CHAPTER 3

WOMEN EMPLOYMENT IN KERALA

"I've got a woman's ability to stick to a job and get on with it when everyone else walks off and leaves it." Margaret Thatcher

3.1 Introduction

The economic prosperity of a nation depends on the quality of its workforce. Several questions can be answered through an analysis of labour force statistics from the point of view of social welfare and such studies provide the base on which national plans for social and economic development may be formulated and therefore considered important for policy makers and planners (Asha. A. Bhende[107], 1985). Many scholars of economic development consider the experience of the state of Kerala in India as distinctive and extraordinary. Kerala's uniqueness is based on a reality that despite low levels of per capita income and a high unemployment rate, the state has made exceptional strides in several areas of social development like health, education, literacy and demographic transition. The state of Kerala is often referred as a testimonial to the statement that development and quality of life cannot always be measured purely in traditional economic terms. Again, the social justice paradigm engendered in Kerala appears to have been accomplished without external aid and in the absence of a violent revolution.

The structural transformation of an economy takes place mainly along two dimensions; one is the changing sectoral share in GDP and the second is the changing share of the workforce engaged in each sector. Just as a growing tree constantly changes the shape, size, and configuration of its branches, a growing economy changes the proportions and interrelations among its basic sectors- agriculture, industry and services. As the per capita income rises, agriculture loses its primacy, giving way first to a rise in the industrial sector, then to a rise in the service sector. These two consecutive shifts in economy are called industrialization and post-industrialization respectively. During industrialization, as people's income increase, their demand for food (the main product of agriculture) reaches its natural limit and they begin to demand relatively more industrial goods. At the same time, because of new farm techniques and machinery, labour productivity increases faster

[107] Asha A Bhende (1985): *Principles of population studies*, Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House

in agriculture than in industry, making agricultural products relatively less expensive and further diminishing their share in the gross domestic product (GDP). The same trend in relative labour productivity also diminishes the need for agricultural workers, while employment opportunities in industry grow. As a result industrial output takes over a larger share of GDP than agriculture and employment in industry becomes predominant. During the post-industrialization era, as income continue to rise, people's needs become less "material" and they begin to demand more services in health, education, entertainment and many other areas. Meanwhile, labour productivity in services does not grow as fast as it does in agriculture and industry because most service jobs cannot be filled by machines. This makes services more expensive relative to agricultural and industrial goods, further increasing the share of services in GDP. The lower mechanization of services also explains why employment in the service sector continues to grow while employment in agriculture and industry declines because of technological progress that increases labour productivity and reduces job opportunities. Eventually service sector replaces industrial sector as the leading sector of the economy.

Amartya Sen argues that women should not be seen as passive recipients of public support, but as dynamic promoters of social transformation which have a powerful influence to control their own environment as well as to contribute towards economic development. Adam Smith, the father of Economics, recognized women's contribution to economic development when he analyzed the concept of 'use value' and 'exchange value'. Unpaid household labour of a woman, who is treated as controller of the home, is generally ignored as what she creates is the 'use value'. A woman, who produces 'use value' through household work is considered to be unemployed and not contributing to the economic development when compared with a woman who produces 'exchange value' through her paid employment ignoring the fact that hours of work put in by the house lady are much higher than the ones endured by paid lady.

Kerala is an interesting context for research on women employment because the patterns in educational and occupational trends for women in the state are dramatically contradictory when compared to many other Indian states. In Kerala, attracting more women to the main stream of employment would accelerate the pace of economic development. There are a lot of determinants when she is making a decision whether to be a part of the labour market or not. Identification of such key determinants of employment for the women in Kerala in the background of households

will help the government in framing policies in enhancing their level in a job environment. Also the various dimensions of women employment like income-expenditure pattern, empowerment and job satisfaction need to be investigated for assessing their present position in the job market and for suggesting measures for improvement. The status of women in Kerala is compared with reference to India and some major states of India using the human development reports published by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in 2009 in the first session of this chapter. The first objective of the work, the trend and pattern of women employment in India and in some major states of India with special reference to the service sector in Kerala, is examined in the next session of this chapter with the help of Census and other employment reports. The secondary data on workforce in the study is based on the Census reports of India for the industrial classification of workforce. Data on workers at the all India level and in some major states of India are taken from the three Census reports commencing from 1981. The 1981 to 2001 Census data is selected due to similarity in the concept and definition of workers. Main workers in the age group of 15 to 59 years are taken as workforce for the purpose of the study. The concept of gender budgeting as a tool to promote women's equality is discussed in the last session of this chapter.

3.2 Status of Women in Kerala

The status of women, constituting nearly half of the population in any region, is closely related to equitable and sustainable development of the economy. The three dimensions of sustainable development namely economic, environment and social are relevant in the discussions of gender equality and these have equal and interrelated importance. Stressing the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development in the absence of economic aspect neglects the financial capital needed to pay for progress. Building up the economic and social pillars of sustainability while neglecting the environment degrades the natural capital needed for growth. Focusing on the aspects of economics and environment without attention to social factors can lead to green growth for a few. As gender gaps prevail worldwide, these few tend to be mostly men. An increasing number of studies indicate that gender inequalities are extracting high economic costs and leading to social inequities and environmental degradation throughout the world. It is the responsibility of governments to make the green economy sustainable by giving preference to women. Otherwise, going green will perpetuate the dominance and perspectives of wealthier males in major economic sectors.

The gender dimensions of the so called Kerala model can be revealed by analyzing the contribution of women in areas of development like health and education. Not only that the women had not lagged behind the men in their achievements in education and health areas, but their substantial role in the development of these two sectors in the state is clear from the human development reports. The role played by women in the health and educational sectors of the state is never acknowledged by those who praise the Kerala model. The women in Kerala had been able to listen to the call for development and rise to the occasion to perform well which in turn added sustainability to the Kerala model of development to a certain extent.

Kerala has been different from the rest of the country in terms of the indicators of women's development. Kerala has a favourable sex ratio of 1084, while the all India figure stands at 940 as per the 2011 census. Similarly in terms of literacy, life expectancy and mean age at marriage, women in Kerala have a higher score when compared with women in the rest of the country. In 1950 when India became a Democratic Republic, the female literacy rate at the national level was merely 7.9 percent. Kerala's female literacy at the same time was four times higher at 32 percent. Similarly in 1950, while the female life expectancy at the national level was only 31.7 years, the same was 42.3 years in Kerala. Thus, historically a favourable ground was set for Kerala women while most of the Indian states were deplorably poor in this regard. Perhaps this paved the way for the outstanding achievement of Kerala in terms of women's development, and as a result, the increase in the overall human development. As per the 2011 Census, Kerala's female literacy is 92 percent while the corresponding figure at the national level is only 65 percent. The female life expectancy in Kerala as per the latest available secondary source is 76.3 years when the same for women at the national level is only 64.2 years.

