

Levels of Women Work Participation and Its Socio-Spatial Dimensions in Haryana

Himanshi¹ and Rajeshwari*²

Abstract: The size of workforce in a country plays an important role in determining the level of its economic activity. As women constitute half of total population in the country, their contribution in economic activities is very crucial. Women involvement in workforce not only influences economic development but it also affects their lives in terms of opportunities and benefits. In this context, the levels of women work participation (WWP) and its socio-economic variations are studied with special reference to Haryana. The study is based on secondary data obtained from National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for the year 2017-18. The unit level data of PLFS have been utilized. Besides this, the temporal variations have been obtained from various NSSO rounds relating to years 1993-94 to 2011-12 (i.e. round 50th to 68th). The study reveals that WWP rate in the state is low than their male counterparts and has also drastically declined during 1993-94 to 2017-18. The study discloses the spatial variations across districts and across social groups. The study shows that caste segregation works in women work participation rate (WWPR), where lower caste women contribute more as compared to 'Others'. The women work participation rate in all age-groups is higher among SC women. It is also higher among illiterate SC women though at state level WWPR shows an increasing trend with levels of women education.

Keywords: Age-specific work participation, MPCE Groups, NSSO, Social Group, Women Work Participation Rate.

Introduction

The economic development of a region or country depends largely on the productivity of both male as well as female population. In India, women constitute nearly half of the total population, so their contribution in economic activities is effective as well as valuable. Their participation in workforce emerges as an indicator to the development of the country. In fact, the strong relations between women work participation and economic development is well established (Duflo, 2011). With more women in the labour market, an economy makes greater use of its productive potential. A study by International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2015) estimated that India could expand its GDP by 27 percent if the number of female workers increases to the same level of male. Moreover, women's participation in the workforce is also an important determinant of their social status (Mammen and Paxson, 2000). The status of women cannot be raised without opening up opportunities of independent income and employment. Further, if they are economically independent they will have better decision making opportunities in all phases of life and will also raise their living standard.

One of the noted achievements of liberalization of Indian economy during 1990's is considered as a huge increase in employment opportunities. Further, India has reported marked improvement in human development indicators including decline in fertility rates, illiteracy and gender gap in education. These should have led to higher female work

*Corresponding Author

¹ Ph.D. Research scholar, Department of Geography, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra. E.Mail: himanshiyadav0502@gmail.com

² Professor, Department of Geography, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra. E.Mail: rajeshwariku@gmail.com

participation rate, but it is puzzling for researchers and policy makers that against this favourable background, WWPR in India is continuously declining. Research based on National Sample Survey data (EUS), shows that the WWPR reduced from 28.5 percent to 21.9 percent points during 1987-88 to 2011-12 (Sharma and Saha, 2015). It further declined to 16.5 percent in 2017-18 (PLFS, 2019)³.

Several studies have been conducted to examine the causes of low women work participation. It has been found by researcher that gender disparity prevails in agricultural wages across all states of India. This is explained as male do tasks which are mainly machinery based while women do low paying tasks such as sowing, weeding and transplanting (Jose, 1988). The studies also revealed that the women with higher level of education in India remain unemployed because of lack of suitable employment opportunities. They seek for valuable formal jobs and in absence of that they withdraw themselves from labour force (Das et.al, 2003). It has been found that family with high income in India withdraws women from work. They take it as a symbol of status (Dunn, 1993; Das et.al, 2015). Srivastava et.al (2009) identified that the women worker in rural areas are mainly engaged in subsidiary status. Their high proportion is involved in agricultural activities. It has been observed that SC and ST women worker registered high WPR because of their extreme poverty. Muslim women have low WPR due to social norms that restricts them to join workforce. However, it has been also observed that there is a decline in public investment in agriculture. With this, the rural women worker faces shortage of employment and hence their WPR declines. The employment in non-farm sector is limited and also rural worker are not aware of specialized skill, which is a requirement of non-farm sector (Mathur, 2017).

In case of Haryana, similar phenomenon has been observed as women work participation is quite low. The study conducted by Chowdhry (1993), revealed that there are gender inequalities in both work and wages in rural areas of Haryana. The agricultural jobs which were previously performed by women like threshing and fodder cutting, are taken by male due to mechanization. All the skilled jobs, associated with machinery are dominated by male. In an another study, it has been found that WWPR is declined in state of Haryana mainly due to displacement factor, as male replaced female by taking their tasks (Ghosh, 1984). Gender disparity in wages is one of the causes for low WWPR in the state as women are paid low as compared to their male counterparts (Narayan, 2016). The other factors which affect WWP, such as household income, lack of employment opportunities and cultural factors, needs to be further explored in case of Haryana.

Objectives

In this context, the present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To study the levels of WWPR from 1993-94 to 2017-18 and inter-district variations in Haryana during 2017-18
2. To study the socio-economic characteristics of women work participation in the state during 2017-18

³ Since 2016, NSSO is publishing Periodic Labour Force survey, instead of Employment Unemployment Data. This is dealt in detail in methodology.

