GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET - A THREAT TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

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Abstract: Social exclusion of certain groups on the basis of race, creed, colour and caste has been practiced in most societies. This paper explores the sources and implications of such exclusion, especially as manifest in discrimination in the labour market. After briefly reviewing the concepts of social exclusion in various contexts, the main focus of the paper is on the gender – based and social exclusion in the labour market in India. Based mainly on the data available from secondary official sources and past studies on the subject, it concludes that even though the extent of discrimination and severity of discrimination has declined over the years, there is still a large degree of disadvantage faced by certain social groups in employment and wages. A large part of it is accounted for by differences in endowment among different social groups but a significant part is due to discrimination. It is a threat to poverty alleviation in India. The paper concludes by suggesting that capacity enhance and affirmative actions are necessary to bring about equality of opportunity in the labour market.

Key Words: Gender discrimination, Labour market, Poverty, Social exclusion

Introduction: The gap between the haves and have not's has widened after the introduction of new economic policy. Planning commission has adjusted the poverty line for 2009-10 prices, which stood at Rs. 29 per day per capita expenditure in urban areas and Rs. 22 per day per capita in rural areas. On the basis of this, the commission claimed that there was impressive rate of decline in poverty from 37.2 per cent in 2004-05 to 29.8 per cent in 2009-10. According to this measure, even in absolute terms, the number of poor has also come down from 407.2 million in 2004-05 to 354.6 million in 2009-10. The orthodox economists are of the view that the higher GDP growth (8.5 per cent) from 2004-05 to 2009-10 has reduced poverty at a record rate of 1.5 per cent point per year.

According to the calorie estimates of poverty, the proportion of households which are unable to consume 2100 calories in urban areas and 2200 calories in rural areas (earlier it was 2400) are considered to be poor. In case of rural areas, the proportion of population below minimum nutrition norms has increased from 59 per cent in 1993-94 to 76 per cent in 2009-10. It means that after the introduction of neoliberal measures, the extent of poverty in Indian has increased. The 'Inclusive Growth Strategy' of government has proven to be a failure in urgent spheres.

Therefore it is necessary for us, before announcing the next five year plan strategy, to realise the ground realities and evaluate where we really stand. There is an urgent need to rethink about so called 'inclusiveness' of India's present economic model. There is also an urgent requirement to take steps to reduce the rate of poverty in real terms rather than in monetary terms by generating secure, better and permanent employment opportunities instead of temporary measures such as MGNREGA.

Methodology of the study: The study assesses the emerging employment scenario in the current economic context. Another approach to the study of social exclusion is to identify the groups that are known to have been or are in danger of being socially excluded on the basis of their specific attributes and examine the mechanisms of their exclusion and possible ways of increasing their inclusion in the mainstream.Gender-based discrimination and exclusion is found to be a common phenomenon across the globe. In this paper an attempt has been made to verify the conceptual issue of link between employment generation, gender discrimination in the labour market with regard to India and its impact on poverty.

The study period is for thirty years from 1981 –2010. The time frame of the study is largely limited by the avability of data on the selected indicators. The study has applied end point method, Semi-log growth modeland MLR model.In the present study sex ratio, urban and rural employment growth rate and labour participation rate is calculated by End Point Method Where all variables in the models are expressed in natural logarithms.

End Point Method

The following formula is used in this study;

$Y = +(((b1/b0)1/n-1)*100)$

Whereb1 = current year value, b0 = base year value and n = class interval

Multiple LinearRegression Model

Urban: $\ln SR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln FL + \beta_2 \ln WPR + u$

Rural : $\ln SR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln FL + \beta_2 \ln WPR + u$

WhereSR = sex ratio and FL = female literacy

WPR = work participate rate

β_1 = Growth rate of respective variable

U = Random disturbance term

Employment generation and the role of women in employment in India: The employment strategy, for achieving inclusive growth in the Eleventh Plan, is to ensure rapid growth of employment and also improvement in the quality of employment. While self employment will remain an important employment category in the foreseeable future, it accounted for 58% of all employment in 2004–05 there is need to increase the share of regular employees in total employment. The generation of productive and gainful employment, with decent working conditions, on a sufficient scale to absorb our growing labour force must form a critical element in the strategy for achieving inclusive growth. The thrust of employment strategy in the Eleventh Plan is Skill Development, which is essential to enhance the employability of unemployed and to improve the quality of employment of those who are employed at a low level of wage rate.