Several social, economic and cultural factors are associated with the women's contribution to the development of health and education sectors of Kerala. The matriarchal system that prevailed among some of the dominant communities in the past, the progressive social movements, government policies and a historically conducive climate are some of the key factors responsible for the success of women in Kerala. The reduction in gender disparities during economic growth happens due to the variables such as female literacy and labour force participation rates that are closely aligned to women's empowerment. These require supplementation by public action in education, women's ownership and political participation. Access to education played a crucial role

in providing job opportunities to women in Kerala or it even empowered the unemployed housewives. Education in Kerala had been promoted during British rule in India by the Christian missionaries who were keen on providing education to all sections of society and strengthening of women, without any kind of discrimination. The first girls' school in the private sector of the state was established in 1819. In the following years, a government girls school (1859) and a training school for women teachers (1887) were opened. A significant figure in the nineteenth century was Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara who started a system called "A school along with every church" to make education available for both poor and rich which still continues. His work has resulted in promoting education for girls and became a good model for the educational system in Kerala after independence. The traditional matriarchal system that prevailed in Kerala gave women the freedom to access several services that had not traditionally been offered to them. Of course, the women's agency or women's empowerment can directly improve the well-being of men and children in her household. The empowerment of women through literacy, economic independence, female labour force participation, political organization etc. can have a strong impact on fertility rates, demographic change and in the quality of life being provided to the next generation. These early achievements in literacy, education and control over assets have positively influenced the status of women in the state.

UNDP's Human Development Reports[108] draw attention to the fact that human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. The Human Development Index (HDI) introduced by the UNDP in 1990 is a simple average of three dimension indices that measure average achievements in a country with regard to 'A long and healthy life', as measured by life expectancy at birth; 'Knowledge', as measured by the adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio; and 'A decent standard of living', as measured by estimated earned income in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) US $. The goals of human development cannot be achieved without the development and empowerment of women. It is a reality that women face disparities in access to, and control over, resources. In order to include gender sensitive measures of human development, the UNDP introduced two indices from the year 1995: a Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and a Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). The Ministry of Women and Child

[108] UNDP (1990), "*Human Development Report 1990*", New York, Oxford Oxford University Press.

development of India has re-casted the HDI, GDI and GEM, constructed by the UNDP, to suit the same to the Indian conditions in 2009.

3.2.1 HDI and GDI: Dimensions and Indicators

The method adopted in the calculation of HDI and GDI by the Ministry of Women and Child Development of India is explained in Appendix II. HDI is a simple average of three dimension indices, each of which measures average achievements in a country with regard to 'A long and healthy life', 'Knowledge' and 'A decent standard of living'.

Table 3.1 Comparison of HDI of Kerala with India and Some Major States

Sl. No	India and major states	HDI score 2006	HDI score 1996	All India rank HDI 2006	All India rank HDI 1996	Betterment in HDI Rank
1	Kerala	0.764	0.736	2	1	-1
2	All India	0.605	0.530	-	-	-
3	Bihar	0.507	0.430	35	35	0
4	Gujarat	0.634	0.574	23	18	-5
5	Tamilnadu	0.666	0.589	16	15	-1
6	Uttarpradesh	0.528	0.458	34	31	-3

Source: Gendering Human Development Indices: Recasting the GDI and GEM for India
Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (2009)

As per the table given above, Kerala ranked first in HDI score from the states/UTs in the year 1996, but moved to the second spot in 2006. Even then, when compared with the states shown in the table, Kerala continues to be one of the states in India with high human development.

Table 3.2 Comparison of GDI of Kerala with India and Some Major States

Sl. No	India and major states	GDI score 2006	GDI score 1996	All India rank GDI 2006	All India rank GDI 1996	Betterment in GDI rank
1	Kerala	0.745	0.721	3	1	-2
2	All India	0.590	0.514	-	-	-
3	Bihar	0.479	0.399	35	35	0
4	Gujarat	0.624	0.559	22	18	-4
5	Tamilnadu	0.655	0.576	16	15	-1
6	Uttarpradesh	0.509	0.429	34	32	-2

Source: Gendering Human Development Indices: Recasting the GDI and GEM for India
Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (2009)

GDI adjusts the average achievements in the same three dimensions that are captured in the HDI to account for the inequalities between men and women. From the table given above, Kerala was ranked first in GDI score from the states/UTs of the country in 1996, but moved to the third spot in 2006. It is clear that the GDI score of the Kerala is much above the all India average and the corresponding figures of some major states shown in the table. The state of Kerala would not have achieved a comparatively high HDI if the women in this region lagged very much behind men as in most other Indian states.

Table 3.3 Comparison of Gender gap in Kerala with India and Some Major States

Sl. No	India and major states	HDI-GDI score 2006	HDI-GDI score 1996	Change in HDI-GDI gap	All India rank on HDI-GDI score 2006	All India rank on HDI-GDI score 1996
1	Kerala	0.018	0.015	-0.003	25	14
2	All India	0.015	0.016	-	-	-
3	Bihar	0.028	0.031	0.003	32	34
4	Gujarat	0.010	0.015	0.005	13	15
5	Tamilnadu	0.011	0.013	0.002	17	10
6	Uttarpradesh	0.019	0.030	0.011	27	31

Source: Gendering Human Development Indices: Recasting the GDI and GEM for India Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (2009)

The table displayed above depicts the gender gaps in human development. In the year 2006, the gender gap in development in Kerala is slightly higher than the all India average, while the same is less for Gujarat and Tamilnadu. The gender gap in development is higher for Bihar and Utharpradesh and less for Gujarat and Tamilnadu when compared with Kerala.

3.2.2 GEM: Dimensions and Indicators

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is intended to measure women's and men's ability to participate actively in economic and political life and their command over economic resources. It focuses on opportunities and captures gender inequality in three key areas, 'Political Participation and Decision-making Power', 'Economic Participation and Decision-making Power' and 'Power over Economic Resources'. The GEM scores formulated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development of Government of India are given in the table shown below. The method adopted in calculating GEM values displayed in the table is explained in Appendix II. Kerala was placed second

in 1996 with a score of 0.486 but moved down to the ninth rank in 2006 with a GEM score of 0.525. However, the positions of other states in India mentioned in the table are far behind the situation in Kerala.

Table 3.4 Comparison of GEM of Kerala with India and Some Major States

Sl. No	India and major states	GEM scores 2006	GEM scores 1996	GEM rank 2006	GEM rank 1996	GEM rank 1996-2006	GEM score difference
1	Kerala	0.525	0.486	9	2	-7	0.039
2	All India	0.497	0.416	-	-	-	0.081
3	Bihar	0.379	0.278	31	33	2	0.101
4	Gujarat	0.485	0.409	15	14	-1	0.076
5	Tamilnadu	0.498	0.459	14	5	-9	0.039
6	Uttarpradesh	0.452	0.334	22	25	3	0.118

Source: Gendering Human Development Indices: Recasting the GDI and GEM for India Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (2009)

The empowerment of men or women in a society is measured using the identified indicators of GEM accounting 50 percent each for men and women in all variables. Thus the GEM is a composite measure of empowerment of men as well as women in the various states of India, without concentrating on women employees in service sector. Since the study is concentrated only on the women employees in the service sector of Kerala, a new empowerment index is formulated to measure the variations in empowerment of different classes of women employees rather than relying on the conventional method adopted by the government.

