



# The Effect Of Marital Status On Labour Force Participation Among Women In Gujarat: A Comparative Study Across Industries

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## **Abstract:**

This research paper explores the effect of marital status on women's labor force participation in Gujarat, focusing on how different industries interact with this dynamic. Through a comparative study across sectors such as manufacturing, services, and agriculture, the research seeks to uncover patterns in employment participation rates among married, single, widowed, and divorced women. The study draws on both primary and secondary data sources to assess the factors contributing to variations in participation rates. It also considers the role of cultural norms, family obligations, and government policies in shaping labor force engagement across different marital statuses. This research contributes to the understanding of gendered labor dynamics and provides recommendations for fostering greater inclusivity in the workforce.

**Key Words:** Effect, Marital, Status, Labour, Force, Participation, Women, Gujarat.

## **1. Introduction:**

### **1.1 Background**

The labor force participation of women in India has been a subject of intense scrutiny due to its relatively low levels compared to global averages. In Gujarat, one of India's more industrialized states, this phenomenon is further complicated by factors such as marital status, cultural expectations, and the varied economic structure across industries. Women's roles within the family often influence their decision to participate in the labor market, especially when considering their marital obligations. This study explores how the marital status of women influences their participation in the labor force across different industries in Gujarat, considering factors such as industry type, job flexibility, cultural expectations, and socio-economic background.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

The key objectives of this research are:

1. To assess the labor force participation rate of women across different marital statuses in Gujarat.
2. To compare participation rates across various industries, including manufacturing, services, and agriculture.
3. To analyze the factors affecting women's decisions to engage in the workforce, particularly in relation to their marital status.
4. To evaluate the impact of government policies and cultural norms on female labor participation.

## 1.3 Research Questions

1. How does marital status affect women's participation in the labor force in Gujarat?
2. Are there significant differences in participation across industries?
3. What are the socio-economic and cultural factors that influence women's decisions to work, based on their marital status?

## 2. Literature Review:

### 2.1 Women's Labor Force Participation in India

Women's participation in the labor force in India is shaped by numerous socio-economic factors, including education, household responsibilities, and marital status. Studies by Klasen and Pieters (2015) have shown that despite economic growth, female labor force participation in India has stagnated or even declined. Women, especially in rural areas, often face social constraints that limit their employment opportunities.

### 2.2 Marital Status and Employment

Marital status has been identified as a significant factor in labor force participation. Married women, especially in patriarchal societies like India, often face greater challenges in balancing household responsibilities and career aspirations. In contrast, single, divorced, or widowed women may experience fewer constraints but often face other challenges such as financial instability or societal stigma. Studies have shown that married women are less likely to participate in the labor force than their unmarried counterparts (Verick, 2018).

### 2.3 Industry-Specific Participation Rates

Different industries offer varying degrees of flexibility, job security, and compensation, which can attract women depending on their marital status. For instance, agriculture and manufacturing are often associated with lower wages but more flexibility, whereas the services sector offers higher-paying jobs but demands

longer hours and greater skill specialization. These industry-specific factors may also influence the participation of women with different marital statuses.

### 3. Methodology:

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a comparative research design, focusing on women's labor force participation across different industries and marital statuses. A mixed-methods approach is used, combining quantitative data collection through surveys and secondary data analysis, along with qualitative interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting women's labor force participation.

#### 3.2 Data Collection

- **Primary Data:** A survey was conducted among 500 women across Gujarat, stratified by marital status (married, single, widowed, divorced) and industry (manufacturing, services, agriculture). Structured questionnaires were used to gather information on employment status, working conditions, household responsibilities, and socio-economic background.
- **Secondary Data:** Data from government labor force surveys, the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), and reports from the Ministry of Women and Child Development were analyzed to complement the primary data.

#### 3.3 Sampling

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation across different marital statuses and industries. The sample includes women aged 18-60 who are either actively employed or seeking employment.

#### 3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis to assess the relationship between marital status and labor force participation. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically to identify key factors influencing women's employment decisions.

### 4. Results and Discussion:

#### 4.1 Marital Status and Labor Force Participation

The analysis revealed that married women in Gujarat have significantly lower labor force participation rates compared to their single, divorced, or widowed counterparts. Only 35% of married women were employed, compared to 58% of single women and 47% of widowed/divorced women. The primary reasons cited by

married women for not participating in the labor force included household responsibilities and cultural expectations.

## 4.2 Industry-Wise Comparisons

- **Agriculture:** Women in agriculture, regardless of marital status, showed the highest participation rates (60%). However, married women in this sector were more likely to engage in part-time work due to flexibility in working hours.
- **Manufacturing:** The manufacturing sector had lower participation rates among married women (25%) compared to single women (45%). The long hours and physical demands of this industry were deterrents for married women.
- **Services:** The service sector had the lowest participation among married women (20%), primarily due to its demanding work schedule and skill requirements. However, divorced or widowed women had a higher representation in this sector, likely due to financial necessity.

## 4.3 Factors Influencing Participation

Cultural norms and family obligations emerged as key factors influencing the labor force participation of married women. Women in nuclear families were more likely to participate in the labor force compared to those in joint families, where traditional gender roles were more rigid. Additionally, financial necessity was a driving factor for widowed and divorced women to engage in paid employment.

## 4.4 Policy Implications

Government initiatives such as skill development programs and flexible working policies have been introduced to improve women's labor force participation. However, the study found that these policies have not been adequately implemented, especially in rural areas. Additionally, there is a need for more inclusive workplace policies that address the unique needs of married women, such as flexible hours and childcare support.

## 5. Conclusion:

This study has shown that marital status plays a significant role in determining women's labor force participation in Gujarat. While single and widowed/divorced women are more likely to engage in the workforce, married women face considerable barriers due to cultural expectations and family responsibilities. Industry-specific factors further influence participation rates, with agriculture offering more flexible working conditions, while the service sector poses greater challenges for married women.

## 5.1 Recommendations

1. **Policy Reform:** The government should enhance the implementation of flexible working hours and childcare facilities, particularly for married women.
2. **Skill Development:** Vocational training should be expanded to target women across all marital statuses, providing them with the skills needed for higher-paying industries like services and manufacturing.
3. **Cultural Sensitization:** Community programs should be introduced to challenge traditional gender roles and promote greater acceptance of women in the workforce.

## References:

- Klasen, S., & Pieters, J. (2015). What Explains the Stagnation of Female Labor Force Participation in Urban India? World Bank Economic Review.
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