0	n.a.	6.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

**Table 7.4: Problems faced by women working as textile factory labour**

Problems faced	Uttar Pradesh		Gujarat	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Male harassment	4.5	5.0	n.a.	0.0
Distance	0.0	30.0	n.a.	10.0
Long work hours	50.0	35.0	n.a.	14.3
Lower wages	31.8	15.0	n.a.	55.7
Lack of technical skills	9.1	10.0	n.a.	15.0
Lack of basic facilities at Workplace	4.5	5.0	n.a.	5.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

Distance to the workplace seemed to be a major problem, particularly in Gujarat. In Gujarat, even though the condition of roads was good, availability of conveyance was a major problem. It was, therefore, not surprising that three-fourths of women in Gujarat had to walk to their workplace. In Uttar Pradesh, there was a very strong preference for women to work within the close neighbourhood and, therefore, 68 per cent of women reported walking to their workplace (Table 7.5).

**Table 7.5: Mode of transport availed by working women (15 years and above) (%)**

State / location	Walk	Cycle/ rickshaw	Scooter/ auto	Bus	Others	Total
Uttar Pradesh	68.5	18.7	8.0	1.5	3.2	100.0
Gujarat	75.6	4.4	12.4	3.5	4.0	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2012

In addition to socio-economic problems and problems related to physical infrastructure, wage labour was a very physically tiring work which exhausted women of all their energies, and too much physical labour with too little nutrition resulted in many ailments. Also, there were some occupations like *agarbatti* making and diamond polishing that involved considerable health hazards, thereby reducing the working lifespan of women. Below are a few of the responses received from working women in work-related activities:

- After doing all household activities I have to go out to work (diamond polishing). Diamond polishing is a very strenuous work for which it puts lot of pressure on eye sight.
- While making agarbatti I feel pain in the hip. Also, the powder causes cough and irritation in the eyes.
- I work from 8 in the morning to 8 in the evening due to which I get headache, back pain and pain in eyes.
- I have to walk a long distance and I get head-ache due to working under hot sun and also there is fear of wild animals.
- I have to go a long distance to work. So I develop swollen legs.
- Physical exhaustion is too much due to working under the hot sun. Every month have to spend Rs.50-100 on medicines
- When we are working on the fields, the owner harasses us.
- In diamond polishing work the dust that comes out goes into eyes and nose, and so it becomes difficult to breath
- Diamond polishing has to be done very carefully with concentration. We often feel headache and pain in the eyes. The wage that is received is not equivalent to the work done
- Sometimes I get injured while cutting threads.
- The workload is very heavy and the job requires standing the whole day under the sun. After working whole day outside, I have to also work at home.
- For tailoring work I have to sit for long hours. So I get back pain and develop swelling in the legs.
- I have to start working immediately after lunch. I'm not allowed to take rest for some time.
- I have to work continuously to please the employer; I cannot even have lunch properly.
- I have problems commuting to the workplace and I have to pay from own pocket for commuting.
- I get eye pain due to chikan work, and moreover low wages and long working hours are extremely demotivating.
- We go to school and also do the work of gems at lower wages.

The abovementioned narratives from working women clearly indicate the lack, and often open violation, of decent work conditions. Given that these workers were employed in the unorganized sector of the economy, which is totally out of reach of any legal entity, the question is what kind of policy prescriptions can be prepared in order to make life a little better for these working women.

Work-related problems exist for women who are home-based workers. Typically, the trader is a male who under-values the quality of work done by females. In the case of zari and embroidery work, the trader calculates the wage depending on the design and the extent of work. The method of calculation is quite complex, known only to the trader. The motive behind this complexity is to under-value the work done by the women in order to pay them less than they should actually receive. Since home-based workers are not organized/unionized, there is a point beyond which the women cannot argue. Their submission was also guided by the lack of alternative employment opportunities in the vicinity and, therefore, antagonizing the trader might aggravate the economic vulnerability of the household.

## 7.4 Constraints non-working women encounter when entering the labour market

The NSSO Employment and Unemployment Survey (2009-10) collected information regarding the willingness of females (15 years and above) primarily involved in domestic duties to accept work opportunities at the household premises. For the country as a whole, one-third of females (15 years and above) in rural areas and more than one-fourth in urban areas who were engaged in domestic duties (by usual principal activity) were willing to accept work opportunities at the household premises (Table 7.6). In both rural and urban India, there was a strong willingness among females primarily involved in household chores to take up tailoring work within their premises. This underlines the need for providing skill training to such females in tailoring, followed by institutional support for marketing their product so that the training thus provided reaches its logical conclusion. Therefore, the declining trend in the female work participation rate in a way points towards lack of skill training and employment opportunities for females in the vicinity.

