



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND FEMALE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN RURAL-URBAN HARYANA: A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

India is diverse regarding social, cultural, and wide geographical variations. Strong patriarchal customs and a male hegemony-based social system are fundamental constructs in the north and northwest. Women's social and economic well-being is adversely affected by patriarchal social networks, and women are thus considered second-level citizens in that social structure. Women's work participation rates are directly related to societal or family development. Haryana is one of India's developed states, with a strong economy but a lack of gender equality and male hegemony in many aspects of life. The women's status in Haryana is no more substantial than in the other parts of the country. The male-female sex ratio in Haryana state is significantly different, a severe worry for social-science studies as a demographic dilemma. Women's holistic empowerment is now required to care for them as part of an augmenting procedure that must lead to their social and economic transformation. As a result, this article aims to discuss the significance of female literacy, sex ratio, and work participation in women's empowerment, focusing on the gender perspective. The data for the study are obtained from the Census of India from 1991-to 2011. This study will look at the disparities in literacy rates, sex ratio, female labour participation ratio in Haryana, and women's empowerment. This study will provide a strategy for focusing more intensely on the concerns of women's empowerment through improved education status social and workforce participation with a holistic approach that includes people participation.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Workforce Participation Rate, Literacy Rate, Sex-Ratio, Rural-Urban, Haryana.

Introduction:

Women Empowerment refers to power, or the authority conferred on women who share unspecified privileges. The concept refers to women's liberation from financial constraints and reliance. Women account for almost half of the country's population, and the majority of them are financially dependent on one another in the absence of work. In the period of women's liberation, a small percentage of women in India were freed and could live their lives the way they chose. Regardless, a significant number of women in our nation require optimistic



assistance. Women's operational status is a crucial determinant in their development toward economic independence, and it has generally been treated as an indicator of their overall social well-being (Mammen & Paxson, 2000). Women's higher participation in the workforce represents their autonomy and social and economic empowerment. "Gender inequities exist in many developing nations due to inadequate status and the low percentage of women in education and employment. As a result, the United Nations' millennium development goals include the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment (Tsai et al., 2009). Hence, women empowerment has become an essential aspect of women's development agendas, featured as the third millennium development goal" (UN, 2000). "Female participation in the workforce assumes much importance in the case of developing countries because of its positive effects on the level of output and adverse effects on population growth" (Collver & Langlois, 1963). "Women's participation in the workforce is an important social up gradation determinant because it directly influences women's autonomy, living standard, and well-being" (Mammen & Paxson, 2000; Sharma & Saha, 2015). "The increasing trend toward women's participation in the labour market in developed and developing countries has drawn social and academic interest" (Ackah et al., 2009). The unnaturally imbalanced sex ratio in India's north and north-west reflects a strong male sex affinity in society and women's low status. The son is central to all cultural and religious ritual performances in a patriarchal society. During their elder years, the son is considered social security for their parents. The son is only considered an asset to meet the economic needs of homes. As a result, he becomes the most important family member in a patriarchal society. After the marriage, the only son, the main member of the family who drives the family lineage forward and obtains social respect, would be eligible for consideration. As a result of this deeply ingrained social and cultural norm, males are regarded as more important in society than females. In addition, such a patriarchal culture becomes sexist. These factors contribute to a significant imbalance in the male-female sex ratio. Economic and socio-cultural factors determine female employment in India, a socially constructed country. "Many studies have identified some of the possible drivers of women's participation in India and its positive impact on their socioeconomic and health status" (Ackah et al., 2009; Rai & Bhattacharjee, 2016). It was crucial to observe that women's workforce participation is meagre than their male counterparts in India. Furthermore, statistics from the last few decades show that women's participation in the workforce has been steadily increasing (Sharma & Saha, 2015). As a result, numerous recent studies have attempted to investigate the magnitude of women's operational status regarding the nature of work across all sectors and regions of India. Workforce participation depends on societal norms, women's behaviour, and their level of education. It has been suggested that when women play a larger part in household economics, they will become more empowered. Women in India are progressively being recognised as less



