

# Female Work Force Participation and Women Empowerment in Haryana

Dinabandhu Mahata, Amit Kumar, Ambarish Kumar Rai

**Abstract**—India is known as a country of diversity regarding the social, cultural and wide geographical variations. In the north and north-west part of the country, the strong patriarchal norms and the male dominance based social structure are the important constructs. Patriarchal social setup adversely affects the women's social and economic wellbeing and hence in that social structure women are considered as second level citizen. Work participation rate of women has directly linked to the development of society or household. Haryana is one of the developed states of India, still being ahead in economic prosperity, much lagged behind in gender-based equality and male dominance in all dimensions of life. The position of women in the Haryana is no better than the other states of India. Haryana state has the great difference among the male-female sex ratio which is a serious concern for social science research as a demographic problem for the state. Now women are requiring for their holistic empowerment and that will take care of them for an enabling process that must lead to their economic as well as social transformation. Hence, the objective of the paper is to address the role of sex ratio, women literacy and her work participation in the process of their empowerment with special attention to the gender perspective. The study used the data from Census of India from 1991 to 2011. This paper will examine the regional disparity of sex ratio, literacy rate and female work participation and the improvement of empowerment of women in the state of Haryana. This paper will suggest the idea for focusing much intensively on the issues of women empowerment through enhancement of her education, workforce participation and social participation with people participation and holistic approach.

**Keywords**—Sex ratio, literacy rate, workforce participation rate, women empowerment, Haryana.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE working status of women is a major factor in the progression of their economic independence, and it has been considered as an indicator of their overall wellbeing status in society [1]. Higher participation of women in workforce is also symbolized for their autonomy status and social and economic empowerment. In many developing countries due to poor status and share of women in education and employment, the gender inequalities persist. Therefore, the promotions of gender equality and the women's empowerment have been included among the Millennium Development Goals by the United Nations [2], [3]. Hence, the women empowerment has become an essential aspect of women's development agendas, featured as the third

Millennium Development Goal (MDG). 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 [4]. Women's participation in the workforce is an important social up gradation determinant because it directly influences the level of autonomy, living standard and well-being of women [1], [5]. The increasing trend toward women's participation in the labour market in both developed and developing countries has drawn both social and academic interest [6].

Imbalanced sex ratio in the north and north-west region of India, which is not natural, clearly indicates the particular male sex affinity in the society and poor status of women. In a patriarchal society son has the central position for all cultural and religious ritual performance. The son is considered as a social security for their parents during their elder-hood. To fulfill the economic needs of households, the son is only considered as asset and hence he attains the prime importance in his family in the patriarchal society. Demographically, in household after the marriage only son would be eligible for considering as main part of the family who drives the family lineage ahead and gains the social prestige for family. Therefore, such a social and cultural norm that is highly deep rooted to the particular society compels the higher importance of male than female in the society and furthermore such patriarchal society become the sex-selective. These all cause for huge imbalance in male-female sex-ratio.

In India, which is a socially constructed country, both economic and socio-cultural factors determine the level of female employment. Many relevant studies have suggested and identified some of the possible determinants of women's participation in India and its positive impact on women's socioeconomic and health status [6]-[11]. In India, it was a very crucial observation that the workforce participation of women is very low comparison to their counterpart male. Moreover, the data of last few decades have depicted that there is a continuous increment in women's workforce participation [5]. Therefore, many of the recent studies tried to examine the level of magnitude of working status of women with the specific orientation of nature of work across all sector and the region of India.

Workforce participations are depending on the societal norms, the behaviour of women and her level of education. It has been argued that the increasing role of women in the household's economy will make them empower. Recently, it has been increasingly documented that in India, women are less empowered and only limited proportion of them were involved in decision making. Contemporary studies

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underscore about women's limited control over material and other resources. They are also restricted to access to the knowledge and right information regarding their basic social and constitutional rights as a citizen. Working status makes women socially educated, independent and autonomous for their decision making. They are also abiding by their enforced lack of physical mobility, and inability to forge the equal share of power in the relationships within families [12]-[14]. The census data have shown that over few last decades the female labour force participation has been increased with more rapidly in Haryana [15]-[17].