**Table 7.6: Proportion of females (15 years & above) usually engaged in domestic duties (by UPA) willing to work within household premises, by type of work acceptable**

State / sector / all India	% of female willing to accept work within premises	Type of work - dairy (%)	Type of work - tailoring (%)	Type of work - others (%)
Rural				
Gujarat	24	7	7	10
Uttar Pradesh	35	9	12	14
All India	33	7	10	16
Urban				
Gujarat	30	0.7	10	19.3
Uttar Pradesh	32	1.5	15	15.5
All India	27	1.3	11.4	14.3

Source: NSSO, Report No. 550

It has been already pointed out (based on the primary survey) that, in Uttar Pradesh, the proportion of females reporting domestic responsibilities as their principal occupation was higher compared to that in Gujarat. A higher proportion of females reporting household chores as primary occupation in Uttar Pradesh compared to Gujarat was noted in the Employment and Unemployment Survey conducted by NSSO in 2009-10 (Government of India, 2013). The proportion of females (in the age group 15 years and above) reporting domestic duties as their usual principal activity was 72 per cent in rural Uttar Pradesh, while it was 56 per cent in rural Gujarat. In the case of urban areas, it was 71 per cent in Uttar Pradesh and 68 per cent in Gujarat (Table 7.7).

**Table 7.7: Proportion of females (15 years and above) reporting domestic duties as usual principal activity, 2009-10**

State / all India	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Gujarat	56	68
Uttar Pradesh	72	71
All India	57	64

Source: NSSO, Report No. 550

The majority of females who reported domestic duties as their principal activity spent most of the time in domestic duties primarily due to the absence of any other family member to carry out household chores.

In Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh as well, the majority of females for whom domestic duties was the principal activity reported non-availability of any other household member to be the primary reason why they had to spend most of the time in domestic duties (Table 7.8).

**Table 7.8: Proportion of females for whom absence of any other household member was the reason for spending most of the time in domestic duties out of all females who reported domestic duties as usual principal activity (15 years and above), 2009-10**

State / all India	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Gujarat	58	61
Uttar Pradesh	55	65
All India	62	65

*Source: NSSO, Report No. 550*

Clearly, household responsibility was considered to be a major hindrance towards female work participation in both rural and urban areas. Another important factor that dampens female employability was the lack of skill training. The record of formal skill training in India is rather poor, with only 2-3 per cent of the workforce receiving formal training (based on NSS data). Persons who drop out of the formal education system due to various reasons can actually contribute substantially towards economic development if they are imparted skills in demand in the market. One of the reasons for the phenomenal growth of East Asian economies has been their human capital formation particularly through skill training.

## 7.5 Impact of marriage

Based on the insights of the field work, marriage as an institution did not deter females from participating in the labour market. The proportion of females who worked prior to marriage was lower than the overall female work participation rate – implying that more females entered the workforce after marriage (Table 7.9). This was mostly in order to add on to the household income. In rural areas, females prior to their marriage mostly worked on their own field or worked as daily wage labourer in agriculture (mostly in groups alongside their family members). In urban areas, unmarried women mostly worked as labourers in textile factories and diamond workshops.

**Table 7.9: Proportion of females who worked before marriage (%)**

State	Rural	Urban
Uttar Pradesh	10.6	20.6
Gujarat	55.5	45.6

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

It was observed that the proportion of females working prior to their marriage in Uttar Pradesh was much lower than that in Gujarat. This was primarily due to the lack of employment opportunities in the vicinity. Villagers in a FGD in a village in Lucknow pointed to declining agricultural work opportunities in the village over the years (the last one and half decade in particular). Because of its proximity to urban centres, land value has appreciated significantly (Rs. 500,000 and above per acre) for which large landowners have started selling their land to the developers (expectedly for housing units). Therefore, agricultural employment has reduced. But there has not been a concomitant increase in non-agricultural employment for the villagers. The decline in agricultural employment opportunities has affected female employment more than male employment. One big advantage of this village is its proximity to urban centres for which males find employment in urban centres (like construction works, driving, vendors, etc.), while females are left with very little work other than few days of employment during transplanting and harvesting seasons in the village. Females in this village do not go outside the village for work. This was primarily driven by

concerns of household responsibilities and partly security concerns. The recent shameful incident in Delhi has further aggravated the security concern (particularly among young unmarried females – both Muslims and Hindus).

The survey enquired whether married women found encouragement or discouragement from their in-laws regarding their participation in the labour market. More than half of the married females reported that they received encouragement from their in-laws to participate in the labour market. Even though the encouragement was to work from home or in nearby locations (usually accompanied by neighbours and relatives), importantly they were allowed or encouraged to work. Sometimes it was self-motivation guided by financial necessity with passive support of the in-laws. It is interesting to note some of the answers provided by respondents:

- I have motivated myself. Cost of living is so high. What is the point in sitting at home.
- It is important to be self-reliant. I am an open-minded person. When I have learnt something, I should utilise the skills and earn.
- I asked for permission from my husband. The next day he bought me a tailoring (stitching) machine.
- My mother-in-law attends to household work and sends me out to work. So I do not feel burdened.
- Both my husband and mother-in-law feel that once the child grows up I can start earning which can take care of the financial problems in the family. But at the same time they feel that I should not neglect household duties.
- My husband says if you work now we can have something for the future.
- My husband and son have the opinion that since it is own agriculture, it is better if family members work.
- My husband says that if females work then they will go ahead in life.
- Everyone in the family works and so I get encouragement to work.
- My in-laws encourage me to work because in that case we will get additional income and we can take good care of children.

