

## The Role Of Women In Driving Inclusive Economic Growth

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### Abstract

Women play a pivotal role in fostering inclusive economic growth by contributing to labor markets, entrepreneurship, and decision-making. However, gender disparities in education, wages, and access to resources hinder their full potential. This study explores the contribution of women to economic growth and identifies barriers preventing equitable participation. Through a mixed-method approach, the paper highlights key sectors where women's involvement has the highest impact and provides actionable recommendations to bridge gender gaps in economic opportunities.

**Keywords:** Women empowerment, Inclusive economic growth, workforce development, women entrepreneurs.

### Introduction

Inclusive economic growth ensures that the benefits of development are equitably distributed across all sections of society. Women, constituting nearly half of the global population, are critical to this vision. From agriculture and manufacturing to technology and governance, women's participation drives innovation, productivity, and social cohesion. However, barriers such as wage inequality, lack of access to education, and socio-cultural norms limit their contributions.

Women play a critical role in driving inclusive economic growth, serving as key contributors to workforce development, innovation, and community well-being. Their participation in the economy, whether through formal employment, entrepreneurship, or leadership roles, has been shown to enhance productivity, diversify industries, and improve economic outcomes for families and societies as a whole. However, gender disparities in access to education, healthcare, finance, and leadership opportunities remain significant barriers to realizing their full economic potential.

Inclusive growth, which seeks to benefit all segments of society, cannot be achieved without empowering women. Efforts to increase women's participation in the economy, such as improving access to quality education, vocational training, and equitable policies, are not only ethical imperatives but also economic necessities. According to global studies, closing the gender gap could add trillions of dollars to the global economy, underscoring the transformative impact of women's economic empowerment.

This paper examines the multifaceted role of women in promoting inclusive growth and suggests policies to empower them further.

### Statement of the Problem:

Despite significant progress in gender equality, women remain underrepresented in key economic sectors: Women's labor force participation is significantly lower than men's globally. Gender wage gaps persist across industries and regions. Women entrepreneurs face challenges accessing finance, markets, and networks. Socio-cultural norms often restrict women's mobility and decision-making power. Addressing these issues is crucial for achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

### Objectives:

1. To analyze the current contribution of women to the economy across different sectors.
2. To identify barriers preventing women's equitable participation in economic activities.
3. To evaluate the impact of women's empowerment on inclusive economic growth.
4. To recommend strategies for enhancing women's role in driving economic growth.

### Hypothesis:

1. Women's participation does not significantly influence inclusive economic growth.
2. Women's participation significantly contributes to inclusive economic growth.

### Methodology

#### Research Design:

This study uses a Secondary data on labor force participation, wage gaps, and economic output and Focus group discussions and interviews with women entrepreneurs, employees, and policymakers.

**Data Collection:**

- 1. Primary Data: Structured interviews and surveys targeting women from diverse sectors.
- 2. Secondary Data: Reports from UN Women, World Bank, and national statistical agencies.

**Tools and Techniques:**

Descriptive statistics for analyzing trends in women’s economic participation. Regression analysis to measure the impact of women’s involvement on GDP growth.

**Profile of the Study Area:**

The study focuses on India, with Tamil Nadu as a case study due to its relatively high female labor force participation and progressive gender policies. Tamil Nadu’s diverse economic sectors-agriculture, textiles, IT, and small enterprises-provide a rich context for examining women’s roles in driving inclusive growth.

**Sampling Design**

Population: Women entrepreneurs, employees, and policymakers in Tamil Nadu. Sample Size: 250 respondents, including 100 women entrepreneurs, 100 women employees, and 50 policymakers. Sampling Technique: Stratified random sampling to ensure representation across sectors and urban-rural areas.

**Analysis and Interpretation**

**Table 1: Women’s Labor Force Participation in Tamil Nadu (2023)**

Sector	Women’s Participation	Men’s Participation
Agriculture	38	62
Manufacturing	25	75
Services (IT, Health)	40	60
Entrepreneurship	15	85

**Source:** National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) and Tamil Nadu State Economic Report (2023).

Women have significant participation in agriculture and services but are underrepresented in manufacturing and entrepreneurship. Focused policies are needed to boost their presence in underrepresented sectors.

**Table 2: Gender Wage Gap in Tamil Nadu (2023)**

Sector	Average Female Wage (Rs)	Average Male Wage (Rs)	Wage Gap (%)
Agriculture	150	200	25
Manufacturing	300	400	25
Services (IT, Health)	600	750	20
Entrepreneurship	NA	NA	NA

**Source:** Tamil Nadu State Labor Report (2023).

Gender wage gaps persist across all sectors, with agriculture and manufacturing showing the highest disparities.

**Table 3: Impact of Women’s Participation on Economic Growth (Regression Analysis)**

Variable	Coefficient	p-value
Women’s Labour Force Participation	0.65	< 0.01
Women’s Entrepreneurship	0.48	< 0.05

**Source:** Author’s analysis based on NSSO and World Bank data.

Women’s labor force participation positively and significantly impacts GDP growth. Women’s entrepreneurship also shows a significant, albeit weaker, effect.

**Findings:**

- 1. Women’s participation is highest in agriculture and services but lags in manufacturing and entrepreneurship.
- 2. Wage gaps and socio-cultural norms are major barriers to women’s economic empowerment.
- 3. Increased women’s labor force participation correlates strongly with GDP growth.
- 4. Women entrepreneurs face significant challenges in accessing capital and markets.

**Suggestions:**

1. Policy Interventions: Introduce targeted policies to reduce wage gaps and increase women's participation in manufacturing and entrepreneurship.
2. Skill Development: Expand vocational training programs for women in high-growth sectors like IT and manufacturing.
3. Financial Support: Provide microfinance and credit schemes tailored for women entrepreneurs.
4. Cultural Shifts: Promote awareness campaigns to challenge gender norms and encourage shared household responsibilities.
5. Monitoring Mechanisms: Establish state-level monitoring systems to track progress in women's economic participation.

**Conclusion:**

Women's contributions are essential for achieving inclusive economic growth. Addressing barriers such as wage inequality, limited access to resources, and socio-cultural norms can unlock their full potential. A comprehensive approach involving policymakers, private sector actors, and civil society is critical to enhancing women's roles in driving sustainable economic development.

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