

## **Issues with Dimming Women Workforce**

### **What is the issue?**

Reaching gender parity in the workforce would have a bigger impact in India and promotes socio-cultural change.

### **What is the estimate of working women population in India?**

- In India women constitute 48.5% of the population where the labour force participation rate for women is one of the lowest in the world.
- Despite educational gains, the labour force participation rate for women in 2017 was 28.5% (compared to 82% for men).
- In 2011-2012, 17.9% of the total employment in India was in regular wage and salaried positions, and in urban areas the gender gap for this employment narrowed.
- Of the 11.7 million urban working women in 2011-2012, almost 43% were in regular wage and salaried positions (up from 28.5% in 1993-1994).
- Young women are moving into non-traditional professional jobs, for example in communications.
- The gender pay gap is shrinking in India women earn 62% of what their male colleagues earn for performing the same work.

### **What are constraints faced by women workforce?**

- Given that the Indian society continues to be highly conservative and patriarchal, getting women to step out of their house and outside the boundary of their village continues to be a challenge.
- There is a popular invalidated theory in India that women stop working once the family grows prosperous.
- But the key reason for increasing large scale joblessness of women in India is due to marginal, low paying and insecure jobs in the market.
- Apart from this the work environment is not so favourable to women, there is a lack of regulatory framework and in its implementation to oversee women safety at workplace and facilities like crèches, feeding rooms are not available to women workforce.

### **What will be the impact of women in the workforce?**

- **Economic Development** - India's Labour Force Will Soon Become the Largest in the World by 2027 the working-age population in India will be almost 20% (18.6%) of the entire global labour force.
- Reaching gender parity would have a bigger impact in India than in any other region in the world.
- Increasing women's labour force participation by 10 percentage points could add \$700 billion to India's GDP by 2025 (or a 1.4% increase).
- **Financial Independence** - Even small amounts earned by the women, mostly working part-time, can at once give them a sense of feeling liberated, as they can take decisions on making small expenditure without depending on their husbands for money and approval.
- In most cases, women spend their earnings to pay small expenses such as getting an LPG cylinder refilled, buy things for their children and even pay their school or tuition fees.
- Spending on self is very low on their priority, financial independence also boosts self-esteem and confidence of these women.
- **Socio-cultural transformation** - There are other benefits from getting women out of their homes to a place where they will share with other co-workers.
- By which the village gradually learns accept as normal for women, even the ones who keep their faces veiled, to step out of their home to work.
- It would help greater integration in villages where caste and religious divisions run deep when women from diverse backgrounds work together.
- The quality of conversations that these women hold undergoes a change.

### **What measures are needed to increase women workforce?**

- A multitude of non-policy factors undoubtedly influences female labour force participation, such as cultural expectations and the type of industry in which a country specializes.
- The government could work with religious leaders and social workers to create cultural campaigns to increase the women workforce.
- If maternity leave makes women less attractive to employers, this can at least be partially balanced by the provision of paternity leave.
- Once both women and men have the right to take time off after the birth of their child, women are less of a risk in the eyes of employers.
- Thus persistent interventions by government agencies and civil society, and particularly individuals who run skill training centres, can double up women workforce.

**Source: Business Line**

