

Link between women participation in employment and fertility

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Abstract

India has experienced rapid economic growth, a decline in fertility rate, introduction of employment generation programs and policy shifts towards women empowerment in recent years. Women in developing countries are starting to join the workforce in greater numbers, and it has been argued that such exposure can lead to improved outcomes for them. The rapid social and economic development is nowhere more apparent than it is in economic activities of women. Steady urbanization is taking place and among the growing number of women in urban areas, increasing proportions are entering in workforce since the beginning of the planning era. This change has been due to many factors like changing economic structure and, therefore, changing employment opportunities, changing pattern of marriage, fertility and family relationships, and changing attitudes towards many aspects of women's employment. It is in this context that this paper attempts to illustrate women participation in employment and its relation with fertility.

Keywords: employment, economic activities, fertility, family welfare

1. Introduction

In the modern developing society, man rarely performs dual role but modern development has created such a situation for the women that she has to perform dual roles. Women take up jobs outside the house to increase family resources as well to perform their traditional household's duties and also as women are more educated now so to feel as independent they like to work. The participation of women in work has been universally recognized as an important element in the adoption of the small family norms as essential for achieving the win goals of economic development and population planning. Such recognition, however, presupposes not only the existence of a conflict between economic employment of women and child-rearing, but also an association between employment of women and their socio-economic status. As such the participation of women in the economic activity of the nation and thereby improving their status is seen not only as a possible means of reducing birth rates but also as a goal in itself, regardless of its demographic consequences.

There are several other reasons which have been advanced for the rapid increase of women's labor force participation. The marginalization of families in the process of industrialization and rising aspirations and levels of living, have forced increasing market number of women to enter labor market to help in maintaining their household requirements for daily life. At the same time, the continuing acquisition of education, as well as skills by women, coupled with giving of social rewards and recognition to non-domestic work have induced women to assume some new economic activities which were oblivion to them formerly.

The mean age of marriage in our country is 18 years. In order to ensure that they can continue working, married women workers have either to delay having children, send their children to schools or entrust their babies to the eldest child usually daughters or to their in — law surrogates. Recently there has been a decline in in- law surrogates owing to pressures caused by increasing expenditure of families. For

those married women who have no one to look after their babies, they bring them to the working place. It has now been increasing realized by these women workers that employment creates incompatibility between working and nurturing of children. Despite wide publicity, birth control measures are a rarity. In construction industry where daily wage payment is the rule, the missing of work means the missing of income for that day. In many cases they also bring their babies to the construction site to be looked after by the young daughter who also accompanies to the work- site.

The exposure to urban environment of these women workers has also influenced their values and outlook. In the city they witness the security and prestige associated with professional occupations and realizes that such occupations require a lengthy formal schooling. This has led many to have high educational longings for their children. Such strong desires suggest that they have adopted an urban attitude towards formal education. Finding them incapable to take the decision, the women workers had left this issue to be decided by their children themselves the type of education they would like to pursue.

These economic difficulties, changing values, high aspiration as well as the incompatibility between employment and nurturing children have contributed to low fertility of women engaged in unorganised and organized sectors both.

The thinking of women workers regarding motherhood has undergone a great deal of change. Traditionally, mother- hood came before economic activity. At present an increasing number of women are wage earners. The survey supports the view that earning a living now comes before marriage and motherhood. Employment has helped to facilitate this transition.

2. Review of Literature

Found that women continue to face many barriers to enter labour market and to access decent work. They disproportionately face multiple challenges regarding access to

employment, choice of work, working conditions, employment security, equality in wage, discrimination and balancing work and family responsibilities. In addition, women are heavily represented in the informal sectors of the economy.

Have investigated the relationship between economic development, composition of economic growth and women's employment. It is observed that economic growth in India has not been employment intensive. Agriculture and manufacturing sectors are typically labour intensive but have not led the overall economic growth in India. The service sector has been the key driver of growth but requires high skills that majority of women do not possess. Their study clearly point to the fact that growth by itself is not sufficient for increasing women's participation in economic activities

In their study found that females in households with higher per capita spending, are less likely to be in the labor force. Expected wages have a significant and positive effect on the likelihood of being in the labor force for urban females. Also more flexible labor markets encourage higher female participation in the labor force.

3. Employment and family welfare

The employment of women in various economic activities raises a number of issues. A possible flow in the optimistic picture presented concerns the issue of whether women entering into the employment market represent an unambiguous improvement in their welfare or in other family workers. A noted development expert and social scientist Wertz has stated

"Researchers [especially women with feminist sympathies] are beginning to assume that the influx of women into the labour force is inherently good, and that work contributes positively to the lives of most women. Work has shown to give women more power in marriage, more self-confidence, and better mental health. Often researchers have assumed that most women have interesting or satisfying jobs and that these jobs are inherently (aside from their monetary rewards) more personally rewarding than child bearing or house-keeping. Researchers have also applied the ethics of the moral value of work and the self — identity gained in work to women. In fact, most women are not professionals with 'interesting jobs'. Most women, like most men, have routine, boring jobs and if some of them find these jobs more interesting than housework (and it is not clear how many really do), perhaps this is a better comment on conditions at home than conditions at work".

We might add, that the notion that of women's entry into the workforce is inherently a 'good thing' reflects the under valuation of women's home-making role of social scientist, as under valuation reflected in the failure of unpaid domestic work to enter national accounts. As for the welfare of other household members, it is not self-evident that the additional income at the disposal of the family or the possibly greater sense of well-being for the wife brought about by her working contacts outside the home always compensate fully for relative neglect of children when adequate child-care arrangements cannot be made or the breakdown of the sense of a stable family base represented by the 'available' another.

4. Conclusion

Female labour market participation in India is very low as compared to other emerging markets. Raising female labour force participation could boost economic growth. Women's

employment is driven by a range of factors like education, gender policies, social norms and the nature of job creation. Gender-responsive policies need to be developed so that women are able to access better jobs or start up a business, and take the benefit of economic growth. Taking up the employment becomes really difficult for them when it comes to their family and children. There is a need to provide them facilities to take care of their children by the employers. Ultimately, the goal is not just to increase female labour force participation, but to provide opportunities for decent work that will, in turn, contribute to the economic empowerment of women.

5. References

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