3.3 Work and Employment

Work is defined as participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit. Such participation may be physical and/or mental in nature. Work involves not only actual work but also, effective supervision and direction of work. It even includes part time help or unpaid work on farm, family enterprise or in any other economic activity. All persons engaged in 'work' as defined above are workers. Persons who are engaged in cultivation or milk production even solely for domestic consumption are also treated as workers. In this study, a reference period of one year preceding the date of enumeration is used for determining a person as worker or non-worker as defined in the Census.

Those workers who had worked for the major part of the reference period (ie, six months or

more) are termed as main workers and those workers who had not worked for the major part of the reference period are termed as marginal workers. A person who did not work at all during the reference period is treated as a non-worker. The non-workers broadly constitute students who did not participate in any economic activity paid or unpaid, persons who were attending to daily household chores like cooking, cleaning utensils, looking after children, fetching water etc. and are not even helping in the unpaid work in the family farm or cultivation, dependents such as infants or very elderly people not included in the category of workers. Pensioners, those who are drawing pension after retirement and are not engaged in any economic activity are treated as non-workers. Also beggars, prostitutes and persons having unidentified source of income and with unspecified sources of subsistence and not engaged in any economically productive work during the reference period are included in the category of non-workers.

Employment is defined as an engagement of a person in some occupation, business, trade or profession, etc. for remuneration as far as this study is concerned. For analyzing the work participation rates of women using the Census of India, the concept of main workers as defined in the Census is followed because this category of workers is involved in a somewhat regular nature of employment. During the collection of primary data, women employees in the service sector with an identical definition of main workers as in the Census were selected.

3.3.1 Labour Force

Statistics of the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment are essential bases for the design and evaluation of government programmes geared to employment creation, vocational training, income maintenance, poverty reduction and similar objectives. The 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians resolution specifies that "the economically active population comprises all persons of either sex who furnish the supply of labour for the production of economic goods and services, as defined by the United Nations systems of national accounts and balances, during a specified time-reference period". The measurement of the relationship between employment, income and other socio-economic characteristics provides information on the adequacy of employment of different sub-groups of the population, the income generating capacity of different types of economic activities and the number and characteristics of persons unable to ensure their economic well-being on the basis of the employment opportunities available to them. Information on employment and income, disaggregated by branches of economic

activity, occupations and socio-demographic characteristics is needed for collective bargaining, for assessment of the effects of poverty reduction policies on different sub-groups of the population and for the analysis of ethnic, gender or age inequalities in work opportunities and participation and their changes over time.

Persons who were either 'working' (or employed) or 'seeking or available for work' (or unemployed) constitute the labour force. The labour force framework is best suited to situations where the dominant type of employment is regular full time paid employment. In these situations, a working person falls unambiguously in the employed category, a person seeking and/or available for such employment falls in to the unemployed category and others fall outside the labour force. The details of the economically active population and its components can be generated from various sources. Common sources of statistics on economically active, employed and unemployed, persons are labour force surveys and other household sample surveys, as well as population Censuses. Any activity resulting in production of goods and services that add value to national product was considered as an economic activity. Such activities included production of all goods and services for market (i.e. for pay or profit) including those of government services and the production of primary commodities for own consumption and own account production of fixed assets.

3.3.2 Work Participation

A man or a woman is considered as a worker if he or she is in the working age of 15 to 59 years and works for more than half the duration of the reference period of one year, similar to the definition of main worker in Census of India from 1981 onwards. In this study, the unemployed or those who works for a short period of six months or lesser which forms the part of the labour force are not included in the workforce. Male or female work participation rates are computed from the various Census reports using a similar formula mentioned below.

$$\text{Work participation rate, WPR} = \frac{\text{No. of workers in the age group of } 15-59 \text{ years}}{\text{Population in the age group of } 15-59 \text{ years}} \text{x } 100$$

3.4 Industrial Classification of Employment

It was Colin Clark (1940) who popularized the idea of segmenting the economy in to three sectors namely primary, secondary and tertiary. According to him, primary activities included agriculture, forestry and fishing and secondary activities included manufacturing, mining and construction. Tertiary production was broad enough to his conceptualization and included trade,

transportation, communications, utilities, banking, insurance, real estate, public administration and domestic, personal and professional services. It did not include the services of the dwelling units.

A standardized system of classification of economic activities is essential for meaningful collection of data relating to such activities. This not only ensures comparability of the data collected within the country from various sources by different agencies but also with the rest of the world. In India, the National Industrial Classification (NIC) is the standard classification followed for classifying economic activities. The NIC is prepared to suit the Indian conditions and follows the principles and procedures laid down in the United Nations' International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC). The Central Statistical Organization (CSO), which is responsible for coordination of statistical activities in the country as well as for evolving and maintaining statistical standards, took up the task of evolving a standard industrial classification as early as in 1960 and evolved a Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) in 1962. To mop-up the significant changes in the organization and structure of industries, the necessity to revise the industrial classification has been felt from time to time. With this objective, the CSO revised SIC 1962 in 1970 (NIC-70) and subsequently revised in 1987, 1998, 2004 and 2008. The Census 2001 of India followed NIC-98 for the classification of economic activities. The latest classification NIC-2008 is identical to the structure of ISIC Rev. 4 up to the four-digit level and also includes five-digit level as per the national requirements.

The tertiary or service sector, the main focus of this study, produces some "intangible" well known goods like government, health, education services and some quite new goods like modern communication, information and business services. The growth of the service sector has linkages with the employment of women in Kerala, as the educated women in the state are highly inclined to jobs in service sector. The latter part of twentieth century heralded the electronic revolution and introduction of women friendly tools and gadgets enabling women to handle services more efficiently. Producing services require relatively less natural capital and more human capital than producing agricultural or industrial goods. As a result demand has grown for more educated workers, prompting countries to invest more in education which in turn benefit their people. The inter-industrial demand with service sectors multiplied job opportunities and in literate states like Kerala, women enjoyed greater accessibility to service sector jobs. Another benefit of the growing service sector is that by using fewer natural resources than agriculture or industry, the pressure on

the regional, national and global environment will be to a short extent. Conserving natural capital and building up human capital may help global development to become more sustainable environmentally and socially**.** Growth of the service sector will not, however, be a miracle solution to the problem of sustainability, because growth of agricultural and industrial sectors is also necessary to meet the needs of the growing world population.

3.5 Women Employment

Participation of women in economic activities is essential not only for the individual development but also for the prosperity of households as well as for the economy as a whole. The entry of women into the labour market is strongly influenced by decisions taken at the household level. Policy makers have started recognizing that reducing the gender gaps in labour markets require that household responsibilities be better combined with labour market participation. Women around the world spend more time on housework than men, even if there are important regional variations. Making time-use more equal between the sexes is therefore one of the factors that can help in promoting gender equality in the labour market and elsewhere. Women's economic activities outside the home have an important bearing on the gender relations within the household. Their economic power relative to that of men is considered as the most important dependent variable affecting gender relations at the household level.

