

## **Dynamics of Marriage and Female Labour Participation: Case of India**

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*Using nationally representative data for 2011-2012, the paper explores the dynamics of marriage and female labour participation in India. The findings suggest that rural married females have significantly higher chances of seeking work compared with unmarried females. However, the relationship is found to be negative for urban married females. Married females are more likely to get work in both urban and rural areas, implying the prevalence of statistical discrimination in employing unmarried females. Educated married females have higher probability of seeking work, implying that higher education can offset the traditional obstacles leading to higher work participation.*

### **I Introduction**

Improving social and economic conditions through equity and efficiency has been the most important priority of the Millennium Development Goals set up by the United Nations. In this respect, full integration of women through elimination of gender disparity in education, health and their empowerment become the most desirable goals for development efforts. For realization of these goals, female labour participation becomes important since it plays an essential role in determining socio-economic development and growth of the economy. Several scholars find women's income influencing household expenditure patterns for better outcomes. Phillips and Burton (1998), using micro-data from Canadian households, find that expenditure on child care increases with women's income. Dev (2011) asserts that women's well-being and empowerment are crucial for the betterment of a child. Hoddinot and Haddad (1995) find that an increase in women's income in Cote d'Ivoire is associated with an increase in household expenditure in favour of food.

Women's labour participation in India, like in other developing countries, is substantially less than from men. They are more likely to be unemployed, underemployed or outside the labour force (Chakraborty and Chakraborty 2009). Recent data from the employment-unemployment schedule for the 66<sup>th</sup> round of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) show a steep fall in female work participation rate. Though the male workforce has increased by 22.3 million from 2004-2005 to 2009-2010, female workforce has declined by more than 21

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