Marriage as an institution did not adversely affect participation of females in the workforce primarily due to economic distress. Participation of young females in the workforce was restricted due to non-availability of employment opportunities in the vicinity. This was particularly true in rural areas. From the above comments it was observed that concern over children's education and financial stability of the household was important considerations motivating female participation in the workforce. An implication of this was increasing participation of females in household decision-making (Table 7.10). Females were more active in decision-making process of the household well beyond the four walls of the kitchen. They were now active participants in decisions regarding children's education and decisions related to household savings. Also in matters related to healthcare, even though females' exclusive decision-making power was relatively less, their participation (jointly along with male members) was considerable. In rural and urban Gujarat, about one-third of the households reported joint decision-making in matters related to health care. In rural UP, this joint decision-making was reported in 20 per cent of surveyed households, while in urban UP it was 29 per cent. The reason for relatively less involvement of females in health-related matters (as reported by the respondents) was their lack of awareness about medical facilities and their lack of confidence in dealing with the private healthcare operators. Males, owing to their greater social networking, had a better idea about costs involved in availing themselves of different types of health services and, therefore, could deal with the private operators better:

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<sup>4</sup> During the period 1998-9 to 2009-10, net sown area in Lucknow declined from 0.14 million hectare to 0.13 million hectare. This was one of the sharpest declines in whole of Uttar Pradesh.

**Table 7.10: Proportion of households where females take decision (%)**

Type of decision	Rural Uttar Pradesh	Urban Uttar Pradesh	Rural Gujarat	Urban Gujarat
Education of children	56	39	50	57
Food to be cooked	77	88	89	81
Savings (finance)	52	62	38	49
Healthcare	33	41	23	34

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

In other words, female participation in the workforce (even though distress-driven) not only contributed to the financial security of the household, it also gave them some sense of dignity through which their participation in the household decision-making improved considerably. Even the male respondents admitted that females can make better decisions regarding their children's education as they spend more time with them, and females could foresee hard times (to some extent) for which they prepare themselves by "saving out of nothing", and thereby "keep the boat sailing".

Increasing participation of females in household decision-making was undoubtedly a positive towards female empowerment (even though it might be distress-driven or forced on them due to non-participation of male members). Another sign of the somewhat growing assertiveness of females in the study locations was their active involvement in important decisions concerning their own life (Tables 7.11 and 7.12). It was only in decisions regarding marriage where senior household members had a much greater say. However, even in marriage, more than one-fourth of households in Uttar Pradesh reported considering the opinion of females themselves. Gujarat, however, seemed to be a much more conservative society in this regard.

**Table 7.11: Distribution of households by the individuals involved in decision-making about various activities of females in the household, Uttar Pradesh (%)**

Decision regarding	Decision taken by (%)			
	Woman herself	Senior members	Husband	Others
Females continuing in education	45	34	18	3
Females looking for jobs	37	37	22	4
Females continuing in jobs	37	31	28	4
Self-employment of females	36	31	21	12
Marriage of female members	28	47	0	25

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 7.12: Distribution of households by the individuals involved in decision-making about various activities of females in the household, Gujarat (%)**

Decision regarding	Decision Taken by (%)			
	Woman herself	Senior members	Husband	Others
Females continuing in education	43	36	14	7
Females looking for jobs	55	23	13	9
Females continuing in jobs	73	12	9	6
Self-employment of females	61	18	15	6
Marriage of female members	6	71	0	23

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

## 7.6 Skill training: inadequate and ineffective

Mehrotra et al. (2013a) estimated India's skill challenge was to train 291 million persons by the year 2022. However, this is only a quantitative aspect of the skills challenge. The concerns of quality, which have also been observed in the present study, also need to be dealt with while addressing the skills challenge. In the study region, there was considerable variation in participation of females in skill training programmes. Female participation in skill training programmes in Uttar Pradesh was particularly low and provided little benefit to the women (Table 7.13). On the other hand, participation was reasonably high in Gujarat, and almost half of the females participating in such programmes got some employment opportunities (even as piece-rate workers home-based worker). The skill training programmes in Gujarat were mostly organized by the NGOs in areas related to stitching/embroidery, computer and beautician related courses.

**Table 7.13: Proportion of households where at least one female member participated in skill training programme in the last 5 years (%)**

State	Rural	Urban
Uttar Pradesh	1.4	3.1
Gujarat	22.2	23.9

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

The scarcity or lack of initiative in skill training programmes in Uttar Pradesh became clear during the FGD organized at one of the surveyed villages in Lucknow district. During the period of this study a training programme was going on in the village organised by the state government (Jan Shiksha Abhiyan). This programme was a three-month course in tailoring, meant only for females with an education level below secondary. The participants had to pay a nominal fee (Rs. 20 per month) to participate in the programme. In this programme, participants were taught 16 different types of stitching, but they were not taught any *chikan* work (which was an important home-based work in the region). However, quality and intensity of training were much below the expectation. There were only two sewing machines for the entire village and, therefore, not everyone got a chance to learn while using the machine. Those who participated in the training considered themselves to be partially trained and, being aware of their limitation, would be happy to earn Rs. 1000 – 2000 per month. But opportunities for earning even this meagre amount did not exist in this village or in the vicinity where they really wanted to work. The training they acquired was mostly utilised for stitching cloth for their own household members. They were extremely eager to learn and wanted skill training programmes to be organised in the village more regularly and on new stitching techniques.