Investments in infrastructure and public services, such as electricity, sanitation and clean water, can improve labour market conditions for women by reducing the time needed to complete household tasks and production. Also development in household production technology has reduced the time and effort needed for housekeeping activities and thus increased the ability of women to participate in labour markets. Taxes and transfers can serve as simple incentives to encourage dual-earner families. Taxing household members separately (rather than jointly) lowers the marginal tax rate of second earners (typically married women) and thus encourages their labour force participation. Transfers such as childcare leave benefits and paid leave is necessary to ensure equality in the decision making process on household work division (Jaumotte[109], 2004).

The changes in the contribution of various sectors of economy to GDP and women

[109] Jaumotte, F (2004): "Labour Force Participation of Women: Empirical Evidence on the Role of Policy and Other Determinants in OECD Countries," *OECD Economic Studies, No. 37.*

employment trends are discussed in the global, national and state perspectives with special reference to the service sector using the available sources of secondary data. Such an investigation about women employment focusing the state of Kerala is essential to study the peculiarities such as the profiles, determinants and dimensions of their employment in the context of the household. As the GDP share of women employment in an economy is not directly available from the secondary sources, the contribution of total employment in major sectors to the GDP or SDP could only be discussed. However, the changing pattern of women's share in employment in the agriculture, industry and service sectors is explored in this session.

3.5.1 International Scenario

The table shown below depicts the percentages of GDP for the various sectors of economy of the world and major countries in the year 2010. When compared with world as a whole and with other major countries of the world, India has maximum percentage of GDP in the agricultural sector. The industrial sector share to the GDP is nearly 50 percent for UAE and China. The service sector share to the GDP of India is less than that of the developed economies like US and European Union, but it is more than that of UAE and China.

Table 3.5 Nominal GDP Sector Composition of World and Major Countries in 2010

Sl. No	World and major Countries	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Total
1	World	5.70	30.70	63.60	100
2	United States	1.20	22.20	76.70	100
3	European Union	1.80	25.00	73.20	100
4	South Africa	3.00	31.20	65.80	100
5	UAE	0.90	51.50	47.60	100
6	India	16.10	28.60	55.30	100
7	China	9.60	46.80	43.60	100

**Values in the cells in percentages*

Source: GDP Sector composition: Field Listing - GDP composition by sector. - CIA World Fact book

The following table displays the sectoral share in employment in world and regions. It reveals that the share of services in employment for both males and females is highest for developed economies while it is much lower for Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia including India. The women employment share is more than that of men in service sector in developed economies. At the same time, in the developing countries a major share of the women employment is found to

be in the agricultural sector even more than men. In developed countries service sector employment is maximum due to the structural transformation of economy. The world pattern follows that of the developed economies.

Table 3.6 Sectoral Share of Employment in World and Regions in 2007

World and Regions	Gender	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Total
World	Male	33.10	26.00	40.90	100
	Female	36.40	17.80	45.80	100
Developed Economies and European Union	Male	4.50	35.00	60.50	100
	Female	3.10	12.80	84.10	100
South Asia	Male	41.50	23.80	34.70	100
	Female	65.10	16.80	18.10	100
Middle East	Male	13.00	26.90	60.10	100
	Female	32.00	17.60	50.40	100
Sub- Saharan Africa	Male	60.30	13.00	26.70	100
	Female	65.10	6.40	28.50	100

Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, January 2009

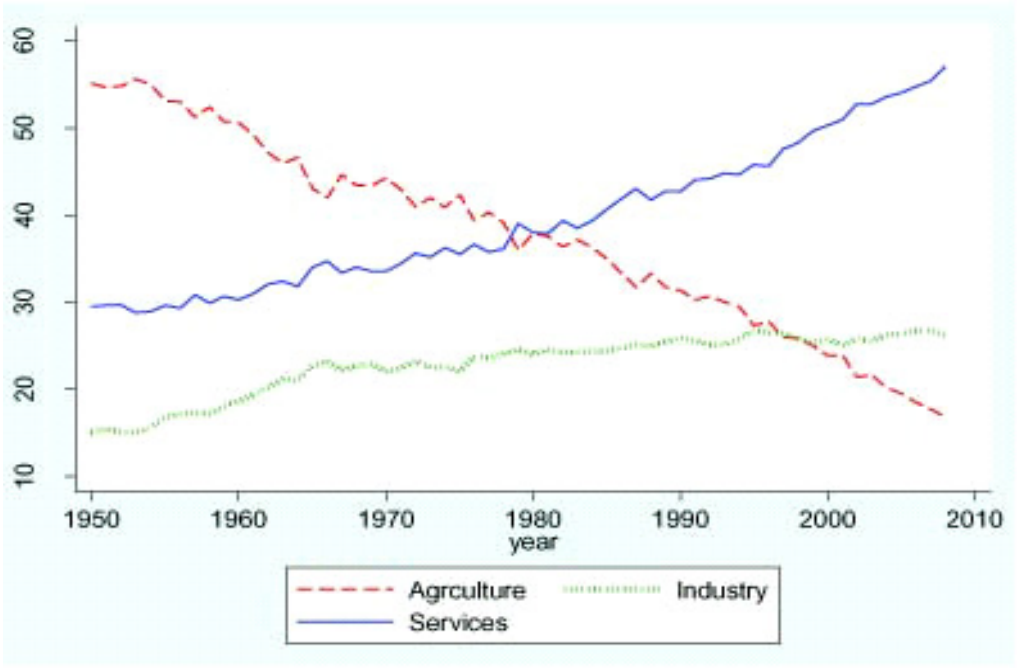
A growth model that is based on structural change lowers the share of workers in vulnerable employment faster than other growth models, if the structural change is associated with a reallocation of labour away from agriculture into industry and service sectors. Empirical evidence on the study by ILO shows that vulnerable employment is often particularly present in the agricultural sector. Hence productive structural change is effective in lowering the prevalence of vulnerable employment on an average. Internationally many developing countries including India are undergoing structural transformation of economy resulting in considerable migration of workers from the vulnerable employment in the agriculture sector to productive and decent employment in the industry and service sectors. The process also created more employment opportunities for under-represented groups in the labour market such as women.

However, between the years 2007 and 2011, such gains due to job reallocation across sectors have decreased as a result of economic recession in Central and South-Eastern Europe, Latin American and Caribbean countries, South Asia, Saharan Africa and the Middle East. Employment has moved out of low-productivity agriculture into industry and services at a much slower pace than before in these regions. None of these regions is in fact projected to get fully back on its pre-crisis

path of structural change, suggesting that the crisis caused more damage than previously thought in the development prospects of many developing countries.

3.5.2 Indian Context

The growing importance of service sector in India can be interpreted as a barometer of economic development. The performance of service sector in India can be evaluated in two different angles: contribution to GDP growth and share in total employment. The importance of service sector in terms of its share in national income or GDP has been growing progressively in Indian economy throughout the post-independence period.