empowered, with only a small percentage participating in decision-making. Women's inadequate control over the material and other resources has been highlighted in recent studies. They also have limited access to information and understanding of their basic social and constitutional rights as citizens. "The working position enables women to become socially educated, self-sufficient, and autonomous in decision-making. They are also abiding by their enforced lack of physical mobility and inability to forge an equal share of power in the relationships within families" (Basu, 1992; Visaria, 1996). "The census data from 1991 to 2011 have shown that female labour force participation has been increased more rapidly in Haryana (Census of India, 1991, 2011). There is a strong correlation between women's employment and their empowered status" (Mahata et al., 2017). Women's operational position allows them to be more economically self-sufficient, and as a result, they become the primary decision-makers for themselves and their families. "Women's economic prosperity makes them stronger socially and even individuals to have their family and society. Women become more aware of their rights due to their regular movement for work and interaction with different contact groups" (Mahata et al., 2017). As a result, women's knowledge and awareness grew, making their own decisions. It has the potential to make them aware of their rights, so empowering them. Despite Haryana's economic growth, women's social and economic advancement lags behind their male counterparts. This distinction has been highlighted when comparing rural and urban areas of residency. "Women in rural areas were still less independent in decision-making and heavily reliant on their families for financial support. As a result, they were less likely to use the resources for their benefit. The state boasts one of India's greatest per capita incomes, yet the lowest male-female ratio" (Mahata et al., 2017). The sex ratio is a measure of women's autonomy and gender equality. As a result, all responsible variables for societal sex-ratio imbalances must be investigated. Furthermore, the study aims to understand how societal sex imbalances are causing demographic instability at the state level. We're also interested in learning more about how this particular socio-demographic phenomenon affects women's working status and autonomy in rural and urban areas.

Aims of the Research:

Recently, everyone has been emphasising women's empowerment. It's correct to argue that women's empowerment has become a pressing issue. Ladies ought to have freedom, confidence, and self-esteem to pick their necessities and requests. "One of the most important indicators of women's empowerment and status is their participation rate in the workforce. Haryana is the state with the lowest female-to-male sex ratio in history." As a result, men have a social and economic edge over women in the state. Man controls the majority of power in society. Because of their economic and social dominance, men are the decision-makers in family life and even personal life. As a result, "females are more vulnerable to making



decisions. Many studies have found that women, who make up half of the population, play an essential role in overall development, from families to the nation” (Rai & Bhattacharjee, 2016; Jejeebhoy, 2000; Mahata et al., 2017).

As a consequence, women's economic participation and prosperity are essential. Haryana has a low female literacy rate and a meagre sex ratio. It reflects the lower standing of women's decision-making and participation in the workforce. As a result, it is essential to analyse it in the same contrast domain as their place of residence. “This paper aims to analyse the trend and pattern of Haryana's sex ratio status, female literacy rate, and workforce participation rate.” We also want to look into how these elements relate to women's empowerment.

Data Source and Methodology:

“The study used the secondary data of the Census of India for the state of Haryana from 1991 to 2011 for the analysis. Different variables were used to calculate the different rates and ratios for the study. The bi-variate analysis is used to achieve the above goals. Other rates and ratios have been calculated using the data to show the trends and relationships among the desired variables. In the present study, we used the following important socio-economic indicators:

1. Sex-Ratio,
2. Literacy Rate,
3. Workforce Participation Rate for:
 - Main (Primary) Workers
 - Marginal Workers
4. Unemployment Rate

The census of India divides workers into two categories: primary workers and marginal workers. It defines primary workers as those who are generally working or have worked for most of the time, with a reference period of six months or more. Workers who had not worked for the reference period's effective duration, i.e., less than six months, were classified as marginal workers” (Census of India, 1991 & 2011). According to the census of India, the primary workers are divided into four categories based on their industrial type:

1. Agricultural-Labours
2. Cultivator.
3. Household-Industry-Workers
4. Other Workers

Other workers are engaged in construction, transportation, trade commerce, storage, communication, professional, and nursing work. The indicators used for the study were calculated under the following methods:



Sex Ratio

“The sex ratio is used to describe the percentage of females per 1000 males. The male to female sex ratio is calculated by dividing the number of males (all ages) by the number of females (all ages) and multiplying by 1000.”