Database and Methodology:

The study is based on secondary data collected from National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). The unit level data of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for the year 2017-18 for the state of Haryana has been taken for the present study. Though some scholars are critical of PLFS data, the authors would like to emphasize that NSSO uses the same methodology for PLFS as for regular EUS (employment-unemployment survey) data. The criticism is mainly on grounds of WWPR decline in PLFS data. It must be noted that the regular EUS has also shown a decline in women workers not only in rate but also in absolute numbers (The decline was 28.4 million from 2004-05 to 2011-12) (Mehrotra and Sinha, 2017). Hence, the PLFS data may be taken without doubt. Further, in absence of EUS data, PLFS is the only source of updated estimates on workers. In addition to PLFS, different NSSO round data- 50th (1993-94), 55th (1999-00), 61st (2004-05), 64th (2007-08), 66th (2009-10) and 68th (2011-12), have also been utilised for temporal comparison. In addition to this, NSSO round, 50th (1993-94), 55th (1999-00), 61st (2004-05), 64th (2007-08), 66th (2009-10) and 68th (2011-12), have also been utilised for temporal comparison.

NSSO defines worker as 'all those persons who are engaged in any economic activity. It needs mention here that unpaid household members who assisted in the operation of an economic activity in the household farm or non-farm activities are also considered as workers'. So, in this study, 'worker' as defined by NSSO is considered. Further, the worker has been categorized in two broad groups namely principal and subsidiary on the basis of their number of working days (as categorized by NSSO). The principal status worker is the one who is employed for major time period in a year (more than 6 months). The subsidiary status worker is the one who worked for a shorter period, but not less than 30 days. These two categories are equated with main and marginal workers. Hence, in present study levels of women workers refer to women workers as sum total of principal and subsidiary status. Women work participation rate is calculated as total women worker /total women population x 100.

It may be noted that NSSO provides information of workers by caste-group. The households are categorized as Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Castes (SC) Other Backward class (OBC) and others. In the present study, because of negligible population of Scheduled tribe (ST), only SC, OBC and other caste are considered. 'Others' refers to non-SC, non-OBC; means all upper caste. As far as age-wise analysis is concerned, four broad age-groups have been taken which are 15-29, 30-44, 45-59, 60 and above. The educational status is categorized on the basis of years of schooling. These categories are: illiterate, up to primary, middle to secondary, higher secondary, graduate and above. In the absence of wealth index, Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure (MPCE) has been considered as proxy of income. On the basis of MPCE, the whole population is divided into 5 groups. The MPCE varies in rural and urban areas. The lowest 20 percent population belongs to poorest households, another 20-40 percent is classified as poor, 40-60 percent as middle income group, 60 to 80 percent belongs to rich and 80 to 100 is referred as top 20 percent population.

Results and Discussions

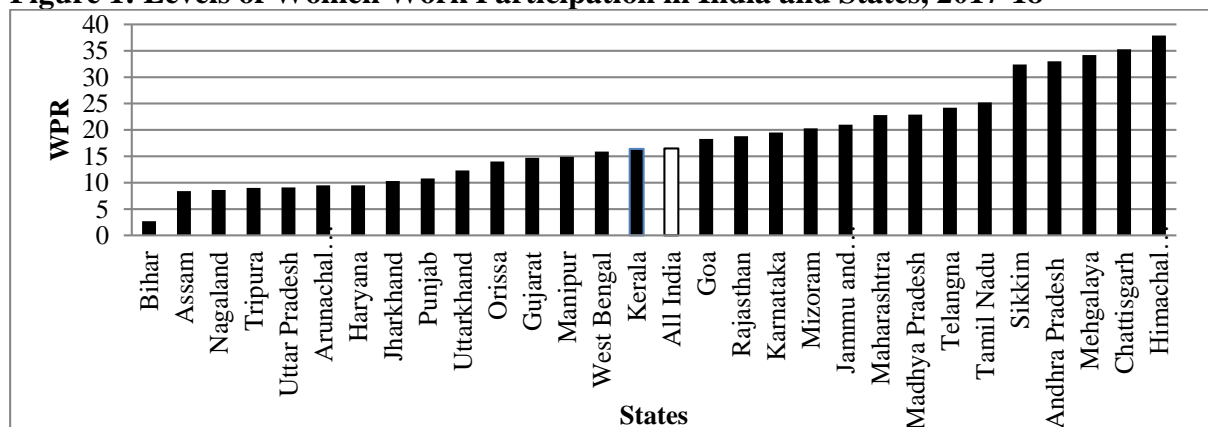
Levels of Women Work Participation (WWP) in Indian states

The total WPR in India is 34.7 percent and the corresponding figure for Haryana is 30.5 percent which is lower than all India average. The women work participation in India is quite low i.e. 16.5 percent as compared to male counterparts which is 52.1 percent (Table 1).

The WWPR shows large inter-state variations and ranges from 38 percent in Himachal Pradesh to 2.7 percent in Bihar (Fig.1). Ten major states of India and three north eastern states have registered high WWPR than national average (i.e. above 16.5 percent). Among major states, three states have less than 10 percent WWPR and Haryana is one among these with 9.5 percent. The neighbouring state of Punjab is also not showing much better WWPR which has 11 percent of its women as workers. All these states which have lower levels of women work participation suggest that they have less skilled women workers (Dunn, 1993; Mathur 2017). Several studies also suggest that low women work participation is also due to gender disparities in education, wages and employment opportunities (Dunn, 1993; Das et.al, 2003; Naidu, 2016; Tripathy et.al, 2019). The earlier studies though related low women WPR with high fertility (Eapen, 1992). In recent research however, the subordinate status of women in decision-making, less employment opportunities and insecure employment are quoted as major causes of low WWPR (Sudarshan et.al, 2009; Das. et.al 2015; Naidu, 2016).

