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India's Invisible Women Workforce

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“ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ ”

“Where women are fete, there the godly prospers.” — Manusmriti

The citation reflects the traditional Indian understanding that the well-being and progress of society are deeply connected to the quality and donation of women. still, despite this philosophical ideal, a significant portion of women's labour in contemporary India continues to remain economically inconspicuous and socially uncredited.

Women form the silent backbone of India's homes, ranches, informal requests, and caregiving systems, yet much of their work remains unknown within formal profitable structures. From managing homes and minding for families to contributing to husbandry and small-scale enterprises, women perform essential labour that sustains both society and the economy. still, because a large part of this work is overdue or informal, it constantly remains absent from profitable calculations, labour statistics, and policy exchanges. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023 – 24, womanish labour force participation in India remains extensively lower than virile participation despite women contributing substantially to overdue domestic and care work. This difference reflects a structural gap between women's factual profitable donation and its formal recognition within labour and policy fabrics. From overdue domestic work and caregiving arrears to agricultural and informal sector labour, women contribute vastly to the functioning of homes and the public economy without entering respectable recognition or compensation. Despite adding exchanges around women's commission and inclusive development, the structural invisibility of women's work remains a case challenge in India.

The issue of inconspicuous labour is deeply connected to the unsexed division of work in Indian society. Women are traditionally anticipated to perform ménage arrears analogous as cookery, cleaning, childcare, elder care, and emotional support, ultimate of which are overdue and barred from profitable calculations. According to the Time Use Survey conducted by the Government of India, women spend nearly 299 beats per day on overdue domestic services, while men spend only around 97 beats. This unstable distribution of overdue labour highlights the unsexed nature of work within Indian homes. {Ministry of Statistics & Programme performance, Government of India, {Time Use in India- 2019} (2020).} Although analogous labour sustains families and indirectly supports the broader economy, it's rarely recognized as productive work.

Women's donation to husbandry further reflects this invisibility. In pastoral India, women laboriously partake in sowing, harvesting, beast operation, and other agricultural exertion. still, much of this labour is distributed as "backing" rather than formal employment because power of land and profitable means largely remains concentrated in the hands of men. Consequently, women constantly remain barred from financial decision- timber, institutional credit systems, and agricultural policy benefits. The Food and Agriculture Organization has constantly emphasized the significance of recognizing women farmers in icing sustainable agricultural development. {Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, {The State of Food and Agriculture 2010 – 11 Women in Agriculture} (2011).}

Another major reason behind the invisibility of women's labour is the dominance of informal employment. A substantial number of women in India are employed in sectors analogous as domestic work, home- predicated manufacturing, cloth product, road haggling, and caregiving services, where employment protections and social security mechanisms remain weak. Informal work constantly lacks fixed paycheck, legal recognition, maternity protections, and stable working conditions. The International Labour Organization has noted that women are disproportionately represented in informal employment encyclopaedically, particularly in developing husbandry. {International Labour Organization, {Women and Men in the Informal Economy a Statistical detail} (2018).}

Patriarchal social morals further contribute to this structural invisibility. In multitudinous homes, women's work is perceived as a natural extension of their domestic duties rather than profitable participation. analogous perceptions reduce the social and profitable value attached to women's labour

and support gender inequalities. Limited access to education, skill development openings, and formal employment avenues also circumscribe women's participation in the organized pool. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey, womanish labour force participation in India continues to remain significantly lower than virile participation despite advancements in educational attainment. Women also remain underrepresented in managerial and leadership positions within formal sectors, raising important enterprises regarding factory addition, gender-sensitive labour programs, and organizational equity. {Ministry of Statistics & Programme performance, Government of India, {Periodic Labour Force Survey Annual Report 2023 – 24}.}

The invisibility of women's work has serious profitable, legal, and social consequences. When women's labour is barred from mainstream profitable recognition, it not only weakens their financial independence but also limits their participation in leadership, governance, and decision- making processes. The issue therefore extends beyond economics and becomes a matter of equality, quality, and inclusive development. Economically, the under- recognition of women's labour leads to inaccurate assessments of public productivity and mortal capital donation. Socially, it reinforces reliance, limits women's haggling power within homes, and reduces their access to financial independence and decision- making openings. The unstable burden of overdue care work also restricts women's capability to pursue education, entrepreneurship, and leadership positions.

Addressing this issue requires comprehensive policy interventions, legal reforms, and organizational transformation. From an operation perspective, institutions and businesses must recognize the profitable value of women's labour through inclusive factory practices, indifferent pay structures, flexible work programs, and gender-sensitive leadership models. simultaneously, labour law fabrics must evolve to strengthen protections for women employed in informal and care- predicated sectors. First, there is a need to formally recognize overdue care work within policy exchanges and profitable planning. Time- use checks and gender-sensitive profitable assessments should be integrated into governance fabrics to further measure women's donation to the economy. Second, perfecting women's access to education, digital knowledge, and skill- predicated training can significantly enhance their participation in formal employment sectors.

Third, labour laws and welfare schemes must come more gender-sensitive by expanding social security protections, maternity benefits, and factory strictness for women employed in informal sectors. Strengthening childcare structure and community support systems can also reduce the disproportionate

burden of overdue care work. also, icing women's access to property rights, financial resources, and institutional credit can empower women economically and increase their visibility within agricultural and entrepreneurial sectors.

India's vision of inclusive growth and sustainable development can't be achieved without recognizing the donation of women's labour.

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