S*ource: Central Statistical Organization for FY 1951- FY 2009*

Fig.3.1 Trends in the Share of Agriculture, Industry and Services in India's GDP

The above pictorial representation of Indian economy displays the shares of agriculture, industry and services in the GDP. It shows how the share of agriculture has fallen from 55 percent in 1950-51 to less than 17 percent in 2008-09. The steadiness of the decline is its most eye-catching feature. The rise of industry by comparison, has been episodic. The manufacturing share rose rapidly in the first 15 post-independence years, reflecting Nehru's emphasis on heavy industry, but more modestly from the mid-1960s to the early 1990s. Following an increase at the outset of the

1990s, reflecting a first wave of liberalization, the share of industry then stagnated. Meanwhile, the share of services increased from 30 percent of GDP in 1950 to 57 percent in 2008-09, rising at an accelerating pace as the period progressed. The average growth rates of agriculture, services, industry over these periods show clearly how the growth of services has accelerated while that of agriculture has declined.

In order to compare the number of women engaged in various sectors of employment, the work participation rates of the male and females should be found out. The work participation rate of women gives an idea of the number of women employed in the working age group of 15 to 59 years of women population. The data of women and men employment taken from the Census reports of India from 1981 to 2001 are compiled separately and presented below.

Table 3.7 WPR of Male Main Workers in the Age Group of 15-59 Years in India and Some Major States

India and Major States	Census Years	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Total
Kerala	1981	32.35	12.41	21.40	66.17
	1991	31.17	11.95	24.42	67.53
	2001	19.20	15.71	26.36	61.27
India	1981	53.80	12.29	17.73	83.83
	1991	50.55	11.26	20.20	82.01
	2001	36.60	13.21	21.35	71.16
Bihar	1981	65.55	6.70	11.10	83.35
	1991	64.38	4.16	12.55	81.09
	2001	51.61	6.12	11.89	69.62
Gujarat	1981	48.86	16.89	19.64	85.39
	1991	44.86	18.22	21.72	84.79
	2001	34.87	20.84	23.24	78.94
Tamilnadu	1981	48.18	16.54	20.76	85.48
	1991	44.64	15.44	23.01	83.09
	2001	35.01	18.96	27.95	81.92
Uttarpradesh	1981	61.30	9.00	14.16	84.46
	1991	57.47	8.06	16.97	82.50
	2001	40.04	10.56	15.29	65.90

**Values in all cells are in percentage*
Source: Census of India 1981, 1991 and 2001 computed by the researcher

From the table shown above, it is clear that the work participation rate of male main workers is less for the state of Kerala as per the Census reports from 1981 to 2001, when compared

with the all India and that of the other major states mentioned. But the decreasing trend of the male work participation is common for all the states and at the all India level. The decrease in the male work participation rate is due to the reduction in employment in the agricultural sector.

Table 3.8 WPR of Female Main Workers in the Age Group of 15-59 Years in India and Some Major States

India and Major States	Census years	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Total
Kerala	1981	11.37	4.29	4.92	20.58
	1991	9.39	4.20	5.91	19.50
	2001	5.13	4.44	6.36	15.92
India	1981	18.79	2.06	2.24	23.09
	1991	20.83	2.06	2.93	25.83
	2001	16.43	3.00	3.86	23.29
Bihar	1981	13.72	0.72	0.78	15.22
	1991	15.62	0.56	0.92	17.10
	2001	13.20	1.11	1.10	15.41
Gujarat	1981	14.20	1.25	2.26	17.70
	1991	17.90	1.27	2.88	22.05
	2001	16.20	1.91	4.45	22.57
Tamilnadu	1981	26.44	3.95	3.18	33.57
	1991	28.31	4.25	4.42	36.98
	2001	23.38	7.44	6.58	37.40
Uttarpradesh	1981	7.42	0.67	0.86	8.95
	1991	10.64	0.78	1.21	12.63
	2001	7.48	1.44	1.62	10.53

**Values in all cells are in percentage*
Source: Census of India 1981, 1991and 2001 computed by the researcher

The table given above displays the work participation rates of female main workers computed with the data from Census reports of India from 1981 to 2001. When compared with the male work participation, the female work participation is only one-fourth for all the states considered in this study and at the all India level. The female work participation rate of Kerala is falling from the 1981 Census to 2001 Census, while the same shows a slight increase at the all India level and for the major states. The fall in the female work participation rate in Kerala is mainly because of the steep fall in employment in the agricultural sector. The female work participation rate of Tamilnadu is more than twice that of Kerala as per the 2001 Census because of the increased participation of women in agricultural and industrial sectors. The work participation rate of women

in the service sector is high for Kerala and Tamilnadu when compared with the all India level and the other major states of the study.

In Kerala the decline in male and female work participation rates in agricultural sector is not compensated by an increase in participation in industrial and service sectors. Hence both the male and female work participation rates are declining in Kerala from 1981 Census onwards. Even though the male and female work participation rate is diminishing from 1981 to 2001 Census, the rates are continuously increasing in the service sector.

The female work participation at the all India level is almost same from 1981 Census because the rate in the agricultural sector is not much diminished. In Tamilnadu, female work participation rate is maximum compared with all the above major states including Kerala and at all India level as the participation in agricultural sector is not much diminished while the same in industrial and service sectors are seen much increased. But the male work participation rate in all India is diminishing from 1981 Census onwards as the rate in agricultural sector is declining at a faster rate than that of the females. When compared with the female work participation rate, the male work participation rate is three to four times higher for all the above states except for Tamilnadu. In Tamilnadu, the male work participation is nearly twice that of female work participation rate as per the Census 2001.

After examining the work participation rates of workers, the distribution of men and women employment across various sectors of economy need to be investigated to reveal the peculiarities of women employment in comparison to men employment. The table shown below depicts the trend in the gender wise share of employment of India and in some major states including Kerala in various sectors from the 1981 to 2001 Census. It clearly shows that the pattern of employment in Kerala is entirely different from the all India and that of the major states considered in this study. The overall trend in employment of India and its major states is a continuous reduction of employment in the agricultural sector and a steady increase in the industrial and service sectors due to the structural transformation of economy as seen in the work participation tables. As far as the employment in Kerala is concerned, nearly 40 percent of male as well as female employment is in service sector. The share of women employment in Kerala in service sector is very much higher when compared with that of the all India and that of the major states. In other words, majority of male and female main workers in Kerala as per the 2001 Census are in the service sector. But the all

India pattern and the figures from other states reveal that majority of them are in agricultural sector.