$$\text{Sex Ratio} = \frac{\text{Total Female Population}}{\text{Total Male Population}} \times 1000$$

Literacy Rate

“The literacy rate is calculated as the number of person of seven+ years’ literate person per 100 persons of seven+ years of ages in the given population.”

$$\text{Literacy Ratio} = \frac{\text{Total Literate Person}}{\text{Total 7+ Population}} \times 100$$

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

“The Labour Force Participation Rate is defined as the proportion of the economically active population to 15-59 of age group.” It is computed as:

$$\text{Labour Force Participation Rate} = \frac{\text{Total workers (15-59 years)} + \text{Nonworkers but seeking work (15-59 years)}}{\text{Total Population (15-59 years)}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Per cent of the main worker out of working population (15-59 years)} = \frac{\text{Total main workers (15-59 years)}}{\text{Total working Population (15-59 years)}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Per cent of the main worker out of total population} = \frac{\text{Total main working population (15-59 years)}}{\text{Total Population aged (15-59 years)}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Unemployment Rate} = \frac{\text{Total population of seeking for work (15-59 years)}}{\text{Total Population (15-59 years)}} \times 100$$

Results and Discussion

Trends of Sex Ratio

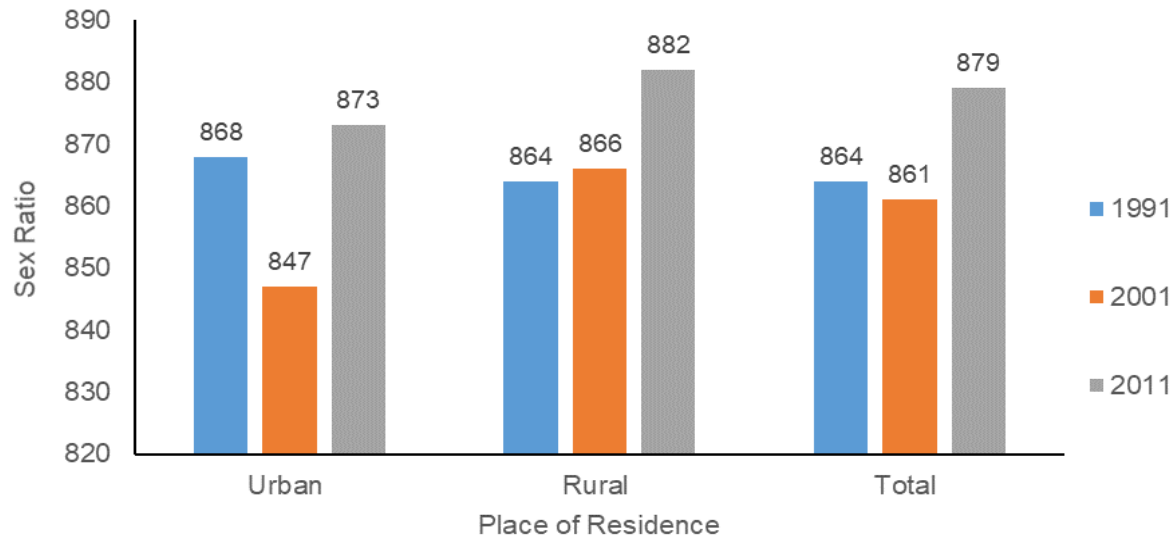


Figure 1. Urban-Rural Trends of Sex Ratio in Haryana.

Source: Census of India, 1991, 2001, 2011

The trends in Haryana's sex ratio by place of residence are depicted in Figure 1. The findings revealed a significant disparity in sex ratio trends between rural and urban areas. “Although the sex ratio in rural areas was significantly worse in 1991 and had steadily improved over time, there was a decline (847) in urban areas in 2001, and it has improved (873) slightly since 1991 (868).”

