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CHANGING TREND OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN RURAL AND URBAN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MSME SECTOR

Ms. PRAGYA SINGH,

Mr. ROHITH.N.

Student

Amity University, Noida,

&

Dr. MAHUA BHATTACHARJEE

Professor

Amity School of Economics,

Amity University, Noida

Abstract

In the post Covid-19 situation when Government of India is found committed to support the MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) to play a dominant role for the recovery, it becomes indispensable to understand the future prospect of women participation in work. The study tried to explore the prospective position of women participation in future considering the present scenario. This will not only enlighten the prospective area of further expansion of economy but it will also give an idea on feasible small scale manufacturing sectors which can be strengthened by clustering similar value added industries. With this purpose an in depth analysis is made on the changes in female work participation rate for rural and urban areas separately from 1961 to 2011. With the forecasting method the study tried to find out the prospective states with relatively higher female participation rate. With the secondary data analysis the study tried to forecast the changes in FWPR from 2021 to 2061 in rural and urban areas separately. It is found that from 2021 till 2061, the urban areas are expected to witness moderately high and very high increasing FWPR, with the majority of states falling under the category of high increasing FWPR. In the current scenario it can be suggested that accommodative monetary policy such as reduction in interest rate and active fiscal policies primarily focusing on social protection measures should be adopted by the government.

Keywords: MSME; Female Work Participation Rate; Agriculture; Women Empowerment; Fiscal Policy; Monetary Policy.

JEL Code: R23, J16

1. Introduction:

The new age of automation and artificial intelligence is on our doorstep. With the tech jobs offering an advanced economic opportunity to women; it becomes equally important for MSMEs to ensure transition of women into highly-skilled roles (Startup India, 2020). This transition holds an important role in case of MSMEs where the number of employees may not be many. In order to hold a key position in leadership roles, women have to be more mobile-both physically as well as mentally. The globe is currently witnessing the huge rise in SMEs where nearly 85% of the total workforce is getting absorbed (ILO, Platform economy, 2018). Micro, small and medium enterprises have significantly facilitated the growth in the country by empowering women on a global platform. (Ministry of micro, small and medium enterprises, 2017). They have emerged as the incubators of entrepreneurship. In emerging market economies, MSMEs contribute to 45% of total employment and 33% of the total GDP (UN, 2018). According to a study by World Bank, 4 out of 5 new positions in the next 15 years will be created by MSMEs, which nearly account for 90% of the total employment in the formal sector. Women, being the harbingers of change, are weaving their success stories, with their hard work. A large number of women are expanding their business horizons and stepping into the businesses. There is now a greater availability of options to women in the fields of employment, which have been a driving force for their emergence as bureaucrats, professionals and executives. The traditional skills of women are now being converted into livelihood which provides them with the income earning opportunities, by starting a home based business of textiles, catering, crafts and many more (Ministry of MSME, 2017). It is expected that nearly 15-170 million jobs will be created by Indian women entrepreneurs, which accounts for 25% of

the new jobs that are required for working age population by 2030 (Bain & Company, Google, 2019). Currently, these businesses represent 20% of all the businesses. According to a report titled 'Women Entrepreneurship in India – Powering the Economy With Her', women owned businesses are majorly owned by single-person wherein the largest share of 38% comes from rural non-farm home based business owners followed by urban self-employed women entrepreneurs at 31%, who usually prefer work from home. MSMEs play an effective role in ensuring women's participation in business and trade. The small business play an important role in reducing the gender gap as nearly 40% of the businesses are run by women. (International Trade Centre, 2017). It is estimated that there are 9.34 million formal women-owned MSMEs, which corresponds to approximately one-third of all the formal MSMEs. (International Finance Corporation, 2018). They are more likely to be present in the retail, healthcare, beauty and cosmetics sectors. They are equally present in the service sector like tourist, transport, hotels, and trade sectors. However, there is a slightly lower presence in sectors like manufacturing, agriculture and construction. In India, nearly 3.01 million businesses are owned either fully or partially by women. Women entrepreneurs collectively contribute 3.09 percent of industrial output (IFC, 2014). More importantly, they employ 13.48 million people, or 10.24 percent of the total workforce (6th Economic Census, 2016). A study by IFC finds that women constitute nearly one fifth of the total workforce in MSMEs. The rate of women's employment in registered MSMEs stand at 20.45 percent while it is 13.02 percent in unregistered MSMEs. However, women are mostly employed in low and medium skilled jobs, with the absence of social security benefits. Improving working conditions of the

