

Labor Legislation and Female Economic Empowerment: Evidence from Night Work, Regulatory and Seating Laws

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Abstract : This paper examines the impact of gender focused labor legislation on women's labor force participation and economic empowerment. We rely on historical legislative acts passed by state legislatures and exploit whether or not states passed regulatory laws regulating overall and industry specific employment and work conditions for women, night work laws and labor laws requiring provision of seats for working women. We exploit the fact that not all states enacted these laws as well as the variation in the timing of enactment of such laws. Our results show that women in comparison to men in treated states are more likely to be in the labor force post introduction of night work laws in comparison to control states. We also document the effect of industry-specific labor policies on women's likelihood to be employed in the affected industry and in higher-wage occupations within the industry of interest. Policy implications of our findings endorse the adoption of labor laws in favor of women to advocate their empowerment through a higher involvement in the labor market and financial independence.

Keywords : female employment, labor laws, marriage, fertility

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