Trends of Literacy Rate

Figure 2 depicts the literacy rate trends in Haryana by location of residence. In Haryana, women's literacy has improved by only approximately 16 per cent in the last two decades. In 1991, just half of the women were literate; however, in 2011, over 66 per cent of women reported being literate. Although there is a significant disparity in women's literacy between urban and rural areas in Haryana, the literacy rate in rural areas was significantly greater than in urban areas. While just one-third of rural women were literate in 1991, after 20 years, around 60 per cent of rural women are literate, nearly doubling the proportion from the 1991 census. In the 2011 census, about 75 per cent of urban women were literate, higher than rural women.

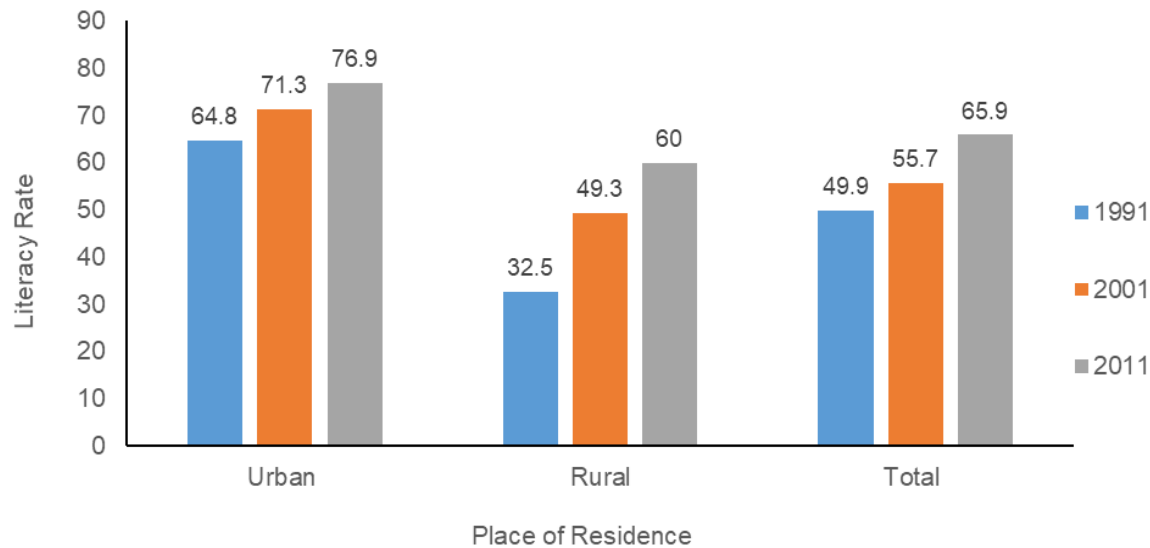


Figure 2. Urban-Rural Trends of Literacy Rate of Women in Haryana.

Source: Census of India, 1991, 2001, 2011

Nonetheless, urban women's literacy progressed slower than rural women's over two decades. The literacy rate of rural women has improved significantly during the last two decades. In rural areas, about three-fifths of women are literate, which is nearly double the figure from the 1991 census. Even though women had more excellent literacy rates than men in Haryana's urban areas, just a 12 per cent increase in literacy rate was documented over the past census decade. It demonstrates the disparities in women's literacy in Haryana between rural and urban areas. In comparison to urban women, rural women have made more progress in terms of literacy.

Trends of Workforce Participation Rate

Table I depicted women's working status trends and patterns in Haryana based on their residence location. "In the last two decades, the share of rural women in the workforce has risen from 22.4 per cent to 58.6 per cent. In contrast, urban growth was far slower, rising from 9.1 per cent to barely 23.7 per cent." In 2001, a significant share of the female workforce in rural areas (about 20 per cent) had dropped, although, in urban areas, an increase of around two per cent was observed. In the rural, female primary working force participation (main worker out of total working population) has fallen. In the urban, it first declined from 1991 to 2001, then regained in 2011 and has been upward since then. Between 1991 and 2001, the proportion of females in the main working group (main



worker out of total population) in the rural region more than doubled (from 11 per cent to 27 per cent). In 2011, the proportion of the primary worker among the working population in rural areas fell once more. Most women in rural areas worked in low-wage jobs, such as agriculture and other primary-sector and linked industries. While the share of rural women in the leading working group was higher than the urban in 2001, the trend continued in 2011.