Table 3.9 Sectoral Share of Male and Female Main Workers in the Age Group of 15-59 Years

Sector	Agriculture			Industry			Services		
Census Years	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
	Kerala								
Male	48.90	46.16	31.34	18.75	17.69	25.64	32.35	36.16	43.02
Female	55.26	48.16	32.20	20.86	21.54	27.88	23.89	30.30	39.92
	All India								
Male	64.18	61.64	51.43	14.67	13.72	18.56	21.15	24.63	30.00
Female	81.39	80.66	70.54	8.90	7.98	12.88	9.71	11.36	16.57
	Bihar								
Male	78.65	79.40	74.13	8.04	5.13	8.79	13.31	15.47	17.08
Female	90.13	91.35	85.67	4.73	3.26	7.21	5.14	5.40	7.12
	Gujarat								
Male	57.22	52.90	44.17	19.78	21.48	26.39	23.00	25.61	29.44
Female	80.19	81.20	71.81	7.06	5.75	8.42	12.75	13.05	19.71
	Tamilnadu								
Male	56.37	53.73	42.73	19.35	18.58	23.15	24.29	27.69	34.12
Female	78.76	76.55	62.53	11.77	11.49	19.89	9.48	11.95	17.58
	Uttarpradesh								
Male	72.58	69.66	60.76	10.65	9.77	16.03	16.77	20.57	23.21
Female	82.95	84.23	71.00	7.49	6.21	13.66	9.56	9.57	15.34

**Values of cells in percentages*
Source: Census of India 1981, 1991 and 2001 computed by the researcher

There is a wide gap between male and female employment in agricultural sector in India and all the above states except in Kerala. In the states mentioned above and at the all India level nearly two-thirds of the female main workers are in agricultural sector. At the same time only around half of the male main workers are in agricultural sector as per the 2001 Census except for Bihar. But in Kerala, the gap in the share of male and female main workers in agricultural sector is continuously diminishing with the values almost one-third of the total main workers for male as well as for female in Census 2001.

3.5.3 Kerala Context

Even though the process of economic development involves a gradual shift from agriculture

to industry and service sectors, the wide expansion of service sector is remarkable in the Kerala economy. However, service sector has not been able to entirely absorb the redundant labour of women displaced from agriculture and household industry, their traditional sectors of employment. The table given below shows a comparison of the share of GSDP of Kerala with share of GDP of India in various sectors of employment. A note-worthy feature of the Kerala economy is that the share of the agriculture sector towards SDP is continuously declining over the years from 1980-81 to 2008-09. Even though the contribution of industrial sector is gradually increasing, the share of service sector has reached 61 percent in 2008-09. In the case of India, the share of services to GDP is more than half in the year 2008-09 as per the Central Statistical Organization. The contribution of agriculture and industrial sectors to GDP are 18 percent and 27 percent respectively. The prominence of services over industry could be an outcome of the de-industrialization process pursued in British India. With comparison to other Indian states, Kerala showed a singularly different pattern with the share of agriculture declining with regard to employment and SDP.

Table 3.10 Employment of Kerala and India: Sectorial Share of GSDP and GDP

	Year	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Total
Kerala	1980-81	30.90	17.20	51.90	100
	1990-91	25.20	19.40	55.40	100
	2000-01	20.00	21.70	58.30	100
	2008-09	14.50	24.60	60.90	100
India	1980-81	41.80	21.60	36.60	100
	1990-91	34.90	24.50	40.60	100
	2000-01	24.20	27.30	48.50	100
	2008-09	18.00	26.80	55.20	100

Source: Department of Economics and Statistics, Thiruvananthapuram and CSO

The rural and urban distribution of the male main workers among the three sectors of economy is displayed in the table given below as percentages of region wise total male employment. The source of data for the computation of the table is Census reports from 1981 to 2001. It is remarkable that for all India and all the states mentioned except Kerala, around two-thirds of rural male main workers are in agricultural sector as per the 2001 Census. At the same time, only one-third of rural male main workers are in agricultural sector and another quarter of them are employed in the industrial sector of Kerala. Male employment in the rural industrial sector at the all India level and in the major states is found to be less when compared with the state of

Kerala. Also, one-third of urban male main workers are in the industrial sector of Kerala which is in line with the situation at the all India level and in major states except Bihar and Gujarat. In Gujarat, nearly half of the urban male main workers are in industry in 2001, while the proportion of them in urban agriculture sector is below 5 percent. Among the urban male main workers, majority of them are in service sector for all the major states considered in the study and at the all India level.

Table 3.11 Regional Distribution of Male Main Workers in the Age Group of 15-59 in Major Sectors

Sector	Agriculture			Industry			Services		
Census years	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
	Kerala								
Urban	16.29	20.51	12.63	30.21	27.18	31.61	53.50	52.32	55.76
Rural	56.55	55.57	38.61	16.07	14.21	23.32	27.39	30.23	38.07
	All India								
Urban	12.18	12.52	7.80	33.63	31.16	32.96	54.20	56.32	59.24
Rural	80.54	79.07	70.75	8.70	7.54	12.19	10.76	13.39	17.06
	Bihar								
Urban	23.93	26.09	16.80	26.82	17.48	20.56	49.25	56.43	62.64
Rural	86.54	87.06	80.78	5.33	3.35	7.43	8.13	9.58	11.80
	Gujarat								
Urban	9.06	9.08	4.98	41.18	39.48	43.97	49.75	51.44	51.05
Rural	79.50	76.01	70.30	9.88	12.00	14.68	10.62	11.99	15.03
	Tamilnadu								
Urban	12.07	11.80	13.23	37.18	34.00	32.06	50.74	54.19	54.71
Rural	76.76	74.66	66.41	11.13	10.88	16.00	12.10	14.46	17.59
	Uttarpradesh								
Urban	15.68	15.71	9.10	30.29	25.95	32.22	54.03	58.34	58.68
Rural	85.39	82.93	75.82	6.23	5.79	11.31	8.38	11.29	12.86

** Values in the cells are in percentages*
Source: Census of India 1981, 1991 and 2001 computed by the researcher

The regional distribution of the female main workers is displayed in the table given below as percentages of rural or urban total female employment. It is seen that for all India and the states mentioned except Kerala, percentage of rural female main workers in service sector remains a single digit figure. But for Kerala, the percentage of rural female main workers in service sector is as high as 33 percent in 2001 Census. Also, about 60 percent of the urban women employees are in the service sector, while the values at the all India level and for the major states are lesser. The proportion of female main workers in the rural industrial sector is higher in Kerala, while the same in

the urban industrial sector of the state is in line with the situation at the all India level and other states given below.

