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BA Economics Honours | Semester V | Calicut University

Gender Analysis in Economics

Course Code: ECO5EJ301 • Module 2

Module II: Gender and Labour Market

Labor market dynamics exhibit persistent gender gaps across workforce participation, occupational segregation, wage remuneration, and job quality in both formal and informal sectors.

Unit 8: Female Labor Force Participation and Claudia Goldin's U-Shaped Curve

Claudia Goldin (Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, 2023) revolutionized historical labor economics by uncovering the long-run evolutionary trajectory of female employment:

- **The U-Shaped Female Labor Supply Curve:**
  1. *Agrarian Phase (Initial decline):* In low-income agrarian societies, women participate heavily in unpaid family farm labor and cottage production. As the economy shifts toward early industrialization and factory work, the locus of production moves outside the home. Strong societal stigmas against married women working in factories, combined with rising male earnings (income effect), cause Female Labor Force Participation (FLFP) to decline.
  2. *Service Phase (Rebound):* As per capita GDP continues to rise, female educational attainment expands, fertility rates decline, modern white-collar service sector jobs emerge, and the opportunity cost of staying at home rises (substitution effect), causing FLFP to rebound upward.
- **The Indian Stylized Paradox:** Despite rapid GDP growth and surging female educational enrollment, India experienced a perplexing secular stagnation or decline in measured FLFP over recent decades, driven by rising household incomes (dropping female distress work), domestic care burdens, and safety constraints.

Unit 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13: Time Use Surveys and the Informal Economy

- **Indian Time Use Surveys (TUS 1999–2000 and 2019):** National statistical surveys by NSO measuring how women and men allocate time across System of National Accounts (SNA) production, non-SNA unpaid care work, and personal activities. TUS reveals that Indian women spend over 5 hours daily on unpaid domestic and caregiving duties compared to less than 30 minutes for men—a staggering care penalty.
- **Informal Sector Vulnerabilities:** Over 90% of working women in India are concentrated in the informal economy (domestic maids, agricultural daily laborers, street vendors, home-based piece-rate workers), characterized by absence of written contracts, lack of social security, and non-enforcement of the Maternity Benefit Act.
- **Modernization, Technology, and Globalization:** While export-oriented ICT services opened high-paying corporate avenues for educated urban women, mechanization in agriculture and traditional industries displaced millions of rural women into underemployment.

Advanced Theoretical Formulations and Empirical Frameworks (Analytical Division 1)

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Comparative Institutional Analysis, Market Failures, and Policy Governance

Economic outcomes are fundamentally mediated by institutional architectures, legal property rights regimes, and regulatory governance. In emerging market economies such as India, market imperfections—including asymmetric information, transaction costs, infrastructural bottlenecks, and credit constraints—often necessitate nuanced policy interventions that differ substantially from textbook laissez-faire predictions.

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Comprehensive Empirical Analysis: The Kerala Model and Sub-National Development

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