WWP in Haryana: As per 2017-18 statistics, Haryana is at 24th rank in WWPR. A comparison with all India average also reveals that WWPR has always remained lower but in recent years, WWPR has declined much sharper in Haryana showing a significant gap with all India average. It may also be noted that WWPR in Haryana has always remained much lower than its male counterparts. In recent years (2009-10 onwards), WPR has declined for both male and female, but the decline is more drastic for women (Fig.2). Not only the rate has declined, but the decline is seen in absolute numbers also. It is in fact a puzzling phenomenon (24.1 percent in 1993-94 to 9.5 percent in 2017-18) that despite growth in size of economy, increased educational and skill levels of women. The studies suggest that decline in WWPR at all India level is related to a shift from agriculture sector to industrial sector (Abraham, 2013). Some other studies also suggest that rising educational enrollment of young women, lack of employment opportunities, effect of increased household income and also mis-measurement of women work⁴ as key explanation of low WWPR are given as key explanation of low and declining women work participation (Mazumdar and Neetha, 2011). In case of Haryana, increase in girl’s school attendance, increasing social restrictions and also women work mis-measurement criteria (i.e. animal husbandry as part of domestic duties and this not being considered as part of women work) seems to play significant role in declining WWPR and also needs further exploration with primary data.

Figure 1: Levels of Women Work Participation in India and States, 2017-18



Source: Report of PLFS (2019), MOSPI, New Delhi

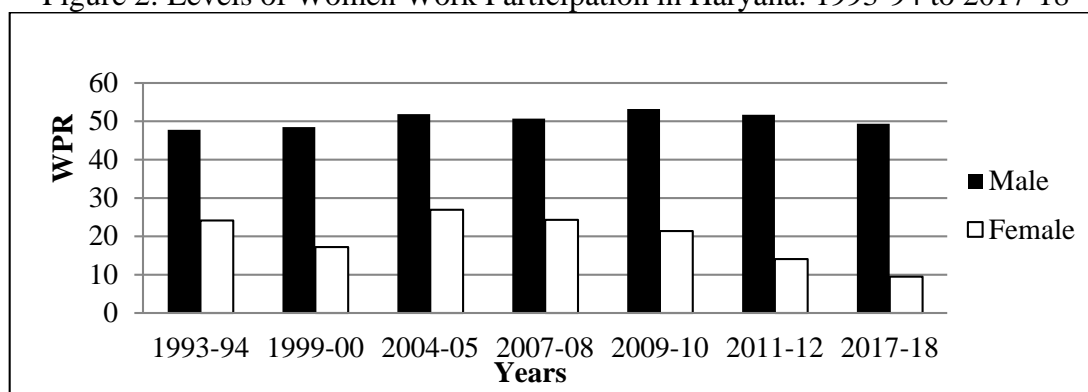
⁴ Some researcher argues that Women engaged in Domestic duties only and domestic duties plus (a category which enumerate women working with subsidiary status) are not strictly followed in NSSO data collection and hence affects WWPR.

Table 1: Level of work participation rate in India and Haryana.

Years	India			Haryana		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1993-94	54.5	28.6	42.0	47.8	24.1	36.7
1999-00	52.7	25.8	39.6	48.5	17.2	33.8
2004-05	54.7	28.7	42.0	51.9	26.9	40.1
2007-08	55.0	25.0	40.4	50.7	24.3	38.4
2009-10	54.6	22.8	39.2	53.2	21.4	38.5
2011-12	54.4	21.9	38.6	51.7	14.1	34.4
2017-18	52.1	16.5	34.7	49.4	9.5	30.5

Source: NSSO, Employment-Unemployment Situation in India, Round 68th, Report No. 537, 2014, MOSPI, New Delhi; Report of PLFS (2019), MOSPI, New Delhi

Figure 2: Levels of Women Work Participation in Haryana: 1993-94 to 2017-18



Source: Calculated from unit level data of PLFS (2017-18), MOSPI, New Delhi

Spatial Variations in Levels of Women Work Participation in Haryana: 2017-18

The spatial variations in WWP across sector (i.e. rural-urban) and districts have been presented in Figure 3. There is marginal difference in state average in its rural and urban women work participation rate. It is marginally higher in rural areas with 9.63 (Urban WWPR-9.27). However, district-wise the variations are more in rural areas ranging from less than one percent in (Mewat, Palwal) to 23 percent in districts of western Haryana. In rural areas, the western Haryana districts (namely Hissar, Sirsa, Fatehabad, and Bhiwani) and the districts of Panipat, Jind, Karnal and Sonipat have higher levels WWPR i.e. more than state average. The literature suggests that in western districts, women are engaged in agricultural activities (own farm household enterprises). (Rajeshwari and Jaglan, 2010; Rajeshwari and Singh, 2018). In northern districts, due to better literacy and better household income, (a typical income effect described in literature) there is withdrawal of women from agriculture⁵. In urban Haryana, the pattern is different. The districts adjoining national capital namely Sonipat, Rohtak and Panipat (except Gurgaon) have high levels of WWPR. The reasons of this variation in WWPR are multidimensional and one reason cannot explain it for whole of Haryana. It need to be studied vis-à-vis socio-economic characteristics in order to confirm the findings of other research which suggest low levels of skill, wage differentials, increase in women literacy and levels of education (which led to withdrawal of women from work), low

⁵ There is clear divide in cropping pattern in Northern Haryana and western Haryana districts. In Northern Haryana districts, it is wheat rice combination which employs migrant labour. Contrary to this, in western Haryana, due to non- availability of migrant labour, women participation in own farm activities is high.

work opportunities, structural shift from agriculture sector and changing domestic responsibilities are some of the reasons of low WWPR (Mehrotra and Sinha, 2017).