There is a close link between women's employment and its association with their empowerment status. Working status of women makes them more economically independent and hence they become the prime decision maker for themselves as well as for the family. The economic prosperity of women makes her stronger socially and even individually to have their identity within family and society. Due to the regular movement for working and exploration with new interaction groups, women become more aware regarding her rights. Hence knowledge and awareness level enhances and the women become independent for the self decision making. It could make them to be aware of their rights, and hence, it makes them empowered. In Haryana, although the economic prosperity is high, the social and economic status of women is still far behind than their counterparts. This difference has been considered more when we compare the place of residence as rural and urban. In rural, still women were less independent in decision making and much economic dependent on their family member and hence, they were less exposed towards using the resources for their own choice. The state has one of the highest per capita incomes, but regarding its male-female balance, it is at a second lowest level in India. Sex ratio itself is an indicator of gender equality and level of women autonomy. So there is a need to explore all the responsible factors for sex-ratio imbalances in the society. Furthermore, the aim of the study is also to understand how the sex-imbalances are functioning latently in the society for demographic disruption at state level. Moreover, we are also interested to explore how this particular socio-demographic phenomenon creates rural-urban differentials in working status and level of autonomy of women.

## II. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Women workforce participation rate is one of the most important factors to indicate the women status and empowerment. Haryana is the state that has historical evidences of lowest sex ratio in terms of female and and hence in the state, man are the more socially and economically advantageous compared to the female. In the society mainly the power is controlled by the man. In the family life and even at the personal life, man is the decision maker because they have economic and social power. Therefore, females are more vulnerable to the decision making. Therefore, females are more vulnerable to the decision making. Many literatures suggested that the female who are considered as half of the population, play a vital role in holistic development from

households to the nation [11]-[13] hence, the women's economic activity and their economic prosperity are much required. Haryana is the state where the female literacy and sex ratio is very low. It indicates the low status of women's decision making and their workforce participation. So, there is a need to explore it in the very contrast domain of their place of residence. The objectives of the paper are to access the trend and pattern of the sex ratio status, level of female literacy rate and workforce participation rate of women in the Haryana. We also want to explore these factors to its inter-linkages to the women empowerment.

## III. DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

### A. Data

The study used the secondary data of Census of India for the state of Haryana from 1991 to 2011 (Primary Census Abstract and Economic table) for the analysis. There were different variables which were used to calculate the different rates and ratios for the study.

### B. Methods

Bi-variate analysis is used to fulfil the objectives above. By using the data, different rates and ratio have been calculated to show the trends and relationship among the desired variables.

### C. Variables

In the present study, we used following important socioeconomic indicators:

- a) Sex-Ratio,
- b) Literacy Rate,
- c) Workforce Participation Rate for:
  - i. Main Workers
  - ii. Marginal Workers
- d) Unemployment Rate

The census of India classifies workers into two groups namely, main employees and marginal workers. It defines the main workers as those who are usually working or had worked for the major part of the duration and the reference period of the duration has been considered as six months or above. While those workers, who had not worked for the major duration of the reference period, i.e. less than six months, were considered as the marginal workers [15]-[17]. According to the census of India, the main workers are classified by Industrial category of workers into the following four categories:

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

**Other workers** are those workers who are engaged in the construction, trade commerce, transport storage and communication, professional and nursing work.

The indicators used for the study were calculating as under following methods:

### 2) Sex Ratio

Sex ratio is used to describe the ratio of the number of

females per 1000 of 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.

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

### 3) Literacy Rate

Literacy rate is calculated as the number person of 7+ year's literate person per 100 persons of 7+ years of ages in the given population.

$$\text{Literacy Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Literate Person}}{\text{Total 7+Population}} * 100$$

### 4) Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

LFPR is defined as the proportion of the total economically active population to the total population of 15-59 of age group. It is computed as:

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

$$\% \text{ of main worker out of working Pop. (15 - 59 years)} = \frac{\text{Total main workers (15-59 years)}}{\text{Total working population (15-59 years)}} * 100$$

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

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

## IV. RESULTS

### A. Trends of Sex Ratio

Fig. 1 illustrates the trends of sex ratio of Haryana by the place of residence. The result showed that there is a considerable difference in the trends of sex ratio in rural and urban. In rural, although the sex ratio was much poor in 1991 and had increased over time continuously, in urban in 2001 there was found a deterioration (847), and again in 2011, it has improved (973) slightly higher from 1991 (868).

### B. Trends of Literacy Rate

Fig. 2 shows the trends of literacy rate in Haryana by the place of resident. In last two decades only about 16% of literacy has increased in women in Haryana as it was only half of the women were literate in 1991, while in 2011, about 66% of women reported as literate. Although there is huge gap in urban-rural literacy of women in Haryana, the pace of being literate in rural was much higher than in urban. While in 1991, only one-third women were literate, after completion of 20 years about 60% of rural women comes under the domain of literate and this was almost the double than their figure of 1991 census. In urban about 75% of women were literate in 2011 census which was higher than the rural women but this

improvement in literacy of urban women over two decades was not so faster as the rural women attained. Over the two decades, a significant improvement has been recorded in the literacy rate of rural women. In rural, about three-fifth of women have come under the literate categories which was almost double than the status of 1991 census. In urban region of Haryana, although there were higher literacy rate of women than rural counterparts, but only 12% improvement was recorded in literacy rate over the last census decade. It clearly shows the rural-urban differentials in women's literacy in Haryana. With compare to the urban region, rural women have better improvement in their status of literacy.

