



WOMEN IN WORKFORCE

The dream of New India is an India where women are empowered, strengthened, where they become equal partners in the all-round development of the country.

Facts:

- While the number of women employed in salaried jobs has increased by 8 per cent, the overall participation of women in India's workforce is on the decline, revealed the Economic Survey 2018.
- The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020 ranks India at 149th position out of 153 countries on economic participation and opportunity.
- According to NSO-EUS and PLFS estimates, though female labour force participation rate is higher in rural areas than in urban ones, the rate of decline has also been sharper in rural areas compared to urban areas.
- According to the PLFS, female workforce population ratio for productive age group (15-59 ages) stood at 23.8 per cent in 2017-18 as compared to 32.3 percent in 2011-12.
- The number of self-employed women has decreased from 7.2 crore in 2011-12 to 5.54 crore in 2017-18.
- At 17% of GDP, the economic contribution of Indian women is less than half the global.

Importance of Women in workforce

- IMF: India's GDP could expand 27% if the number of female workers equals that of men.
- India could boost its growth to 9% per year if 50% of women could join the work force.
- Micro level: Financially independent and greater control over their own lives, they will stand against physical and emotional abuse, they will handle social issues and pressures on their own.
- Macro level: Good for the overall economy, McKinsey Global Institute report 2016: increasing gender parity, India can add \$700 billion to the global GDP, Men's wages will also increase, Women help build an inspiring work culture.

Reasons for low female labour force participation

- 35 % of the women are illiterate.
- Entrenched patriarchal social norms.
- Rising household incomes.
- Disproportionate burden of unpaid household and child caring work on women.
- Absence of suitable jobs for women and a significant gender wage gap.
- There is no comprehensive policy support and there is lack of its effective implementation.
- Mismatch between aspiration of educated women and the quality and availability of jobs.
- Higher participation of women in education.
- Insufficient formal wages and poor job opportunities.
- Shrinking of the agriculture sector.
- Lack of formal enterprises.
- Barriers to migration for women, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment at the Workplace.

Suggestions to increase women workforce

- Reorienting Policy Design.
- Convergence with programmes for adult education, literacy and advanced skill training and higher education.
- Using tax policies to incentivise women into the labour market on both the demand and supply side.
- Communication and Behavioural Change.
- Support Services for Entry and Continuation.
- Gender-sensitive infrastructure.



Sources: India Today, Economic Times, WeForum, Financial Express, Indian Express & others.