Table 2: Levels of WWPR in Haryana: 2017-18

WWPR (Percent)	Districts (Rural)	Districts (Urban)
<4	Mewat, Palwal, Faridabad, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Mahendragarh, Gurgaon, Panchkula	Mahendragarh, Mewat, Rewari, Fatehabad
4-8	Rewari, Ambala, Kaithal, Jhajjar	Ambala, Faridabad, Yamunanagar, Karnal, Panchkula, Jhajjar, Gurgaon
8-12	Rohtak, Sonipat, Hissar	Hissar, Kurukshetra, Bhiwani, Kaithal
12-16	Karnal, Jind	Jind, Sirsa, Sonipat
16-20	Panipat	Rohtak, Panipat
>20	Fatehabad, Sirsa, Bhiwani	-
State Average	9.63	9.27
Coefficient of Variation	72.97	57.04

Source: Calculated from unit level data of PLFS (2017-18), MOSPI, New Delhi

Figure 3

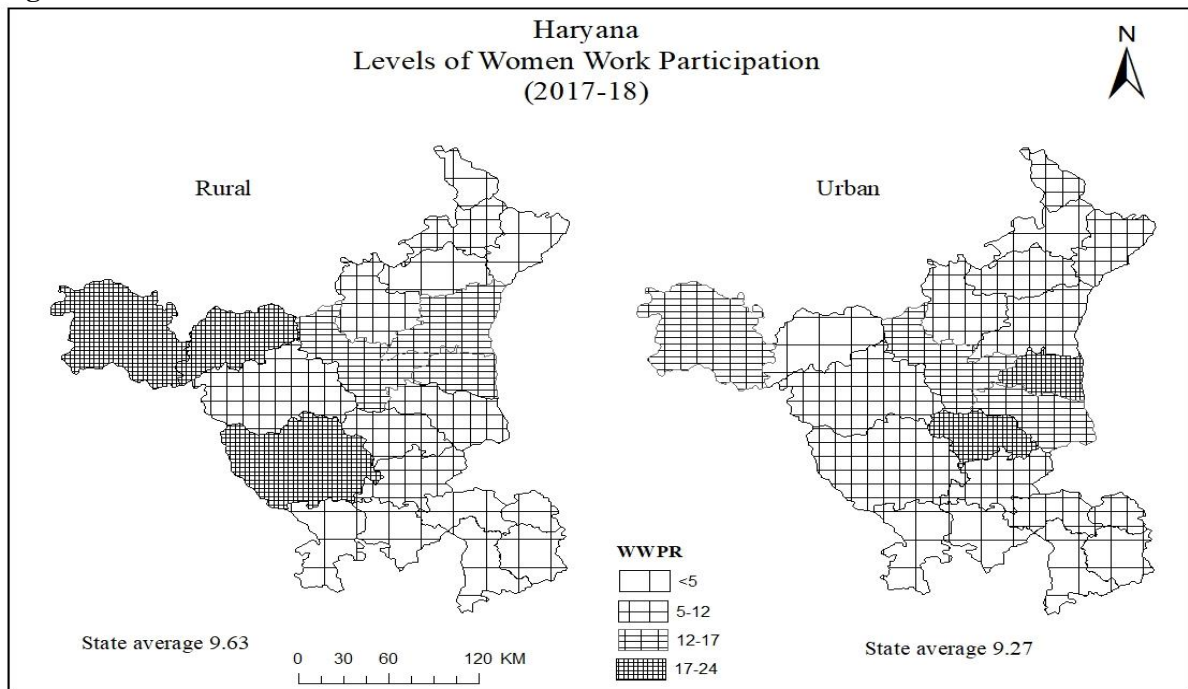
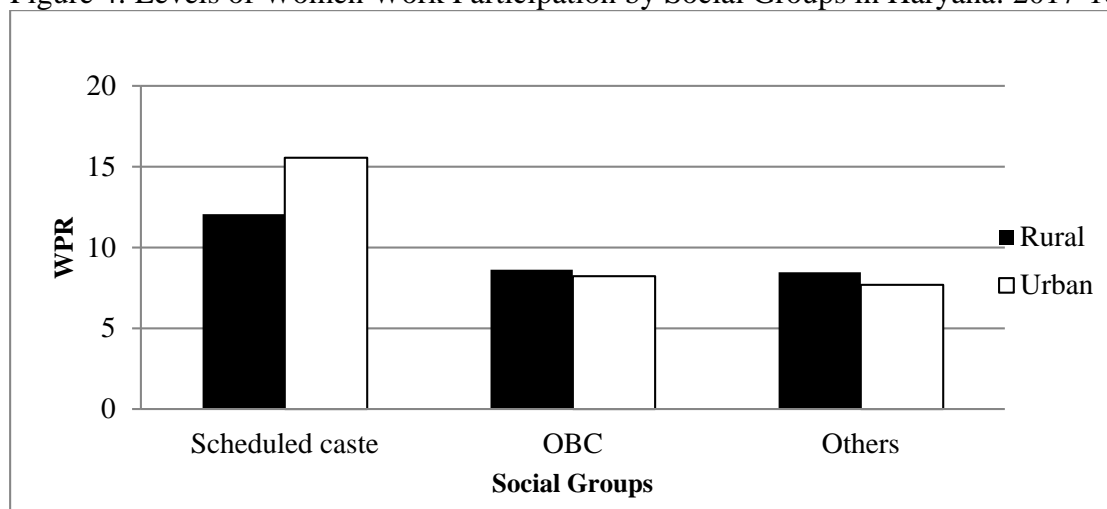