TABLE I  
 TRENDS OF WORKING STATUS OF FEMALE UNDER THE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES BY THEIR PLACE OF RESIDENCE IN HARYANA, CENSUS OF INDIA

Census Year	LFPR		% Main Worker <sup>1</sup>		% Main Worker <sup>2</sup>		Unemployed Rate	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
1991	22.4	9.1	51.2	91.8	11.4	7.8	0.2	0.6
2001	58.6	23.7	47.9	73.4	26.7	12.0	0.1	0.1
2011	38.4	25.2	47.7	80.1	15.0	13.6	11.4	9.7

Note: <sup>1</sup>Main Worker Out of Total Working Population

<sup>2</sup>Main Worker Out of Total Population

### C. Trends of Work Force Participation Rate

Table I illustrated the trends and pattern of women working status by their place of residence for the state of Haryana. In past two decades, the rural women workforce proportion has increased from 22.4% to 58.6%. While in urban, this growth was comparatively less and it was from 9.1% to only 23.7%. In 2001, a considerable proportion of female workforce had decreased in the rural area (about 20%) while for the same period, in urban, we found a growth of about 2%.

In the rural, the trends of the female main working force participation<sup>1</sup> of the female have declined, while in urban it was first declined for 1991 to 2001 and again regained in 2011 and it was in increasing trend.

In the main working<sup>2</sup> group of female, in the rural region, their proportion became more than double (from 11% to 27%) for 1991 to 2001. Again in 2011, the percentage of the main worker out of the working population in rural area has decreased. It was clearly seen that most of the women in rural were engaged in marginal working kind of job which might be agriculture and other primary sector and allied group. While in the main working group<sup>2</sup>, the rural women proportion was higher compared to the urban 2001 and again in 2011 the declination was recorded. In contrast to that in urban, form 1991 to 2011, it was in increasing trend.

The result shows that in the recent decade, the unemployment rate for women has been surprisingly increased. This may be due to the definitional articulated for unemployment rate and the increasing trends of women literacy rate in the state. This massive increment of women unemployment has been recorded in rural and urban both.