The changing demographic dynamics (declining fertility and benefits of demographic dividend) coupled with socio-economic changes expected to contribute to favorable condition for increasing labour force participation of females. However, the failure of the economy to integrate females into labour market becomes quite disturbing and unusual. Labour participation rate of female in India was 29.00 as of 2011. Its highest value over the past 21 years was 37.00 in 2005, while its lowest value was 29.00 in 2010.

TABLE – 1 CATAGORIES OF WORK PARTICIPATION RATE IN INDIA 2011

Workers	RURAL			URBAN		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Main workers	1693.33	603.39	226.72	711.87	123.14	835.01
Percentage	74	26	100	85	15	100
Marginal workers	298.66	511.16	809.82	50.77	32.79	83.58
Percentage	37	63	100	61	39	100
N on Workers	1812.39	2483.61	4296	737.2	1194.19	1932.39
Percentage	42	58	100	38	62	100

Source: Census 2011

A majority of women are employed in the agricultural sector (68.4Percentage), followed by the service sector (15.8Percentage). The eastern states, which are among the poorest states, show surprising patterns in involvement of women among the various sectors. At 59.4 per cent, women here are less likely to be employed in agriculture than any of the other regions, but almost twice as likely to be involved in manufacturing (18.7Percentage) as compared to the national average (9.8Percentage) manufacturing of tobacco products and products out of wood (other than furniture) are among the major activities for women on these states.

TABLE-2 LEVELS AND TRENDS IN SECTOR WISE COMPOSITION OF WOMEN BY SECTOR AND REGION (Percentage)

Regions	Sector wise composition of women in the work force 2009-10					Change sector wise composition of women in the work force 1983-84 and 2009-10				
	Agriculture	Manu-Fracturing	Construction	Services	Mining	Agriculture	Manu-fracturing	construction	Services	Mining
North	70.1	6.4	2.4	20.9	0.2	-15.5	38.8	637.3	73.9	119.5
Centre	76.9	5.5	8.8	8.7	0.2	-11.4	-7.1	806.5	45.2	-61.4
North east	67.9	4	9.6	18.3	0.2	-9.9	-55	2686.4	21.4	-37
East	59.4	18.7	4	17.4	0.6	-23.4	79.4	691.1	57.7	-2.9
West	72.3	5.9	1.8	19.9	0.2	-12.9	3.1	14.5	107	32.2
South	61.4	14	5.6	18.5	0.6	-18.6	33.6	428.8	45.8	37.3
India	68.4	9.8	5.6	15.8	0.4	-15.3	23.2	477.1	58.8	-8.1

SOURCE: NSSO Data

Trend of female labour force participation rate: Analysis of trend in labour force participation by sex indicates the decline is largely observed among females than that of males. It has been observed that the participation rate among males remains stagnant over the years. At the same time, it also shows that there exists wide gender difference in participation rate across all the NSS rounds and it is one of the lowest among developing countries. Rural-urban difference in labour force participation rate does not show any significant variation among male. On the other hand, the participation rate among females varies widely between rural and urban area. For female the rural participation rates are more than doubled as compared to urban participation rates.

TABLE - 3
LEVEL AND TRENDS IN FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES BY REGION (Percentage)

Regions	Participation rates 2009-10			Change in participation rates 2009-10			Change in participation rates 1983-84 to2009-10		
	Paid	Unpaid	LFPR	Paid	Unpaid	LFPR	Paid	Unpaid	LFPR
North	23.2	12.2	36	-14.4	-26.9	-19.3	-16.2	-14.1	-14.3
Centre	22.6	18.4	41.1	-0.4	-38	-21.9	-14.1	-30.3	-22.2
North east	17.3	13	31.6	-0.6	-40.4	-21.2	-19.2	-20.3	14.9
East	15.3	7.1	22.6	-25.7	-49.6	-36.7	-45.6	-34.9	-42.5
West	30.1	15.1	45.7	-16.4	-32.9	-22.3	-25.1	-19.3	-22.7
South	38.5	11.4	51	-70	-35.2	-16	-15.8	-19.1`	-15.3
India	26	13.1	39.6	-10	-37.9	-22	-22.8	-24.3	-22.7