Fig.3

Levels of WWPR vis-à-vis Social Groups:

The caste of households also determines the participation of women in the workforce. The estimates for the socially disadvantageous groups reveal that they have a higher probability of being in the workforce compared to those belonging to other social groups. The level of WPR is high among women belonging to scheduled caste category as compared to OBCs and ‘Others’ non-SC and non-OBC women. The reason seems to be that they are highly engaged as agricultural labourers in rural areas (Motiram and Singh, 2012). Further, the level of education among them is also low so they are mostly socially acceptable in low paying jobs. It might be due to their extreme poverty which forces them to work (Srivastav et.al, 2009). The WPR of women belonging to non-scheduled caste is low as women here faces social restrictions. Further, the low participation is also due to low work opportunities which have better work conditions.

Figure 4: Levels of Women Work Participation by Social Groups in Haryana: 2017-18



Source: Calculated from unit level data of PLFS (2017-18), MOSPI, New Delhi

Age-specific WWPR

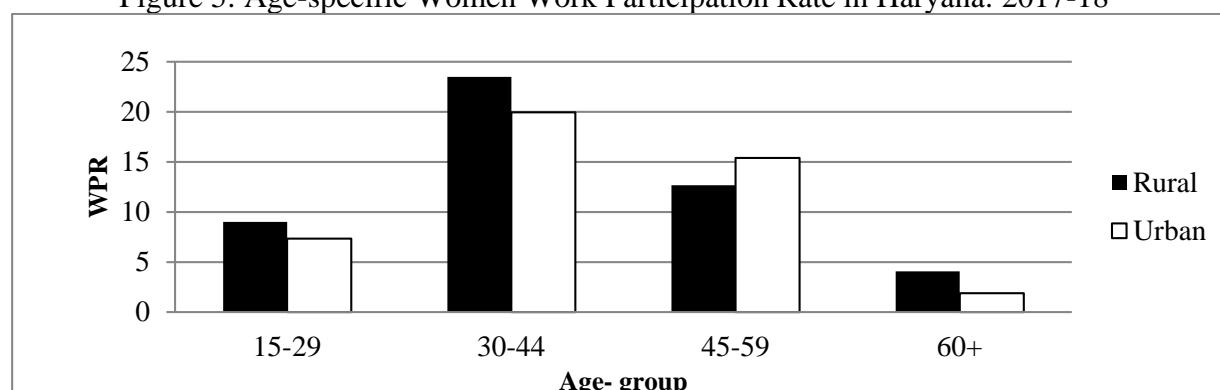
The age-specific level of work participation among women shows that age plays a critical role in both rural and urban areas of the state. The 15-29 age group is the age when women are seeking higher education and studies suggested that this is also the prime child bearing age of women and it affects their participation rate (Eapen, 1992). Their presence is highest in 30 to 44 years of age in both rural and urban areas.

Table 3: Levels of women work participation vis-a-vis Socio-economic characteristics, Haryana, 2017-18

	Scheduled caste	OBC	Others	Total	Rural	Urban
Rural	12.06	8.62	8.47	9.63		
Urban	15.55	8.23	7.69	9.27		
Age group						
15-29	11.91	5.58	7.95	8.42	9.02	7.35
30-44	26.82	22.26	19.33	22.23	23.49	19.95
45-59	20.18	13.92	10.45	13.68	12.67	15.4
60+	11.17	1.53	1.54	3.41	4.08	1.9
Educational Status of Women						
illiterate	15.63	9.65	3.27	8.86	8.86	8.84
Up to primary	10.51	4.75	6.21	7.05	7.43	6.18
Middle to secondary	12.81	7.09	10.57	10.25	11.81	7.36
Higher secondary	5.88	3.78	7.25	6.05	6.04	6.05
Graduate and above	8.32	32	19.89	21.61	25.74	19.49
MPCE Groups (Rural)						
Poorest (lower 20 percent)	15.03	1.87	5.25	8.01	-	-
Poor (20 to 40 percent)	9.56	8.16	11.01	9.61	-	-
Middle (40 to 60 percent)	13.77	20.6	9.76	13.69	-	-
Rich (60 to 80 percent)	7.21	15.04	7.6	9.29	-	-
Richest (top 20 percent)	8.34	7.51	11.52	9.74	-	-
MPCE Groups(Urban)						
Poorest (lower 20 percent)	17.36	8.69	3.05	9.48	-	-
Poor (20 to 40 percent)	17.37	11.31	4.93	9.25	-	-
Middle (40 to 60 percent)	10.66	7.96	6.98	7.89	-	-
Rich (60 to 80 percent)	13.01	3.73	8.75	8.03	-	-
Richest (top 20 percent)	7.53	5.81	12.11	11.18	-	-
All Haryana	12.87	8.49	8.15	9.51	9.63	9.27