Such types of training programmes, which contribute little to improve employability of the trainees, clearly highlight the apathy of the officials to impart vital skills to youth for them to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend. The fact that such training programmes were judged by the total absence of any innovation regarding the type of training to be imparted, very little infrastructure being used to provide such training, and the absence of any follow up action once the training was provided.

In this village in Lucknow (where the FGD was held), females usually entered the workforce at a very young age (13-14 years). If the mother was working in agriculture, the child accompanied her mother. If the mother was in *chikan* work the child got involved in it. This village had one elementary school (up to 8<sup>th</sup> standard) and, therefore, females mostly could not study beyond the elementary level. After completion of elementary education, females in this village wanted to enter the labour force and for this they wanted some kind of skill training to be organized in the village itself. The high school was located 6 km away, which acted as a deterrent towards attaining higher education for females.

## Section 7.7: Participation in government programmes

Among the social security programmes, awareness in both states was the highest in the case of scholarship programmes for girls' education. Also the highest number of beneficiary households among different kinds of social security programmes was in scholarship for girls' education. In Gujarat, as many as 20 per cent of households surveyed benefitted from girls' scholarships, while it was close to 10 per cent of households surveyed in Uttar Pradesh.

Awareness about health care related programmes was much higher than social security-related programmes and, among them, Anganwadi programme was well known to the households in both the states (Table 7.14). The functioning of the Anganwadi centres seemed better in Gujarat than those visited in Uttar Pradesh, where weighing machines, charts showing heights and weights of the children, the presence of the Anganwadi worker caring for the children and preparing their meal. Though there were a reasonable number of children (15 – 20) in the centres in both Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, the physical conditions of the centres (walls, roofs, and general cleanliness) were better in Gujarat compared to that in Uttar Pradesh. During the FGD in one of the villages in Gujarat it was revealed that though RSBY cards were distributed in the village, the hospital refused to provide services as the government did not release the funds.

**Table 7.14: Proportion of households being aware of or benefitted from government programmes (%)**

Programme	Uttar Pradesh			Gujarat		
	Aware but not benefitted	Benefitted	Not benefitted	Aware but not benefitted	Benefitted	Not benefitted
related to						
Social Security	26.3	6.1	73.7	45.1	6.4	54.9
Health care	46.6	5.5	53.4	72.1	6.8	27.9
Employment	63.6	2.8	36.4	16.4	2.0	83.6
Housing	66.4	2.4	33.6	44.3	5.4	55.7
Nutrition	61.1	13.2	38.9	70.1	45.1	29.9

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

In employment-related programmes, the focus enquiry was on MGNREGA. Contrary to other programmes enquired about in the study, awareness (and to some extent interest as well) about MGNREGA was much higher in Uttar Pradesh, even though there was not much difference in the proportion of beneficiaries between the two states. The average days of employment in Uttar Pradesh were 13 days in the last year, and the wage received was Rs. 100 per day. Even though the study locations in Gujarat did not seem to take much interest in MGNREGA, on average, days of employment in the case of the participating households was 17 days (higher than that found in Uttar Pradesh) and the average wage received was Rs. 120 per day.

In relation to the functioning of MGNREGA in the study regions of the two states, insufficient days of employment and non-availability of work seemed to be common causes of discontent among the villagers. In Gujarat, tribals complained of social exclusion by the Panchayat (village administration), while the Panchayat head complained about non-availability of workers. The problem lies in lack of awareness among the tribals particularly about the mechanism through which MGNREGA works – they still perceived it as any other government programme with a top-down approach (where state and district authorities prepares a project to be implemented) rather than MGNREGA being a demand-driven guaranteed employment programme. There was awareness in Uttar Pradesh, but it could not be ascertained through the FGDs why not enough work was undertaken. The villagers expected the district and state authorities to be much more active in implementing this programme. The only positive development that had happened in the

village in Lucknow district was the wage increase during the last two years in agriculture primarily due to MGNREGA. The MGNREGA wage in the village was Rs. 100 per day, and the agricultural wages for females had increased from Rs. 60 – 70 per day two years ago to the present Rs. 100. But with very few days of employment, this wage increase hardly had an impact on the livelihood of the villagers.

In programmes related to housing (Indira Awas Yojana), the proportion of beneficiaries was a little higher in Gujarat compared to Uttar Pradesh. The functioning of the Public Distribution System helped in maintaining nutritional security for a reasonably high proportion of households in Gujarat.

Overall, there seemed to be reasonably good awareness among the people in the study regions of both the states about various government programmes and schemes (with the exception of tribals in Gujarat who have been excluded from the mainstream of the society for several centuries; even if the tribals were aware of certain schemes, they were denied access at the local level through the practice of caste hierarchy). The real problem lay in programme implementation that often became complicated by the caste hierarchy at the local level.

## **7.8 Summary**

The most pressing problems that females faced related to conditions of work (low wage, long work hours, physical exhaustion, and health hazards), and that of physical infrastructure (roads and conveyance). Household members were not averse to the idea of females participating in the workforce, even though this willingness most of the time was distress-driven. Apart from economic stability, an important indirect consequence of female work participation was their increasing involvement in household decision-making. The most fundamental problem that persists is the mentality of male supremacy at the workplace resulting in the mistreatment of females as inferior beings. Social mobilization and creating awareness are some of the means of addressing the problem. One practical and visible solution lies in facilitating skill-training programmes for females in a meaningful way substantiated with follow up actions. The lack of skill-training programmes, particularly for females, remains a major concern not only in the study locations, but throughout the country. However, between the two states, a much higher proportion of females participated in skill-training programmes in Gujarat, which helped them in getting a job or becoming self-employed.