Census Year	LFPR (Labour Force Participation Rate)		% of Main Worker (main worker out of the total working population)		% of Main Worker (main worker out of the total population)		Unemployed Rate	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1991	9.1	22.4	91.8	51.2	7.8	11.4	0.6	0.2
2001	23.7	58.6	73.4	47.9	12.0	26.7	0.1	0.1
2011	25.2	38.4	80.1	47.7	13.6	15.0	9.7	11.4

Table 1: Trends in Women’s Working Status in Haryana by Location.

Source: Census of India, 1991, 2001, 2011.

In contrast to urban areas, it rose from 1991 to 2011. The findings demonstrate that the unemployment rate for women has unexpectedly increased in the last decade. This could be attributed to the unemployment rate's definitional articulation and the state's growing women’s literacy rates. Both rural and urban areas have seen a significant increase in women's unemployment.

Working Women's Distance from Home to Place of Work (Rural-Urban Difference)

Figure 3 depicts the differences in the distance women travel from their homes to places of work to work in rural and urban areas. More than two-thirds of women worked at home in rural areas, whereas just one-third worked in urban areas. “In rural Haryana, only five per cent of women walked to work more than 10 kilometers from home. In urban areas, the proportion of women travelling the same distance was nearly three times higher than in rural areas.” The number of working women in rural and urban regions diminishes as the length of the workplace increases from women's houses. “Around 90 per cent of rural women prefer to work within two to five kilometers from their homes. In comparison, just 10 per cent of working women in urban areas commute less than ten kilometers from their home to their workplace.”

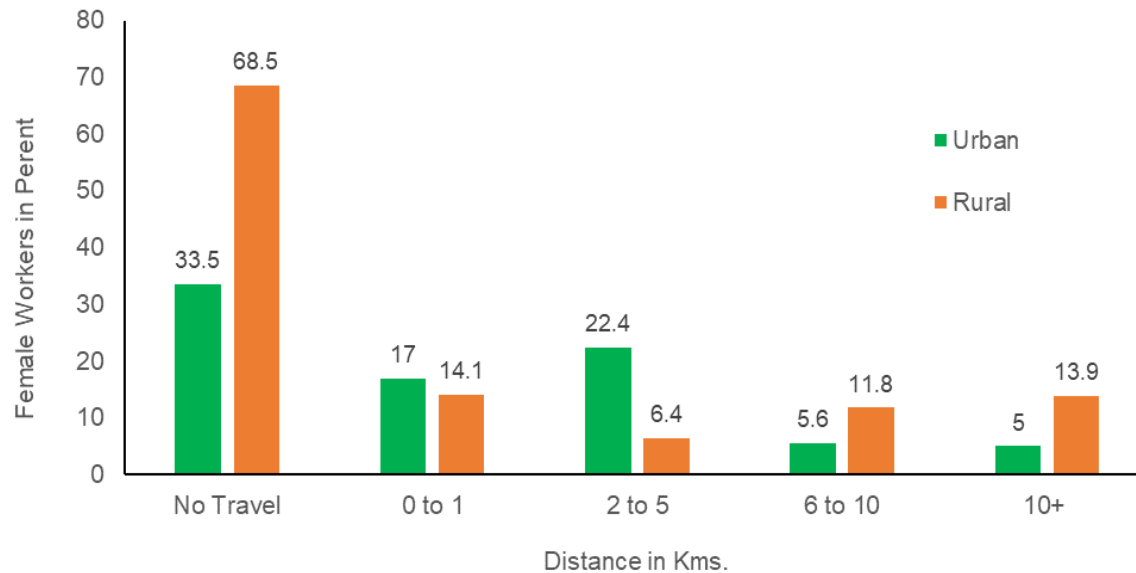


Figure 3. The Urban-Rural Difference for the Distance from Home to Place of Work for Working Women in Haryana, 2011.