Source: Calculated from unit level data of PLFS (2017-18), MOSPI, New Delhi

Figure 5: Age-specific Women Work Participation Rate in Haryana: 2017-18



Source: Calculated from unit level data of PLFS (2017-18), MOSPI, New Delhi

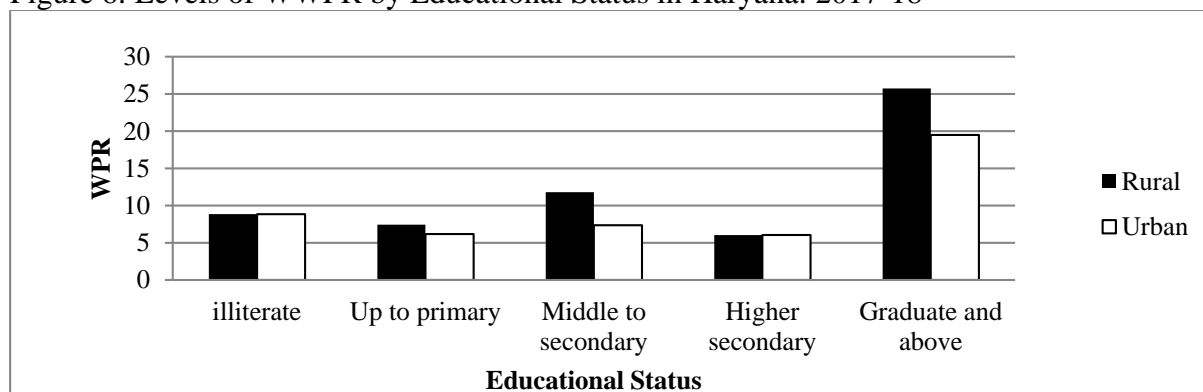
Levels of WWPR and Educational status of Women

As far as educational status of women is concerned, the highest WPR has been registered among the women with higher levels of education in both rural and urban areas

Levels of Women Work Participation and Its Socio-Spatial Dimensions in Haryana

(25.74 percent and 19.49 percent respectively). Figure 6 indicates that women with better educational qualifications are utilizing their education by participating in economic activities. In rural areas, it may however be noted that WWPR is 11.8 percent among secondary level of education, but is highest among women with graduate and more levels of education. In urban areas, also, the pattern of WWPR vis-à-vis educational status is more or less similar to that in rural areas, but WWPR is only 19.5 percent among women with graduate and above educational levels which is lower than its rural counterparts. The reason may be that in urban areas, women might be either engaged in acquiring further skills or might have not sought employment (married or other reason).

Figure 6: Levels of WWPR by Educational Status in Haryana: 2017-18

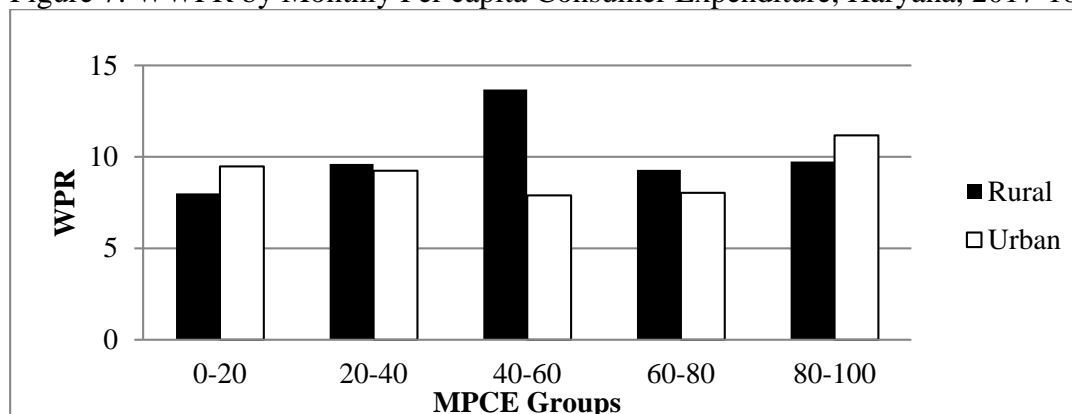


Source: Calculated from unit level data of PLFS (2017-18), MOSPI, New Delhi

WWPR by Monthly per Capita Consumer Expenditure (MPCE)

As stated in the methodology, monthly per capita consumer expenditure is taken as proxy of income. The 0 to 20 MPCE group represents the poorest or lower 20 percent population in both rural and urban areas and 80 to 100 shows the richest or top 20 percent population. The WWPR vis-à-vis MPCE shows a different pattern of WWPR in both rural and urban areas (Fig. 7). In rural areas, the WWPR shows marginal difference among all MPCE groups except middle group. It shows that in rural areas, WWPR increases with income/expenditure and showing a peak in middle income group (13.7 percent). In case of urban areas, WWPR shows decrease with MPCE groups till middle income/expenditure group. The WWPR reaches its peaks (11.18 percent) among top 20 percent population group. In other words, WWPR is better among higher expenditure groups in urban Haryana.

