



G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting

Why in News

Recently, the **Union Minister for Labour and Employment** has said that **India is making collective efforts to reduce gender gaps in labour force participation.**

- He was delivering the Ministerial Address on Declaration and Employment Working Group Priorities at [G20](#) Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting.

G20

- It is **an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union**, with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
- The G20 membership comprises a mix of the world's largest advanced and emerging economies, representing about two-thirds of the world's population, 85% of global gross domestic product, 80% of global investment and over 75% of global trade.
- **Members:** Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, and the European Union.

Key Points

- **Issues Discussed:**

- The Employment Working Group deliberated upon key issues, including **women employment, social security and remote working.**
 - In 2014, G20 Leaders pledged in Brisbane to **reduce the gap in labour force participation rates** between men and women by **25% by 2025**, with the aim of bringing **100 million women into the labour market**, increasing global and inclusive growth, and reducing poverty and inequality.

- **Initiatives Highlighted by India:**

- **Educational and Skilling Efforts:**

- [**New National Education Policy, 2020:**](#)

- It aims for reforms in **school and higher education systems**.
 - India is strengthening its educational and skilling efforts to ensure quality education from preschool to senior secondary stage.

- [**National Skill Development Mission:**](#)

- It aims to create **convergence across sectors and States** in terms of **skill training activities**.

- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana:**

- It enables the youth to take up industry related skill training to assist them in securing better opportunities.

- **Digital educational content** has been made available on various e-learning platforms like [DIKSHA](#), [SWAYAM](#).

- **For Employment Generation:**

- **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana:**

- The government is paying up to 24% of wages towards EPF contributions for new employees as well as those who lost their jobs in the pandemic and are being re-employed.

- **To Ensure Women Participation:**

- **New Code on Wages, 2019:**

- It will reduce gender-based discrimination in wages, recruitment and conditions of employment.

- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana:**

- It provides financial support to women entrepreneurs to start small enterprises.
- Collateral free loans worth Rs 9 lakh crore have been disbursed under this scheme.
- There are around 70% of women in this scheme.

- **New Code on Social Security:**

- It may now include even self-employed and all other classes of workforce into the folds of social security coverage.

- **Others:**

- Women can now work even **during night hours** and the duration of paid **maternity leave** has been increased from **12 weeks to 26 weeks**.

- **G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target:**

- This has been developed for achieving equal opportunities and outcomes for women and men in the labour markets as well as societies in general.
- The G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target has been set as:

- Increasing the **quantity and quality of women's employment**.
- Ensuring **equal opportunities** and achieving better outcomes in the labour market.
- Promoting a more **even distribution of women and men** across sectors and occupations.
- Tackling the **gender pay gap**.
- Promoting a **more balanced distribution of paid and unpaid work** between women and men.
- **Addressing discrimination and gender stereotypes** in the labour market.

Labour Force Participation

- The labor force participation rate indicates the percentage of all people of working age who are employed or are actively seeking work.
- India continues to struggle to provide its women with equal opportunity.
- In 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic, female labor force participation in India was 23.5%, according to [ILO](#) estimates.
- According to the [Periodic Labour Force Survey](#), 2018-19, the female labour force participation rates (LFPR) among women aged above 15 years are as low as 26.4% in rural areas and 20.4% in

urban areas in India.

Constraints in Female Labor Force Participation

- **Stereotyping in Society:** India's societal norms are such that women are expected to take the responsibility of family care and childcare. This stereotype is a critical barrier to women's labor force participation.
 - Due to this, women are in constant conflict over-allotment of time for work and life is a war of attrition for them.
- **Digital Divide:** In India in 2019, internet users were 67% male and 33% female, and this gap is even bigger in rural areas.
 - This divide can become a barrier for women to access critical education, health, and financial services, or to achieve success in activities or sectors that are becoming more digitized.
- **Technological Disruption:** Women hold most of the administrative and data-processing roles that artificial intelligence and other technologies threaten to usurp.
 - As routine jobs become automated, the pressure on women will intensify and they will experience higher unemployment rates.
- **Lack of Gender-Related Data:** Globally, major gaps in gendered data and the lack of trend data make it hard to monitor progress.
 - In India, too, significant gaps in data on the girl child prevent a systematic longitudinal assessment of the lives of girls.
- **Impact of Covid-19:** Owing to Covid-19, global female employment is 19% more at risk than male employment (ILO estimates).

Way Forward

- Work opportunities for women are restricted to a few sectors. Policies are needed to promote access to employment across the spectrum of sectors and occupations, investments in diversified sectors and upgrade to high-end activities, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas along with infrastructural support like transport, housing, sanitation facilities, lights and so on.
- Encouraging female entrepreneurship can promote a broader dynamic economy, elevate the economic role of women, and therefore distribute the benefits of growth more equitably.

Source: PIB