## Chapter 8

### Findings from the Time-Use Survey

#### 8.1 Introduction

Women who are not working in any income-generating activity and not receiving any remuneration are not considered to be a part of the labour force. Their activities are not considered to be economically significant. However, common sense would suggest that but for their so-called non-economic contribution it would have been rather difficult for male members of the household to participate in economic activities. In other words, unpaid non-economic activities done by females are equally important for the overall wellbeing of the household.

Women, whether they are participating in economic activities or not, generally have to bear a much larger disproportionately share of household responsibilities. The time-use survey provided detailed information on how individuals spent their time and tried to capture an individual's daily life schedule with a specificity that combines both income-generating and non-income-generating activities. The daily time schedule of adult female members (15 years and above) for the previous day (one day prior to the date of survey) was considered for the purpose of the study. What follows is an analysis of the results of the time-use survey (which was a part of this study) for adult females who are in different types of occupation. It needs to be noted that, in this study, it was not possible to capture simultaneous activities and, therefore, it is possible that, in some instances, the total time in different activities might add up to more than 24 hours. Questions based on each of the activities – economic, learning, household maintenance responsibilities, taking care of children and the elderly and personal care – were put to both male and female members of the household. Household maintenance included activities like cleaning of dwelling unit as well as surroundings, washing clothes, cleaning of utensils, fetching water, cooking, and shopping for household rations and other needs. Personal care activities included eating, sleeping/resting, physical exercise, religious practices, personal hygiene, medical care, and time spent on searching for a job.

#### 8.2 Time-use study of adult working females

In the case of a female agricultural labourer, in rural Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, the time allocation in different activities was almost similar (Table 8.1). One important difference was related to child caring. In Gujarat, due to better functioning of Anganwadi centres, women could leave their small children in the Anganwadi centres and go for wage employment. However, this was not so in Uttar Pradesh and, hence, women had to spend relatively more time in taking care of their children, more than twice the number of hours spent by females in Gujarat. While females in Uttar Pradesh spent 7.5 hours on an average per day on economic activities, women in Gujarat could manage one extra hour on economic activities.

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<sup>5</sup>Typical time-use surveys capture simultaneous activities by asking what activities were undertaken every hour of the day. This way the total number of hours worked in a day remains less than 24. However, in the survey, the questionnaire captured time-use through time taken in performing each of the activities – cooking, cleaning, other domestic chores, taking care of the elderly and children. Therefore, the number of hours worked sometimes comes to over 24.

**Table 8.1: Average time spent by adult females by occupation:  
Agricultural labour (hours)**

Activity	Uttar Pradesh	Gujarat
	Rural	Rural
Economic activities	7.54	8.49
Household maintenance	4.30	3.18
Caring for children	3.62	1.67
Caring for the elderly	0.36	1.03
Learning	0.60	0.32
Personal care	8.15	8.60

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

*Note: There are no agricultural labourers in urban areas*

In the case of construction workers, the proportion of time spent in personal care was relatively higher, which was understandable given the fact that the very nature of this job was extremely physically taxing (Table 8.2). In the urban areas, female construction workers had to carry their children to the worksites as they had nobody to look after them at home. Therefore, economic activities and caring for children were to some extent simultaneous activities for female construction workers in urban areas. It is important that child care centres should be opened up in both rural and urban areas to take adequate care of the children while their mothers are working.

**Table 8.2: Average time spent by adult females by occupation:  
Construction labour (hours)**

Activity	Uttar Pradesh		Gujarat
	Rural	Urban	Urban
Economic activities	7.50	6.00	8.50
Household maintenance	3.02	2.45	3.58
Caring for children	0.97	3.70	1.54
Caring for the elderly	0.36	1.75	0.13
Learning	0.75	0.30	
Personal care	9.85	9.17	8.26

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

*Note: there were no female construction labourers in rural Gujarat*

In the case of home-based workers, it is important to note that females spent a substantial proportion of their daily schedule in child caring (Table 8.3). It was primarily because of taking care of their children (since there was no one else to take care of them) that they preferred working from home instead of going out to work. Most of the females in this occupation had small children and, therefore, they had to spend more time on them. Also, the nature of the work in this occupation (chikan work, zardosi work, zari work) put a lot of pressure on their eyesight, weakening their vision with age. Generally, females in this occupation were relatively young. In the village in Lucknow District where the FGD was held females usually entered into this work at a very young age (13-14 years). If the mother was in chikan work the child was involved in it along with the mother. Otherwise females become associated with some small workshops and start working there as apprentices earning Rs. 500 to 600 per month. During the time of the survey and FGD it

was observed that this village had only one elementary school (up to 8th standard) and, therefore, females did not (could not) study beyond the elementary level. After completion of elementary education, females in this village wanted to enter the labour force and for this they needed some kind of skill training in the village itself. The high school, however, was located 6 kilometres away, which often acted as a deterrent to higher educational attainment for females in that and nearby villages.