Figure 7: WWPR by Monthly Per capita Consumer Expenditure, Haryana, 2017-18



Source: Calculated from unit level data of PLFS (2017-18), MOSPI, New Delhi

Intersectionality of Caste, Education and MPCE Classes

It may be noted that historically land ownership (material wealth) and occupation have shown a correspondence with Verna based vertically social hierarchy (caste status) in India, where the 'shudra' (lower caste/ untouchables) do not own land but perform all the diverse labour (Sinha, 2020). Jodhka has also pointed out that the reality of caste plays out in modern day labour markets, the informal sector and corporate economy (Jodhka, 2015). In this context, the intersectionality of caste with class (MPCE groups), age and education with women work participation has been discussed here.

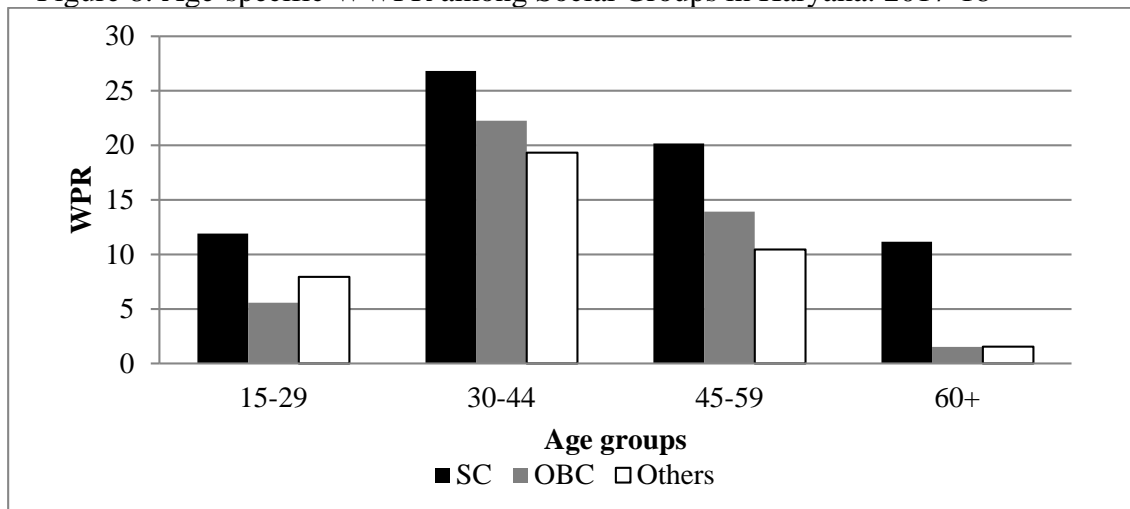
The age-specific WWPR across social groups reveals that WPR in all age-groups is higher among SC women. As, 30-44 age group is considered as most economically active age-group, so it registered high WPR in all social groups. It may be noted that in the age-group 60 and above, the WWPR among OBC and non-scheduled caste women is less than 2 percent, it is disproportionately higher among SCs women which confirms their need to work and hypothesis of Jodhka that caste play out in the modern day labour market.

The intersectionality of caste with levels of education does reveal that among lower caste SC women, the WPR is high among illiterate women and also among women educated up to secondary level. Contrary to this, among OBC women the WPR fluctuates, first increases at secondary level but again declines at higher secondary level and then peaks at graduation and above level. In case of non-SC and non-OBC women, the WPR increases with increase in levels of education. The high WPR among SC women with educational level also indicate towards their kind of employment which invariably may be informal sector and needs further corroboration. On the other hand, OBC women who are graduated and above registered highest WPR. It might be due to that OBC women had more opportunities for valuable and better quality jobs. The non-scheduled and non-OBC women also reports similar condition, but their WPR is comparatively low than OBC women.

The monthly per capita consumer expenditure vis-à-vis WWPR across social groups reveals that in rural areas, the WWPR among SC women is higher (15.03 percent) among poorest group (0 to 20 percent). The WWPR decline afterwards with exception in middle MPCE group and is least (8.3 percent) among the rich and richest MPCE group. In case of urban areas, WWPR is higher among the lower 40 percent population which may be presumed due to economic stress. It declines with income group and is least (7.5 percent) among top 20 percent population. As far as OBCs are concerned, the WWPR in rural areas is high among middle and rich MPCE group (20.6 and 15.06 percent respectively). Among 'Others', the WWPR in rural areas shows two peaks- one in 20 to 40 percent MPCE group and another among top 20 percent (11.5 percent). In urban areas, however, the WWPR shows little variations in MPCE groups of bottom 40 percent. The WWPR increases only among top 20 percent which needs further exploration with primary data in view of their type of employment and social characteristics.