<sup>1</sup>Main Worker Out of Total Working Population

<sup>2</sup>Main Worker Out of Total Population

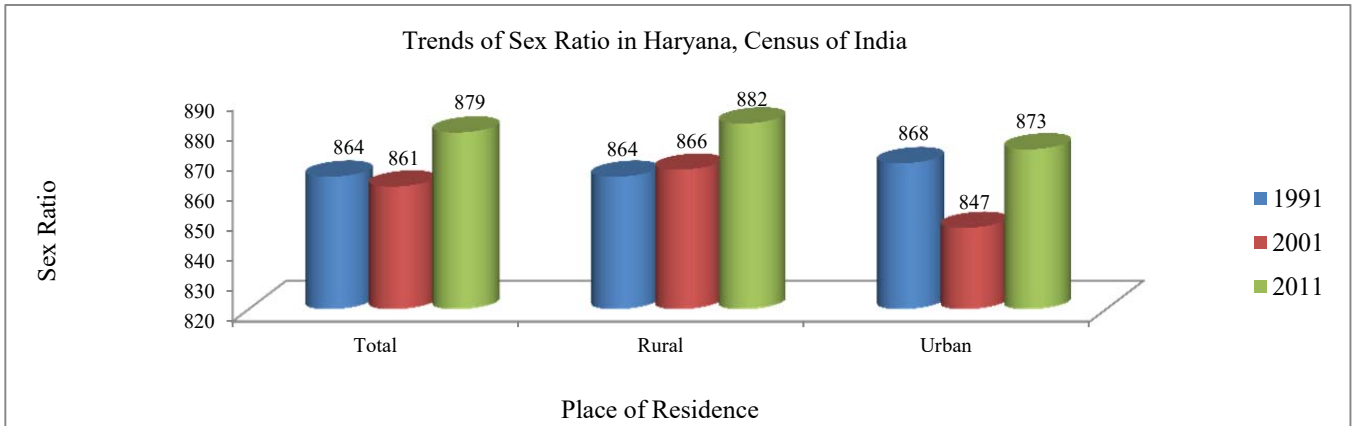


Fig. 1 The Rural-Urban differential in trends of Sex-Ratio in Haryana

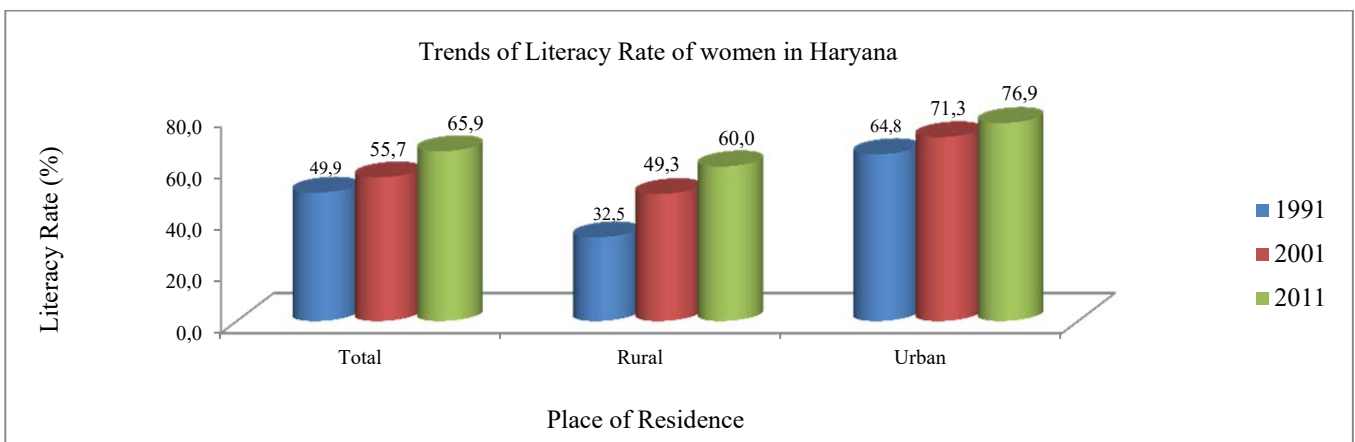


Fig. 2 Trends of Literacy Rate of women in Haryana

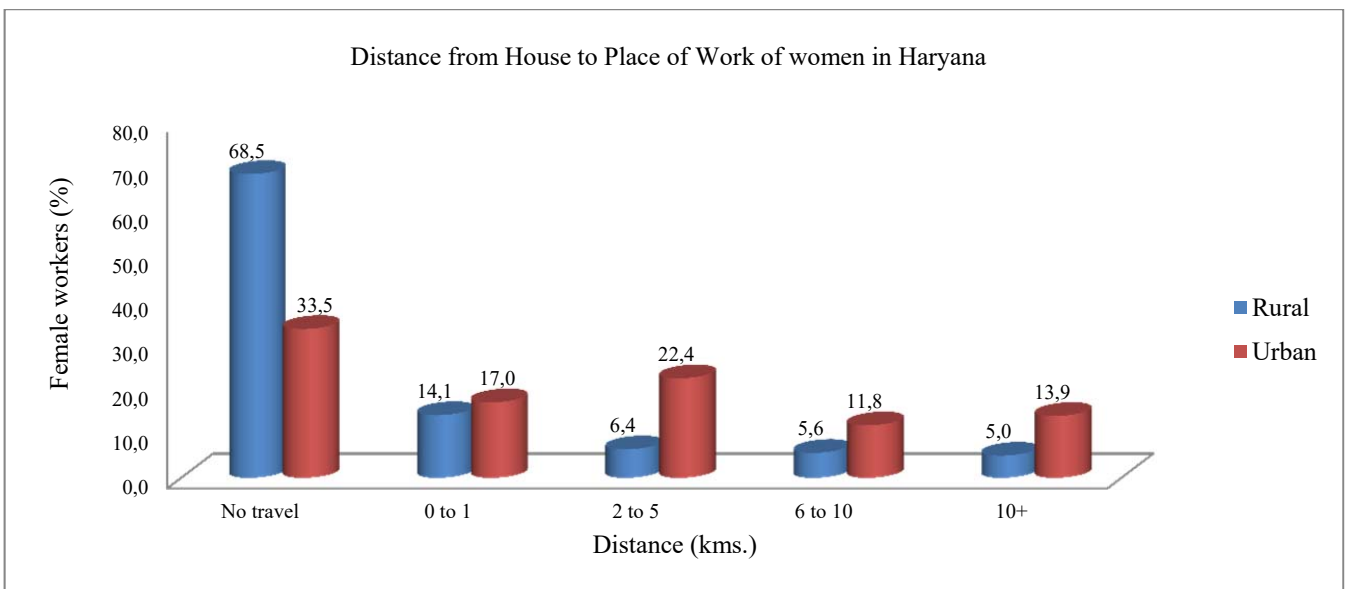


Fig. 3 The rural-urban differential for the distance from home to place of work for working women in Haryana, Census of India 2011