SOURCE: NSSO Data

Labour force participation rate among women aged 25-59 year over 1983-84 to 2009-10 India and disaggregated at the regional level. It also shows the employment rate for the latest NSSO round and changes in the previous 5 years. National trends show that labour force participation has declined over the long term as well as the shorter time horizon. This is true for both unpaid and paid works between the period 1983-94 and 2009-10 unpaid work participation rates declined by 22.8 per cent and paid work participation rate by 24.3 per cent.

In 2009/10, the labour force participation rate of male in rural area is 55.6 percent and in urban area it is 55.9 percent. Unlike this among rural females 26.5 percent participated in labour force whereas it was 14.6 percent in urban area. Similar pattern is observed in all the rounds of NSS. Compared to other periods, rural women's participation is exceptionally low in 2009/10. One of the major features that emerge from the trend analysis is that women's participation in labour market is typically low in India and wide gender difference in participation rate also persists. Only 25 to 30Percentage of women in rural and 15 to 18Percentage in urban areas participate in labour market whereas in the case males it is more than 50 percent. One of the reasons of low participation of women in labour force is the non-recognition of a number of women centric works as economic activities (such as cooking, collection of fuel and fodder, house and utensils cleaning etc.).

Moreover, a variety of social and family related constraints compel women to confine themselves to household activities at their prime working age. Early exit of women (probably post marital age) from labour market is particularly reflected in urban areas where women face inadequate social and family support system (ministry of Labour and Employment, 2010) Another major feature that comes out from the figure is the fact that there has been a steep decline in female labour force irrespective of rural and urban area in recent year. The decline is relatively higher especially in rural area. It has been observed form the data that 2004-05 is bit of an outlier in terms of female labour force participation rate. On the other hand, 2009-10 indicates a reversion to the longer term trend of gradual decline. It has been pointed out by the official that poor investigative method or inadequate capture of women's work in the latest round results in decline in participation rate.

However, the argument put forth by it may not be the reason for such a persistent decline of female labour force. If changing labour demand results in more demand for women in paid work, then it is more likely to be captured by the investigators. Nevertheless, there has not been any evident implying increase in demand for women in paid employment and that is a real paradox. There are several reasons for why female opt out of labour force. Increase in educational level of female partly responsible for the recent decline in participation rate. In the period 2004-05 to 2009-10, 313 million people opted out of the labour force to study as against 267 million in the previous five years 1999-2000 to 2004-05. The rural woman overtook her urban counterpart for education, with the former growing at 3.3 percent as against 2.7Percentage for the latter. But at the same time

education may not be the only factor for such fluctuating trend since participation rate declines across all the age groups. There are certain other factors that also play important role which needs in-depth investigation.

The growth of female labour participation rate and the ratio of female to male labour participation show a significant decelerating growth rate of 1.8 per cent per annum in India from 1990 to 2010. The results indicate that the growth of female participation rate and the ratio of female to male labour participation rate in India has been moderately decelerating during the overall period. The female labour force participation and its contribution to economic development have greater importance. Hence, drawing women into the labour force can be an important source of future growth of the Indian economy. It has been pointed out that demographic dividend, coupled with high female participation rates, and is alleged to have accounted for about a third of East Asia's high precipitate growth rates (Bloom and Williamson, 1998). Beyond economic benefits, women's participation in the labour force can be seen as a signal of declining discrimination and increasing empowerment of women. The women Labour participation rate has declined and it is observed that the ratio of women Labour participation have moved from Agricultural sector to construction and service sector.