**Table 8.3: Average time spent by adult females by occupation:  
Home-based worker (Hours)**

Activity	Uttar Pradesh		Gujarat	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Economic activities	6.23	6.20	5.27	4.18
Household maintenance	4.86	5.29	3.56	4.63
Caring for children	1.72	3.60	5.75	4.96
Caring for the elderly	0.19	0.31	0.00	0.03
Learning	2.63	0.90	0.33	2.60
Personal care	8.64	7.96	9.57	8.60

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

Those working in the service sector had attained higher levels of education, so they spent a relatively larger proportion of time in learning activities compared to females in other occupations (Table 8.4). Also, females who were in the service sector were in much better-paying jobs and economically too they were better off. But still family members expected them to do all kinds of household activities and so they had to spend a substantial portion of their time at home doing those activities related to maintaining the household.

**Table 8.4: Average time spent by adult females by occupation:  
Services (hours)**

Activity	Uttar Pradesh		Gujarat	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Economic activities	8.64	7.33	8.71	6.11
Household maintenance	2.65	3.96	2.64	2.09
Caring for children	2.37	1.17	1.23	3.53
Caring for the elderly	0.55	2.78	0.25	0.00
Learning	2.60	2.63	2.12	3.56
Personal care	8.60	7.11	9.94	9.15

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

**Table 8.5: Average time spent by adult females by occupation:**

Activity	Uttar Pradesh	Gujarat
	Rural	Rural
Economic activities	5.50	7.19
Household maintenance	4.49	5.34
Caring for children	0.87	0.65
Caring for the elderly	0.54	0.08
Learning	0.79	0.50
Personal care	8.02	9.55

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

*Note: There were no farmers at own field in urban areas in both States*

Females who did not go out to work in wage employment generally had some land owned by the male member of the household and spent on an average 25-30 per cent of their time working on the land (Table 8.5). Working on the land and performing household chores accounted for half of their daily time schedule.

### 8.3 Time-use of males in household activities

Compared to females, males spent much less time on an average per day on household activities. In Gujarat, the average time males spent on household activities was higher than their counterparts in Uttar Pradesh. This was also one of the reasons for the higher participation by females in the labour market in Gujarat compared to that in Uttar Pradesh.

**Table 8.6: Average time (hours) spent by adult males in household duties**

Activity	Uttar Pradesh		Gujarat	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Cleaning of dwelling unit, surrounding	0.2	0.9	0.3	0.9
Cleaning of utensils	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.4
Shopping	1.4	1.0	1.6	1.3
Washing clothes	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.3
Cooking	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4
Fetching water	0.2	0.1	1.1	0.6

*Source: Primary Survey, 2012*

### 8.4 Summary

The above analysis observes that, despite being a part of the workforce and working as hard as men (or maybe more), females end up doing a lot of activities that do not directly result in income-generation. On an average, such working women had to spend 4 – 6 hours a day either in doing household chores or taking care of the children/elderly. These are clearly non-economic activities. But if they were not undertaking these responsibilities, the household would have had to hire and pay someone to do the same. To the extent that female members save that amount for the household, indirectly becomes their economic contribution to household earnings. Moreover, since females take care of the children and aged members of the household, prepare meals and wash clothes and utensils, it is possible for men to more easily go out to work. In this way females again contribute indirectly to the income-generating process of the household needs to be acknowledged by society at large.

The importance of this time-use analysis lies in the fact that it clearly brings out certain qualitative aspects about women's work and time disposition and the hardship they face in day-to-day life with little recognition in labour statistics or in society. First, they contribute indirectly to the income- generating activities of male members of the household. And secondly, their participation in the labour market is greatly constrained by their responsibilities in the household, which also restricts them from looking for jobs in areas beyond their immediate neighbourhood.

## Chapter 9

### Concluding Remarks and Policy Recommendations

This study was undertaken as a response to the growing concerns among policy-makers regarding the declining trend in female labour force participation and employment, particularly during the second half of the last decade. Accordingly, the study began with an analysis of employment and unemployment survey data (NSS) for the 61st (2004-05) and 66th (2009-10) rounds. In India, there has been a consistent decline in the female labour force participation rate and workforce participation rate both in rural and urban areas since the 1970s (with the period between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 being the only exception). This decline in female WFPR was much sharper in rural India compared to urban India, and was principally driven by the fall in unpaid family work. In order to understand the possible determinants of declining female employment, a primary household-based survey was conducted in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat in both rural and urban areas.

The study revolves around factors behind the declining female employment. It also focuses on the problems and constraints that female face related to their participation (or non-participation due to those very constraints) in the labour market. In the literature on female employment, family income and education were identified as important pull factors for this declining trend in female employment. However, in this study, there was no evidence of any income effect, and the notion of backward bending supply curve does not seem to be relevant in the study locations. However, education as a factor could be established in some of the study locations.