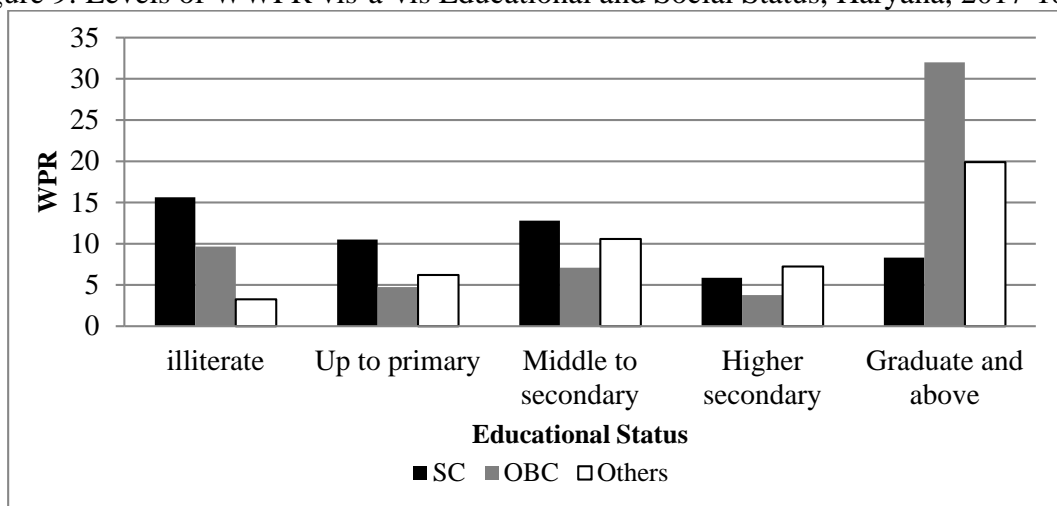
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Figure 8: Age-specific WWPR among Social Groups in Haryana: 2017-18



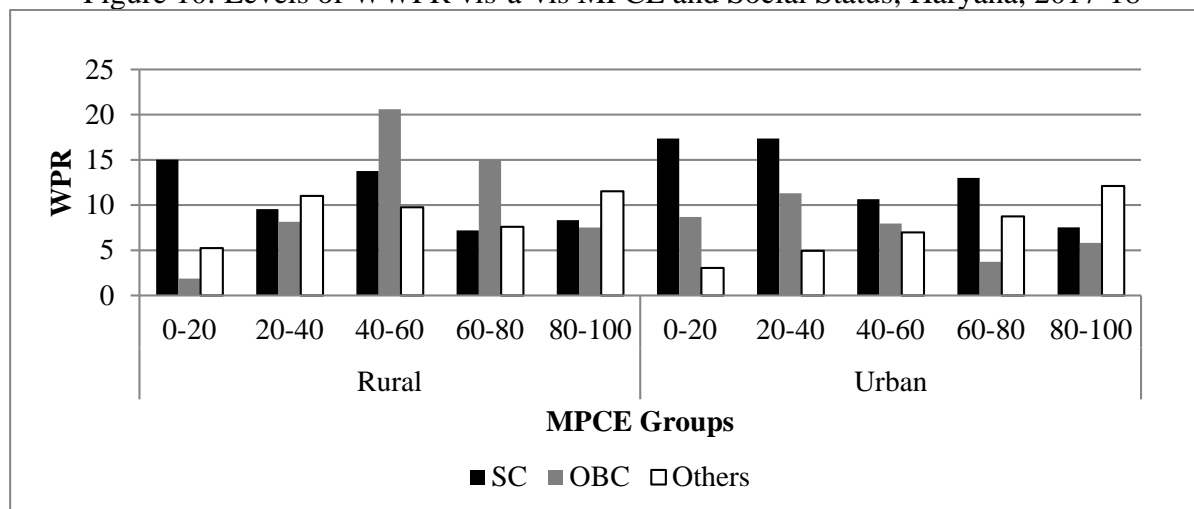
Source: Calculated from unit level data of PLFS (2017-18), MOSPI, New Delhi

Figure 9: Levels of WWPR vis-a-vis Educational and Social Status, Haryana, 2017-18



Source: Calculated from unit level data of PLFS (2017-18), MOSPI, New Delhi

Figure 10: Levels of WWPR vis-a-vis MPCE and Social Status, Haryana, 2017-18



Source: Calculated from unit level data of PLFS (2017-18), MOSPI, New Delhi

Conclusion

The work participation rate of women certainly improves opportunities of independent income and employment which consequently result in better decision making opportunities for women. The present paper analyses the pattern of women work participation with special reference to Haryana in view of changing socio-economic conditions i.e. economic liberalisation and improved human resource development i.e. literacy and development.

The analysis reveals that women work participation rate (WWPR) in the state of Haryana is much lower than its male counterparts i.e. 49.4 percent for males and 9.5 percent for females. The WWPR has declined more drastically in the state from 1993-94 to 2017-18. There are inter-district variations in its rural and urban areas. In rural areas, the variation is more in its urban counterparts. The women work participation is high in western Haryana districts, while in urban areas it is better in northern district of the state. It may be related to different economic conditions and social restrictions. The variation in urban WWPR is largely due to variations in women education levels and low employment opportunities in the state. The analysis of WWPR by age, educational status and social and economic characteristics has been attempted. It shows that among all age groups SC women registered high WPR than 'Others'. The WPR is high among illiterate lower caste women. The monthly per capita consumer expenditure has been taken as proxy of income. It reveals that WWPR among SC women is higher in lower 40 percent population group in both rural and urban areas. Contrary to this, the WPR of non-SC and non-OBC is high among top 20 percent population. The WPR of SC women are higher than other social groups due to the fact that work is not their choice but need to run their lives easily.

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