TABLE - 4

GROWTH ANALYSIS ON FEMALE LABOUR PARTICIPATION RATE AND RATIO OF FEMALE TO MALE LABOUR PARTICIPATION RATE

Log quadratic function $\log Y = a + b_t + c_t^2 + u$

Growth analysis	Regression Co-efficient			R^2	NGR	Growth Rate
	A	B	C			
FLP Rate	3.509	0.018 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.000)	0.72	Decelerating	1.8
RFMLP Rate	3.678	0.018 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.000)	0.58	Decelerating	1.8

The main problems for declining participation of female in labour force could be attributed to many causes like lack of technical skills of older cohort of women, household responsibilities, higher level of participation in education of the younger generation etc. Besides, the macro level economic changes also play a significant role in this regard. For instance, due to mechanization of agriculture the requirement of manual labour goes down and hence affect female participation rate as female are mostly engaged in agriculture. Besides, the slowdown in overall job creation that is jobless growth of the economy may also have deceleration effect on the rate of labour force participation of female.

Factors influencing the sex ratio for rural and urban in india: Modern economic growth has been characterized by the movement of an increasing proportion of the population in developed countries from the rural areas to the urban areas. Urbanization is largely a product of industrialization. The economies of scale arising from non-agricultural pursuits as a result of technological changes led to the movement of large proportion of labour population from the rural areas to the urban areas. The effects of urbanization on modern economic growth of developed nations led to the decline in birth and the shift toward the small family.

Table - 5

Number of Workers (in millions) in 2004-05 and 2009-10 and Compound Annual Growth Rates (CAGR in %) between the Two Years

Rural & Urban	Principal status workers*			Subsidiary status workers**			All workers ***		
	2004-05	2009-10	CAGR	2004-05	2009-10	CAGR	2004-05	2009-10	CAGR
Rural									
Male	213.5	228.0	1.31	4.5	4.1	-1.98	218.5	232.1	1.21
Female	91.4	81.2	-2.34	33.0	24.0	-6.19	123.8	105.2	-3.20
Persons	304.9	309.2	0.28	37.5	28.7	-5.61	342.3	337.9	-0.26
Urban									
Male	90.1	102.8	2.68	1.4	0.7	-11.73	91.6	103.4	2.45
Female	20.4	20.9	0.47	4.8	3.2	-7.80	25.2	24.1	-0.89
Persons	110.5	123.7	2.28	6.2	4.0	-8.61	116.8	127.7	1.80
Rural + Urban									

Male	303.6	330.7	1.73	5.9	4.8	-3.92	310.1	335.5	1.59
Female	111.8	102.1	-1.80	37.8	27.9	-5.89	149.0	130.0	-2.69
Persons	415.4	432.8	0.82	43.7	32.7	-5.63	459.1	465.5	0.28

Note: *measured as usual principal status (UPS); **measured as only subsidiary workers; ***measured as UPSS.
Source: Estimated on the basis of NSSO 2006 and 2011.

A woman's chance of getting a regular job in the organised sector is 0.67 of a male worker; and, a woman worker, on an average, earns 60 per cent of the wage of a male worker (Papola and Sahu 2012). Urban labour markets are especially unfriendly to women. As against over one third of rural workers, only 18 per cent of urban workers are women. In larger cities their share is still lower around 12 to 15 per cent. Workforce participation rate is as low as 14 per cent as against 55 per cent for men in urban areas; the two rates are 29 and 55 respectively in rural areas (CSO, 2010).

Labour force participation rates are generally much lower among women than among men, but the gap is much larger in urban than in rural areas: during 2007-08, labour force participation rates among men were estimated to be 55 per cent in rural and 57 per cent in urban areas, but only 22 per cent in rural and 14 per cent in urban areas, among women (CSO, 2010). That of those looking for work, a smaller proportion of among women than among men found jobs was evident by a higher rate of unemployment among women than among men, especially in urban areas. Unemployment rates were around 2 per cent both for men and women in rural areas, but in urban areas, female unemployment rates were around 7 per cent as against 4 per cent in the case of males.