Table 3.12 Regional Distribution of Female Main Workers in the Age Group of 15-59 in Major Sectors

Sector	Agriculture			Industry			Services		
Census years	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001	1981	1991	2001
	Kerala								
Urban	16.92	19.98	9.75	23.96	27.06	29.70	59.12	52.97	60.54
Rural	61.57	56.73	39.96	20.34	19.86	27.24	18.09	23.40	32.79
	All India								
Urban	22.98	22.12	13.93	27.70	24.57	29.40	49.31	53.31	56.67
Rural	89.53	89.66	82.86	6.28	5.43	9.29	4.19	4.91	7.85
	Bihar								
Urban	34.70	38.82	28.55	15.17	12.32	20.12	50.04	48.86	51.33
Rural	93.35	94.47	88.87	4.12	2.72	6.49	2.52	2.81	4.65
	Gujarat								
Urban	20.89	20.01	12.12	22.08	20.26	26.04	57.03	59.73	61.84
Rural	91.42	92.29	85.02	4.22	3.12	4.59	4.36	4.59	10.39
	Tamilnadu								
Urban	27.82	23.71	24.76	35.85	33.33	34.84	36.33	42.97	40.39
Rural	88.73	86.74	78.32	7.05	7.28	13.64	4.22	5.97	8.05
	Uttarpradesh								
Urban	14.07	16.89	10.05	27.04	24.44	32.40	58.89	58.68	57.55
Rural	90.74	91.82	81.65	5.28	4.15	10.39	3.98	4.03	7.96

** Values in the cells are in percentages*
Source: Census of India 1981, 1991 and 2001 computed by the researcher

Equal educational opportunities for women and the matrilineal system prevailed in Kerala were the distinguishing features in comparison to other Indian states, gave inheritance rights to women in Kerala. There has also been significant change in perceptions about jobs among the educated women, even in rural areas. As a natural corollary of spread of education and social progress, an increased number of women now aspire for salaried jobs, preferably government jobs or even economically less rewarding private jobs, as compared to getting employed in either fields or factories. This had, however, led to disequilibrium in the job-market with too many women searching for the jobs in service sector which might have resulted in disproportionate expansion of the sector. The expansion of service sector in Kerala is an irreversible phenomenon. A noticeable trend in the women employment in Kerala is the increase in the share of employment in the service

sector. The employment pattern of women in Kerala resembles the patterns of women employment in many advanced countries rather than that of India in general.

From the analysis of work participation rates and sectoral composition of workforce, it is clear that the majority of women are employed in the service sector in Kerala, even though their work participation rate is lesser compared to men employment. A study on women employment in Kerala should certainly consider the contribution of women in service sector of the state. As mentioned earlier, since women have dual roles in the family and at the workplace, the issues related to women employment are entirely different from that of men employment.

Table 3.13 Proportion of Female Main Workers in the Age Group of 15-59 Years within Each Sector

Sector	Agriculture			Industry			Services		
India and Major States	1981 Census	1991 Census	2001 Census	1981 Census	1991 Census	2001 Census	1981 Census	1991 Census	2001 Census
Kerala	27.03	24.08	22.25	26.71	27.02	23.24	19.49	20.30	20.54
All India	24.49	27.61	29.45	13.44	14.50	17.44	10.50	11.84	14.40
Bihar	16.77	18.34	19.33	9.38	11.03	14.54	6.36	6.38	7.95
Gujarat	21.43	26.97	29.87	6.50	6.05	7.76	9.74	10.92	14.92
Tamilnadu	35.09	38.55	40.10	19.05	21.41	28.21	13.12	15.97	19.07
Uttarpradesh	9.81	14.07	14.44	6.27	7.93	10.96	5.15	5.93	8.71

** Figures in the cells are percentages of female main workers in the total employment in a sector*
Source: Census of India 1981, 199 and, 2001 computed by the researcher

Since the women employment is the focus of our study, it is interesting to find out the percentage of female main workers when compared with the male main workers in each sector of India and major states from the Census data. It gives an idea of the number of female employees working in a sector when 100 employees are randomly selected from a particular sector. The table given above shows that proportion of female main workers is continuously increasing in service sector, while that of the agricultural and industrial sectors is decreasing in Kerala. On the other hand, the proportion of female main workers in the agricultural, industrial and service sectors of some of the major states of India and at the all India level is increasing. As per the 2001 Census, the proportion of women employees in the service sector is considerably less for all the major states included in this study except Tamilnadu when compared to Kerala.

Table 3.14 Female Employment in the Registered Public and Private Establishments in Kerala

Sector	Agriculture		Industry		Services		Total	
Years	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2001	58016	11.75	152872	30.95	283052	57.30	493940	100
2004	53414	10.77	163761	33.02	278703	56.20	495878	100
2005	41858	9.41	127370	28.63	275644	61.96	444872	100
2006	35381	8.30	112423	26.39	278241	65.31	426045	100
2007	34921	7.99	123551	28.28	278395	63.73	436867	100
2008	33404	7.44	132756	29.58	282680	62.98	448840	100
2009	33171	7.34	133589	29.56	285109	63.10	451869	100

** Compiled by the researcher*
Source: Directorate of employment and training, Govt. of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram

Due to the non-availability of Census data after 2001, the data on men and women employment in the registered public and private establishments in Kerala is collected from the Directorate of Employment and Training and is displayed in the above table. The women employment in the agricultural and industrial sector decreases from the year 2001 to 2009, while the same in the service sector is constantly increasing. In 2009, about two-thirds of the total women employment of the public and private establishments in Kerala is in service sector.

Table 3.15 Male Employment in the Registered Public and Private Establishments in Kerala

Sector	Agriculture		Industry		Services		Total	
Years	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2001	54521	7.29	220799	29.53	472434	63.18	747754	100
2004	47379	6.69	195766	27.63	465400	65.68	708545	100
2005	54965	7.91	175357	25.23	464579	66.86	694901	100
2006	68960	10.21	150084	22.22	456441	67.57	675485	100
2007	49924	7.41	168130	24.94	456059	67.65	674113	100
2008	50919	7.62	167957	25.12	449701	67.26	668577	100
2009	51416	7.56	178841	26.30	449830	66.14	680087	100

** Compiled by the researcher*
Source: Directorate of Employment and Training, Govt. of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram

The male employment follows the same pattern of women employment in Kerala as far as the registered public and private establishments are concerned. The percentage share of male employment is slightly higher for service sector, but the same is a little lesser for industrial sector

when compared with the female employment as tabulated above.

The table shown below depicts the proportion of women employees of Kerala in each sector as per the data on employment of the state government. The results reveal that the proportion of employed women as obtained in the Census is only nearly half in all sectors when compared with that in the registered private and public establishments of the state. In service sector, the women proportion in employment is about 40 percent in 2009. The proportion of women employed in the agriculture sector is gradually decreasing from 2001 while that of the industrial and service sector is on a rise in Kerala.