Despite universal programmes on literacy and elementary education (Literacy Mission of the 1990s, and SSA since 2002), the problem of illiteracy still looms large, particularly among rural females of Uttar Pradesh. As a result, they are trapped in low productive jobs with low remuneration involving physical hardship and strain. Given that correlation between female illiteracy and incidence of poverty was quite strong both in an economic sense as well as a broader sense of deprivation, and mother's education is an important determinant of child's overall development, there is but no option other than emphasizing on female educational attainment within the broad framework of educational programmes designed by the central and state governments. Further, higher educational attainment will also improve employability of females in more productive and better remunerative jobs. In this context, it is important to provide short-term skill training programmes for females at the local level in line with local industry needs like tailoring, food processing, and other handicraft products, which will give them an opportunity to find employment in the vicinity.

Analysis of age-group wise activity of females (both in rural and urban areas) suggested that the influence of increasing participation in education did not have a significant impact on declining female employment in Gujarat, while in Uttar Pradesh its impact was much stronger. The proportion of females in the age-group of 15 to 29 years who were in education was much higher in Uttar Pradesh compared to that in Gujarat where the majority of females in this age-group were engaged in economic activities. Thus, education as a pull factor had a much stronger influence in the study locations in Uttar Pradesh, while in Gujarat its impact was not so obvious.

There was social group-wise segregation of occupation guided by educational attainment and, to some extent, social customs. SCs and STs were deprived in terms of material wellbeing, which was manifested in lower human development achievements. Because of economic distress, females in these social groups had to enter the labour force quite early and, as a result, they were trapped in physically exhausting and low-paying jobs. In other words, in most cases, the occupational choice for females belonging to SC and ST social groups was restricted to manual wage labour. In the case of other social groups, females were either in non-manual wage employment, or working on their own land (in rural areas), or were barred from

working outside due to social customs.

In terms of quality of employment, the analysis pointed out that qualitative improvement in education was related to attainment of higher levels of schooling. However, this process was not continuous and attainment of a certain minimum threshold standard of education was necessary. In urban Gujarat, a shift away from manual labour happened (at least in some cases) with the attainment of secondary education, while in UP and also in rural Gujarat this threshold level was at higher secondary level. Therefore, the benefits of education varied across regions and, to a large extent, were dependent on the local economy.

In terms of remuneration, average wages for males were higher than that of females. Secondly, on an average, wages in urban areas were higher than those in rural areas. Thirdly, except in occupations like agricultural labour and construction labour in rural Uttar Pradesh, there was hardly any difference in days of employment between males and females in the other occupations considered here.

By and large, a greater proportion of less-educated females were in the workforce, both in rural and urban areas. A qualitative improvement in female occupations was occurring as girls were accessing higher secondary education. In rural and urban UP, on attaining higher secondary education, none of the females were engaged as agricultural or construction labourers. They were mostly in home-based work, clerical work or small scale trading (commercial shops). In rural Gujarat, higher secondary educated females were in textile factories or diamond factories as daily wage workers, but not in agriculture or construction sectors as labourers. There seems to be a notion of gradation of occupations (even among those working as daily wage labourers), which influenced their participation in different occupations depending on their educational attainment. So, even though there was similarity in occupational status between construction labourers and textile factory labourers, construction work might be viewed as a low grade work and, therefore, on attaining a certain minimum level of education, construction work ceases to be an employment option. For females looking for a qualitative improvement in employment opportunity, secondary education might not be enough. It is, therefore, important to increase the number of higher secondary schools for girls with special emphasis on vocational education at least one in each school. Further, scholarships for girls' education should be extended up to at least the higher secondary level.

Female workers suffered both in terms of quantity as well as quality of employment. Household responsibilities, social obligations, and security concerns often forced females to accept rather unfavourable terms of working conditions of low wages and long working hours. Further, on many occasions their economic contribution was not even factored in despite putting no less effort than males. This was particularly true in case of home-based work where men were also involved and dealt directly with the traders. A large proportion of women were working as home-based workers in embroidery, zardosi work, and decorative items. Though such home-based work involved all members of the household, women had to perform a disproportionately larger share of that work. This was in addition to their daily household chores. The nature of employment in such work was self-employment. However, it is noted that such self-employment for women was not by choice but by compulsion. Women found it difficult to go out for work due to family responsibilities and certain social norms in some communities, which prevented women from taking up wage employment outside the home, along with lack of suitable employment opportunities in the vicinity.

This phenomenon of women participating in the workforce was more prevalent in rural areas and, on many occasions, their willingness to participate in the workforce could not materialize due to non-availability of work in the neighbourhood. In rural areas, the supply of women workers willing to participate in agricultural work far outnumbered the demand for workers. Also, women preferred working in the vicinity, which was often not available at all or available for only a few days. The problem of finding work was more acute for females with small children compared to their younger or older counterparts. Women with small children could not accompany their husbands for work in far-away places (20 – 30 km), which was not a problem for younger or older females.

Work opportunities for females were indeed extremely limited, particularly in rural areas with shrinking employment opportunities in agriculture and not enough employment opportunities being created in the non-farm sector. Due to various socio-economic and cultural factors along with security reasons, females prefer to find employment opportunities in the vicinity. This only adds to the problem of female participation in the labour market. Creating employment opportunities in small towns, which can be easily accessed by females staying in both rural and urban areas, and improving employability of women should be the foremost agenda for policy-makers. Further, in order to protect the quality of employment in terms of decent work conditions, women's associations and self-help groups should be promoted both in rural and in urban areas.