The above table reveals that sex ratio in India was high in 2010. The data clearly shows that there were 1007 females for 1000 males. The major reasons for this are due to migration of the population to the urban areas. The people started migrating to urban areas keeping their spouses in village, as housing facilities are not available in towns. From 1961 to 1991 the growth rate of sex ratio was negative because the preference for the male child was still prevalent among all the people. There is relative gap in the health conditions between males and females because of certain types of mortality which are sex selective. The adverse sex ratio is also due to lower expectation of life at birth for females in the past compared to males. Thus high female death is the main cause for low sex ratio and in 2010 the growth rate of sex ratio is positive. It is however, difficult to pin-point any particular reason for the declining sex ratio.

In 2010 the sex ratio has increased. This is because in recent times technology assisted female foeticide which is practised in some pockets despite prevaling legislation banning the use of diagnostic tests to determine the sex ratio. Sex ratio is a very important criterion affecting all major elements of the economy and combined with age distribution and martial status. The employment growth of UPS and UPSS inIndia both in thecase of rural and the urban area is estimated with dependent variable sex ratio and independent variable female literacy and work participation rate.

TABLE - 6

MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION MODELS For Rural And Urban Sex Ratio For Ups And Upss

Ups

Dependent variable	**Constant (β_0)**	**Co efficient of female literacy (β_1)**	**Co efficient of WPR (β_2)**	**R^2**
SR (Rural)	78.768 (32.758)	0.1 (0.821)	-0.549 (-1.616)	0.78
SR (Urban)	994.280 (49.043)	0.248 (4.155)	-1.032 (-3.359)	0.93

* significant at 10% level

UPSS

Dependent variable	**Constant (β_0)**	**Co efficient of female literacy (β_1)**	**Co efficient of WPR (β_2)**	**R^2**
SR (Rural)	982.276 (44.734)	0.00458 (0.450)	-0.561 (-2.556)	0.88
SR (Urban)	994.569 (55.209)	0.197 (3.696)	-0.957 (-3.797)	0.94

* significant at 10% level

The correlation coefficient of the variable female literacy both in the rural and the urban areas are fixed at zero value by keeping other values constant.The average value of sex ratio in the rural area is 6.925 and in the urban area is 7.098.The correlation coefficient of the variable work participation rate both in the rural area and in the urban area are fixed at zero value by keeping other values constant. The average value of sex ratio in the rural area is-0.55 and in the urban area is -.032 for UPS and The average value of sex ratio in the rural area is-0.561 and in the urban area is -0.957 for UPSS.

R^2 value 0.78and 0.93 shows that, varitions in sex ratio in rural is explained by 78 percentage and in urban 93 percentage of the variable in the dependent variable of India in the case of UPS. R^2 value 0.88and 0.94 shows that, varitions in sex ratio in rural is explained by 88 percentage and in urban 94 percentage of the variable in the dependent variable of India in the case of UPSS.

Social exclusion and discrimination on employment: Inequality in access to quality employment and education and skill has led to persisting inequality in wages and earning in the labour market. There is a great variation in wage rates not only across different population groups but also across different types of works. The range of variation extends from an average of approximately ` 523 for the richest quintile in regular works to as low as ` 70 for a female in casual works in rural areas. Further, within each category of types of work, particularly regular and casual in other works, there is perceptible inequality in wage payments. The casual public works, however, reflects minimization of this inequality to a great extent. However, given the very small share of casual public works in total employment, the overall inequality in wages remains significant.

On an average, monthly earnings of a female worker were 72 per cent of those of a male worker. The gap was much less in public administration, banking and insurance and education, but much higher in manufacturing and trade. Occupation wise the difference was high in executive and supervisory positions where female earnings were only about 58 per cent of male earnings and, in unskilled work where they were only 48 per cent.

Table - 7

Average Daily Wage Rates (in `) across Different Population Groups and Types of Works, 2009-10

Population groups	Average daily wage (in `)		
	Regular workers	Casual in public works	Casual in other works
Sector			
Rural	229.35	93.53	92.56
Urban	362.35	95.34	122.33
Gender			
Male	330.08	98.80	106.31
Female	249.51	86.54	70.19

Source: NSSO, 2009-10, calculated from unit level records - for all age groups.

Among sales workers and telephone operators, women on an average earned much more than men and among teachers, Para medical workers and higher grade clerical workers the two sexes earned similar salaries. Age, education and length of service were positively associated with earnings, but more so in the case of male than female workers.