#### *D.Rural-Urban Differential for the Distance from Home to Place of Work for Working Women*

Fig. 3 illustrated the differentials in the distance covered by women from her home to place of work solely for working purposes in rural and urban. The result shows that in rural more than two-third women were working at their home compared to urban women whose proportion was only one-third. In rural of Haryana, only 5% of women were travelling to work more than 10 km from their home location while in urban centers, the proportion of women to travel the same distance was almost thrice than the rural counterparts. As the distance of workplace increases from the households of women, the proportion of working women decreases for that places both in rural and urban. About 90% of rural women prefer to work within the periphery of two to five kilometers of ranges from their households, while only 10% of working women in urban regions moves less than ten kilometers of periphery from their house to work.

#### V.DISCUSSION

Sex ratio, literacy rate and female workforce participation rate are considered as a proxy indicator for women empowerment and their level of autonomy. Usually, these indicators represent the social and economic importance and value of women in any society. In the present study, we have clearly identified the interrelationship among the status of sex-ratio, the level of educational attainment and women's employment in the state of Haryana. It does not mean that there is a vigorous and straightforward correspondence between the sex ratio and women's labour force participation, for the situation, it is too complex [18]. Highly male dominant sex-ratio clearly indicates that there is higher male affinity and less social and economic value of women in the existing society. In such kind of social setup of a patriarchal society, the son is considered as epicenter for all cultural and religious ritual performers. Moreover, he is also understood as a sole source of social and economic security and caretaker of their family and family lineage. So the sex ratio has adversely affected the status of women and their worthiness in such society.

The social value of women also linked to their economic utility value and importance in the household as well as in society. Over the time, the sex ratio has improved in Haryana and resultant to that its association with their economic importance has been increased through their workforce participation rate enhancement. Therefore, there was a positive association in sex ratio increment and rate of women's workforce participation. The similar finding has been seen in other studies [10]-[12], [14]. The workforce participation status of women also represents their level of autonomy regarding their social and financial decision making at individual and households level as well and their physical mobility. So if the rate of workforce participation will increase, naturally it will enhance the level of autonomy in women, and the similar positive finding was visible in the state of Haryana especially, with a rapid pace of enhancement

in the rural region. So the proportion of working participation of women is more important in any society for its holistic development. Because women are the 50% human workforce and human resource and if they could remain as a consumer rather than a producer the society never attains its optimum level of development level. Therefore, women workforce participation is an essential element of the inclusive and sustainable development. In this view, those women who were expected to make a greater economic contribution to the family receive a larger share of resources. In our patriarchal society, parents tend to value male children who were expected to become productive adults and to take over the family enterprise or earn an income, so that they will be in a position to support their ageing mother and father. Although economic considerations are certainly not the only ones involved, they would rarely be absent [19], [20].

The level of educational attainment of women, her involvement in workforce participation and the distance traveled for working are the important indicators that represent and measure the level of women autonomy and their enjoyment of empowerment status. Men and women's job search locations also differ owing to their different socio-structural locations. Although in many works of similar literature it has been found that women are more likely to conduct their job search based on proximity to their residence and as such, are more attracted to employment opportunities closer to their homes than are men [21], [22]. But if they are ready to move more from their house to work only, it clearly indicates higher autonomy of women. Moreover, many employment generating sectors that provide the opportunity to work for women are having the legal guidelines for their female employees regarding taking care of distance from house, mobility and safety issues. So it also contributes to occupational gender segregation and the concentration of female labour in certain jobs [21]-[25].

#### VI. CONCLUSION

By enhancing the participation of women in the mainstream of society, either through sex balancing or by providing the opportunity to women to have a higher involvement in workforce participation, we can rapidly change the picture of male dominance Society of Haryana. After 2001 census central government of India and Haryana state government took much initiative policy like as "**Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**" (save 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). The government of India also launched the National Mission for Empowerment of Women on International Women's day in 2010. The main aim of this program was the women's welfare and socio-economic development, gender equality and gender justices through the inter-sectoral convergence of programs that impact women. All these schemes were mainly for raising

the status of women, especially in the rural areas. Consequently, it was found that particularly in the rural areas, people were more acceptor of these schemes. As a result, the evidences of increasing sex ratio have been observed and with the increasing women workforce participation, the autonomy of women has also enhanced in the state in the recent decade.

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