Source: Census of India, 2011

Women's empowerment and autonomy are measured using proxy measures such as the literacy rate, sex ratio, and female workforce participation rate (WFPR). These measures illustrate women's social and economic status and value in most societies. The correlation between the level of sex ratio, women's employment, and educational attainment in Haryana has been identified in this study. It does not imply a direct and transparent relationship between the sex ratio and women's participation in the labour force because it is far more complicated (Harris & Watson, 1987). "A high male-dominant sex ratio signifies greater male affinity and lowers social and economic importance for women in today's society. In such a patriarchal society, the son is regarded as the epicenter for all cultural and religious ritual performances."

Moreover, "he is also seen as their sole source of social and economic security and the caretaker of their family and lineage" (Mahata et al., 2017). As a result, the sex ratio has hurt women's prestige and worth in such a society. Women's social value is partly determined by their economic utility and relevance in the home and community. Haryana's sex ratio has improved throughout time, and as a result, the state's financial reputation has been enhanced due to the higher workforce participation rate. Therefore, "there was a positive association between sex ratio increment and women's workforce participation rate. A similar finding has been seen in other studies" (Dasgupta & Goldar, 2005; Basu, 1992; Visaria, 1996). Women's level of autonomy in terms of social and financial decision-making at the individual and household level and their physical mobility is reflected in their



workforce participation status. As a result, if women's participation in the workforce rises, their autonomy will automatically increase. In the state of Haryana, a similar positive finding was observed, particularly in the rural area, where improvements were made at a rapid rate. As a result, the proportion of women who work is more significant in society's overall development. Because women make up half of the human labour and human resources, organisations can never reach their full potential if they continue to be consumers rather than producers. As a result, women's participation in the workforce is a critical component of inclusive and long-term growth. According to this viewpoint, women who are expected to make a more significant economic contribution to the family are given a higher portion of the family's resources.

“In our patriarchal society, parents prioritise male children who are expected to grow up to be productive adults who will take over the family business or earn enough money to support their ageing mother and father. Economic considerations aren't the only ones at play, but they'd be rare if they weren't” (McCabe & Mark, 1976; Wolf & Fligstein, 1979). The proportion of women's educational attainment, their participation in the workforce, and the distance travelled for employment are all critical indicators that represent and quantify women's autonomy and empowerment status. Due to socio-structural differences, men's and women's job search locations differ. Although it has been discovered in many works of similar literature that “women are more likely than males to conduct their job search based on proximity to their home and, as a result, are more attracted to career prospects closer to their homes (Hanson & Johnston, 2013; Erdoganaras et al., 2013).” However, if they are willing to move more from home to work only, it shows that women have more liberty. Furthermore, many employment-generating sectors that allow women to work have regulatory limitations involving distance from home, mobility, and safety concerns for their female employees. As a result, it contributes to gender segregation in the workplace and the concentration of female labour in specialised occupations (Hanson & Johnston, 2013; Anumonwo, 2013; Mahata et al., 2017).

Conclusion

In India, women are worshipped but are not treated like a *Devi*. They are always pulled back from whatever they do to enhance and prosper. The civil rights movement inspired Indian women to fight for themselves. Many NGOs are there, which help them uplift and live dignified life. By strengthening women's participation in the mainstream of society, we can quickly change the picture of male dominance in Haryana, either through sex balance or by creating opportunities for women to be more involved in the workforce. Following the 2001 census, the Indian central government and the Haryana state government implemented several initiatives, including “*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (save the daughter and educate daughter);



Ladly Scheme (scheme for daughters); *Sukanya Dev Yojna* (money scheme for daughters); *Kanya Kosh* (funds for females); *Dhana Lakshmi Scheme* (a scheme for daughters, generally in India, girls are understood as ‘*Dhanlaxmi*’ that represents the goddess of wealth) and *Apni Beti Apna Dhan* (our daughter is our wealth).” On “International Women's Day” in 2010, the Indian government also announced the National Mission for Women's Empowerment. The fundamental goal of this program was to improve women's welfare and socio-economic growth, as well as gender equality and justice, by bringing together inter-sectoral activities that affect women. All of these programs aimed to improve the status of women, particularly in rural areas. As a result, it was found that people, particularly in rural regions, were more accepting of these initiatives. As a result, there has been evidence of a rising sex ratio. In the last decade, women's autonomy has grown in tandem with their increased participation in the workforce.

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