Table 3.16 Proportion of Women Employees in the Public and Private Establishments in Kerala

Year	Agriculture	Industry	Services
2001	51.55	40.91	37.47
2004	52.99	45.55	37.45
2005	43.23	42.07	37.24
2006	33.91	42.83	37.87
2007	41.16	42.36	37.91
2008	39.61	44.15	38.60
2009	39.22	42.76	38.79

Source: Directorate of Employment and Training, Govt. of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram
** Figures shows the percentages of women employees in total employment in each sector*
** * Compiled by the researcher*

Although, Kerala has attained commendable achievements in the field of general education among females, the same is not true for the spread of professional and vocational education. Again, the domains within the service sector that has been witnessing vibrant growth in other parts of the country like consultancy customer care services, financial services, business support activities and services in information technology have not yet emerged in the state as viable channels of employment. The service sector in Kerala is largely comprised of hotels and restaurants, shops and commercial establishments and sales and servicing of consumer appliances, which has limited potential of expansion. Even tourism, the sector that has been held as a promising sector of self-employment generation, does not seem to offer much promise for unemployed females, mainly because of sex-selective occupational segregation of available professions in this field like guides, tour operators etc. Thus the trends indicate the U-curve depicting women's economic participation along the course of development, can be reasonably expected to have a rather longer trough, a

relatively wide flatter portion, for some periods to come (Sumit Mazumdar and Guruswamy M[110] 2006)

3.6 Women Employment and Gender Budgeting

A gender budget is the budget that acknowledges the gender patterns in society and allocates money to implement policies and programmes that will change these patterns in a way that moves towards a more gender equal society[111]. As discussed earlier, the achievement of human development is heavily dependent on the development of women and girls. These women and girls not only comprise a large part of human resources of Kerala, their socio-economic development sets foundation for sustainable growth of economy and society as a whole. Around the world, gender budgeting tends to focus on women because their economic activities continues to be very different in nature from men's. Women are less engaged in formal sectors, under-represented in higher levels of employment and continue to receive less pay than men for the same work. They also continue to do most of the unpaid work like bearing, rearing and caring children and other aged dependents.

An ideal government budget focuses on those who are least able to provide for themselves. Gender budget thus tends to focus more on the needs of women and girls than those of men and boys because women and girls are at a disadvantage economically and in other ways. Gender budget expands our concept of economy to include things that are not usually valued in money. It recognizes the unpaid care economy- the work that mainly women do in bearing, rearing and caring for their families and the people in the society. Unless this unpaid care work is done, the economy will not function effectively and people's well-being will be negatively affected. Government therefore needs to find ways of supporting those who do this unpaid care work, lessening their burden and ensuring that the work is done as well. Since the gender budgeting is a tool for gender mainstreaming in the developmental process as a whole, it should not be confined to social areas like education, health and welfare. But it needs to be extended in areas such as power, defence and information technology where the gender implications may not be immediately apparent.

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[110] Sumit Mazumdar and Guruswamy M (2006): "Female Labour Force Participation in Kerala: Problems and Prospects", *Presented at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, Los Angeles, California,* Mar 30 - Apr 1, 2006.

[111] Government of India (2007): *Gender Budgeting Handbook for India Ministries and Departments*, Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Good gender budgeting relies heavily on data, so that policies, programmes and budgets can be evidence based rather than based on myths or assumptions. The data revealing the position of women in a society is essential for an effective gender budgeting. The implementation of policy recommendations made in this study on the basis of empirical data on women employment in the service sector in Kerala would probably assure the equality of women in labour market through proper gender budgeting.

3.7 Conclusion

The chapter attempts to discuss the problems and prospects of women employment and their role in the overall development with special reference to the state of Kerala. The trend and pattern of women employment in Kerala is explored with a key focus on the service sector, which was the first objective of this study. The state of Kerala is well known for its high human development. The development experience encountered in Kerala reveals how even economically poor states could transform the lives of its people and attain high levels of social development. From the human development reports, it is clear that the state of Kerala is well ahead in the HDI, GDI and GEM when compared with the all India level and some of the major states considered in the study. However in the gender gaps in human development, the states Gujarat and Tamilnadu are ahead of the state of Kerala in the ranking for the year 2006. Access to education played a crucial role in empowering the women in Kerala which resulted in improving the well-being of men and children in their household. The empowerment of women in the state through literacy and work participation had a strong impact on fertility rates, demographic change and in the quality of life provided to the next generation.

Internationally, in the developed economies which are in a post industrialization period, the service sector accounts for a major share in GDP and in total workforce. It is seen that three quarters of the total women employees in the developed economies are in service sector. In developing economies like India, even though the contribution of the service sector to GDP is more than half, number of employees in the agriculture sector is maximum compared to the other two sectors. It is interesting to notice that about two-thirds of women employees in such economies are still working in agricultural sector. The GDP share of the agricultural sector of developing economies is lower due to the continued use of inferior techniques resulting in low productivity in that sector. Since independence, the share of GDP of the agricultural sector in India is continuously falling and

that of the service sector is increasing. The service sector of India and Kerala in particular is seen developing and agriculture sector loses its importance in the share of GDP or SDP. But work participation of women in Kerala is nearly one-fourth of men and has fallen from 21 percent in 1981 to 16 percent in 2001. Meanwhile, the corresponding value for India remained unaltered at 23 percent for the period. The work participation rates of women in the major states of the study have increased during the above mentioned period. However, the work participation rates of Gujarat and Tamilnadu were more than that of Kerala during 2001. The decline in the work participation rates of women employment in Kerala is due to the steep fall in women employment in the agricultural sector.

Though the shares of men and women employment were the maximum in the agricultural sector of Kerala in 1981, the service sector accounted for the maximum share in employment in 2001. But agriculture sector continues to be the source of maximum employment for men as well as women at the all India level and in the major states. Also, the proportion of women working in the agricultural sector is much higher than that of men as far as the cases of major states and all India level are considered. Due to the high literacy of women in Kerala, they might have opted better to be unemployed than to work in agricultural sector with lowest productivity and less wages. With a vast pool of educated human resource, among the females in particular, Kerala can emerge as a destination for knowledge-intensive enterprises, which can release some pressure from the serious problem of educated unemployment.

The regional differences in the composition of women employment are examined as urbanization of a society influences the economic activities of the population. As per the 2001 Census, among urban areas a maximum of 60 percent share of women employment is in service sector in Kerala and in Gujarat. In rural areas, the share of women employment in service sector is largest in Kerala with a value of 33 percent. The corresponding values of the women employment in the rural areas of the major states including the all India level are very low. The average number of women employees present in a sample of 100 service sector employees is high in Kerala in 2001 when compared with the all India and the major states except Tamilnadu. Hence it is clear that a noticeable trend in the women employment in Kerala is the increase in the share of employment in the service sector. The employment pattern of women in Kerala resembles with that of many developed countries rather than that of India in general.

Data on employment from the registered public and private establishments of Kerala, from 2001 to 2009, shows that more than two-thirds of the women employees are in service sector. It is also observed that the proportion of women employees in formal service sector employment in Kerala is nearly half in comparison to men employees, while the same for all the service sector activities is only less than a quarter. Analysis of the secondary data reveals that the overall work participation rate of women employees in Kerala is less due to the reduction in employment in the agriculture sector when compared with the national level. The proportion of women in the service sector is found to be increasing in Kerala as per the Census reports and is at a higher level than the situation in the all India level and in the other states studied except Tamilnadu.

The policy suggestions of any study on women employment could be fully realized only if sufficient funds are allotted for their implementation. Women's and men's needs, concerns and priorities often differ due to their different roles in society. The way a government raises and spends money can have a negative impact on women. Hence the process of conceiving, approving, executing, monitoring, analyzing and auditing budgets in a gender-sensitive way is essential. The concept of gender budgeting should also be propagated so that public-private sectors, institutions, non-governmental organizations etc. adopt such practices. Such budget allocations on the basis of data on gender composition of employment in Kerala would help in addressing the problems like low work participation and wage differentials in women employment scenario of the state.