The non-availability of employment opportunities was a major cause of low female participation in the labour market, and this was particularly true in Uttar Pradesh where both LFPR and WFPR were lower than the national average.

Improvement in service delivery (particularly in the social sectors like health and education where achievements have been rather low) can actually enhance female employment particularly in rural areas. If females were made a part of this social delivery system then it would not only ensure quality employment to a large section of well-educated females but would also lead to better human development achievements in the regions. Improvement in the service delivery system is also important in the urban centres where daily wage female workers face problems related to child care when they go out to work. These were poor women, daily wage earners by profession, whose children deserved to be educated in order to come out of the poverty trap. Therefore, development of the care economy is one of the measures that can raise female labour force participation.

As far as family support and encouragement is concerned, in both study locations the responses from family members were very positive and, in Gujarat, the responses were overwhelming. However, the preference was on home-based work, or work in the vicinity. Participating in the labour market did not relieve females from household responsibilities and they had to take up the double burden of earning as well as household responsibilities.

The most pressing problem that females faced were related to conditions of work (low wage, long working hours, physical exhaustion, and health hazards), and that of physical infrastructure (roads and conveyance).

In the study locations, there was considerable variation in participation of females in skill training programmes. Female participation in skill training programmes in Uttar Pradesh was particularly low, and females complained that, even when such programmes were organized, they lacked innovation and were hardly any use to them because the training did not improve their employability. In contrast, participation was reasonably high in Gujarat, and almost half of the females participating in such programmes had some employment opportunities (even as piece-rate home-based worker). Providing appropriate skill training can greatly enhance earning potential of females and provide them much-needed economic independence.

Overall, there seemed to be reasonably good awareness among the people in the study regions about various government programmes. However, caste hierarchy at the local level complicated the implementation of programmes. A possible solution to this problem would be increasing awareness, slowly bringing back the excluded sections of the society into the mainstream primarily through meaningful civil society interventions.

Marriage as an institution did not deter females from participating in the labour market. In fact, working after marriage improved the bargaining power of females in the household and increased their participation in household decision-making process. Female participation in household decision-making is extremely crucial for the overall wellbeing of the household and the female herself. This is particularly true in matters related to availing health care facilities. Even though participation of females in decisions related to availing

health facilities is limited, they are the ones who mostly decide what is to be cooked and hence play a major role in determining nutritional status of their household members. Globally India ranks 65th in Global Hunger Index (out of 79 countries), and one of the important contributors to such poor performance is the high incidence of child malnutrition. Further, more than half of the females in the age group 15 – 49 suffer from anaemia, which significantly reduces their participation in the workforce. Despite achieving significant economic growth, Gujarat has one of the highest child malnutrition rates in the country (45% of children under 5 years were underweight) and ranked 12 out of 17 major States in Hunger Index.

Educating or making females aware about nutrition and hygiene can contribute significantly towards improving health and nutritional status along with greater participation of females in the workforce. One way of achieving this is by raising awareness through Anganwadi or Asha workers, which imply that such workers first need to be trained and more workers have to be employed to carry on with the campaign. This will also have positive implications for female employment in rural areas.

Despite participating in economic activities, females had to fulfil all kinds of domestic responsibilities that turned out to be extremely strenuous and physically exhausting. Better functioning of Anganwadi centres in study locations in Gujarat was of considerable help to the working females who had to spend less time on child care activities.

The importance of the time-use analysis lies in the fact that it highlighted qualitative time disposition of females and the hardship that they faced in day-to-day life without much recognition in labour statistics or in the society, even in their own household. First, they contributed indirectly to the income-generating activities of males by taking the bulk of household responsibilities on their shoulder. Second, their participation in the labour market was greatly constrained by their responsibilities in households, which also restricted them from looking for jobs in areas beyond their immediate neighbourhood.

In brief, relative to the pull factors, it was more the push factor (in the form of lack of employment opportunities in the vicinity) that was driving down female employment in the study locations. This calls for policy correctives that go beyond the realm of employment initiatives in order to make economic growth much more inclusive in terms of gender. Decomposition of per-capita income growth for the last two decades revealed that a large part of the growth in per capita income was accounted for by growth in labour productivity. The two biggest contributors to growth in labour productivity were growth in capital deployed per unit of worker and total factor productivity growth. Evidently, growth in labour productivity in India has been occurring on account of the increasing adoption of labour displacing technology. This strategy of increasing labour productivity that is devoid of an employment objective is pursued in order to enhance international competitiveness. However, such a strategy of downsizing the workforce will be counter-productive causing lower aggregate demand, causing further decline in employment. In our study location in Lucknow, it was reported during the FGD that the import of blocks of designs from China penetrating the market was causing a decline in demand for traditionally skilled workers. In order to protect the livelihood security of traditionally skilled workers, it is imperative that such labour displacing policies be reversed, and an alternative policy framework be put in place to establish the link between rising labour productivity and expanding domestic demand which, together, have the potential to sustain higher employment growth.

At the micro-level, there is a need to set up child care centres with a much expanded scope of child care and child development activities so that mothers can participate in the labour market, and this initiative is particularly needed for migrant female workers having children. Unless targeted measures are taken to bring almost half of the population into productive employment, it will be difficult for India to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend.

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