Table - 8

Extent of Inequality (Ratio of Lowest to Highest Daily Wage Rate) in Wage Payments, 2009-10

Extent of inequality* in average daily wage			
	Regular	Casual in public works	Casual in other works
Rural/Urban	0.63	0.98	0.76
Female/Male	0.76	0.88	0.66
Overall**	0.24	0.82	0.56

Table also shows that the extent of inequality is the lowest in public works. Except in cases of female to male ratio, the public works wages are more or less the same for other population groups. Over the years, public works have played an important role in removing wage inequality, particularly in the case of casual employment. In addition, implementation of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 and fixation and regular revisions of National Floor Level Minimum Wages (NFLMW) has helped in reducing disparities in wage payments across different population groups. In spite of all these developments, however, the

disadvantage and discrimination faced by women continues to be large and the equality between sexes in the labour market is still a distant dream.

Suggestions: Studies suggest that while discrimination is quite significant, a major part of the exclusion is accounted for by endowment that is education, skills and experience of a worker. It is, therefore, necessary, in the first instance, that effective measures to improve the endowment of the workers belonging to the disadvantaged social groups are undertaken. These measures may include not only a support for education and skill formation, but also steps towards alleviation of their poverty. Their access both to education, training and health facilities and to sources of livelihoods needs to improve. For, while quite often, availability of institutions and facility is not found sufficient, enabling people to avail of them is also equally important, in so far as their existing economic and social handicaps prevent their use. It is, however, observed that endowment again is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for benefitting from participation in the labour market and accessing jobs befitting one's qualifications. The fact that rates of return on education are significantly lower for Scheduled Caste workers than for others suggests that the labour markets discriminate among workers with similar educational endowment but with different social background. Part of this exclusion takes place because the dissemination of information on jobs is often exclusionary: information becomes available only those who have someone 'inside'; and the insiders mostly happen to be from among those socially and economically better placed.

In the process, equality of opportunity is denied. The discriminatory process can extend beyond access to information to processes of selection in which attributes which have little relevance for the performance of the job, but tend to favour candidates with better social and economic endowment (e.g. facility with spoken English!), are emphasized. The second necessary condition to reduce exclusion and discrimination, therefore, is to ensure equality of opportunity in access to information and use of non-discriminatory methods and criteria in selection. Finally, it is also observed that ensuring capacity enhancement and equality of opportunity also does not necessarily lead to a non-discriminatory and non-exclusionary treatment in the labour markets as employers often have a 'taste' for discrimination. To the extent, such discrimination is found to be systematic and significant; the necessary measures lie in the spheres of affirmative action, and more specifically in the form of positive discrimination. Such action in the form of quota and reservation in jobs in the public sector has been practiced with significant positive results in India for several decades now and the private sector may have to consider its adoption in broader social context as part of its social responsibility towards the disadvantage sections of society.

Conclusion: Some of the notable changes in respect of women's employment are as follows: One, the share of women in the organized sector employment has increased: Second, thought there has been hardly any increase in the share of regular wage and salary earners in total employment; it has significantly increased in the case of women workers. It must, however, be noted that it is still far below that among the male workers of whom 19 per cent are in this category. Third, more women are now finding employment in better paying and 11 secure job providing sectors and activities, such as financial services and information technology. Fourth, there has been a decline in the wage gap.

Efforts need to be made to reduce the difference in income groups Existence of social exclusion and discrimination in the labour market is quite well established in a large number of studies. The case for introducing measures to combat them is thus obvious. Such measures consist of two elements: one that aim at capacity enhancement of the excluded groups so as to reduce their disadvantage vis-à-vis other groups and the second, to positively discriminate in their favour by giving them preferential treatment in hiring. In fact both these approaches have been adopted in India in the form of preferential and promotive measures in education and reservation in public sector jobs. But social exclusion and discrimination in labour markets against these groups still continues to be widespread and of significant extent as evidence presented earlier shows, partly due to poor effectiveness of the existing measures and partly because of the absence of any affirmative action in the private sector where most of the Indian workers are employed.

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