women along with their greater participation can achieve the Sustainable development goal of Gender Equality (SDG 5). MSMEs, similar to the large companies should be encouraged to adopt gender inclusive practices with their business and value chains (UNDESA, 2017). MSMEs need to formally train the women with the skills required in the market by adopting integrated business tools. There should be zero tolerance towards all forms of violence at work, flexible work arrangements for women and providing child care (UN Women, 2016). Women employees prioritize sustainability by promoting gender balance in the businesses (DESA, UN, 2018). The companies which employ more women are likely to invest more in low-carbon products, renewable resources and energy efficiency. With The recent outbreak of COVID-19 globally, sustaining business operations will be particularly difficult for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (ILO, 2020). In view of the global outbreak, governments across the world are introducing a wide range of measures in order to infuse more confidence and increase credibility of small business lines. Some of these measures include provision of short term liquidity as done in India currently, provision of wage subsidy for a period of three to six months, compensation for the reduction in turnover particularly during lockdown period etc. while India must ensure the introduction of safety net measures for the workers as well, the real challenge lies in the identification of 63.4 million unincorporated MSMEs, of which approximately 99% micro enterprises that remain largely informal. A concessional interest rate loan which is announced by Small Development Bank of India (SIDBI), specifically target MSMEs which manufacture goods and services related to Covid-19. These packages are promising for ensuring short-term liquidity concerns and further stimulus

packages focusing on the MSME sector are required (Radhika Pandey, 2020).

2. Review of literature:

In a paper by Dr. Ajay Sharma, Sapna and Vinod in 2012, they found out that the main challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs are the overlapping of responsibility of business and family, non-awareness of the best options available for finance, illiteracy among rural women because of which they lack knowledge of measurement and basic accounting, less decision making power for Indian women because of the male dominant society, lack of training to succeed as business owners, and restricted mobility among the rural women (Sharma, Dua, & Hatwal, 2012). There is a dearth of financial assistance available for women entrepreneurs and also they are the victims of exploitation by moneylenders. The repayment capacity of women is lower, either due to the low profits of their businesses, or a lack of financial support in the form of ownership of assets or other properties. According to a United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), (2003), report, women suffer from various constraints, and cultural values and social norms hinder the equal participation of women in society (M & Khan, 2016).

Wakilur Rahman (2012) during his study of women entrepreneurship development in Bangladesh found that as mentioned in the goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals to promote the gender equality and to empower women, the Article 28 of the constitution of Bangladesh mentioned the issue of equal economic right and opportunities and the development of women entrepreneurs. The country's 5th five year plan (1997-2002) integrated the macro framework and multi-sectoral economy to bring women into the mainstream of economic development and encourage potential women entrepreneurs (Rahman, 2012). Conducive policy environment during the liberalization era post 1991 resulted in a

steady increase in the number of MSMEs in India. It increased from 67.87lakh in 1990-91 to 133.68lakh in 2007-08. However, Bank's credit to micro enterprises declined from 4.2% in 2002-03 to 2.8% in 2007-08. This was because of the high administrative costs of small-scale lending, Asymmetric information, High risk perception, and Lack of collateral. However, a provision of raising funds from separate stock exchanges for SMEs was suggested by SEBI in 2009 (Ghatak). SME listing on stock exchanges will add significantly to creation of wealth in the economy. No listing is required for SMEs whose face value of capital is less than Rs.1crore. The SMEs having bank loans can also be converted to equity financing through SME listing (subject to listing guidelines). It may reduce non-performing advances of banks. A measure suggested to reduce the overall risk for SMEs was constructing SME index for the growth of SME platform. This reduces the risk due to volatility and broader portfolios (Kulkarni & Chirputkar, 2014).

Santosh Mehrotra and Sharmistha Sinha (2019) in their study have analyzed the trends in female work participation and have studied the underlying reasons behind the observed trend. They have estimated the NSS unit level data of various rounds and have found out that female workforce in rural areas declined by 28.4 million during the time period from 2005 to 2012. In urban areas, it increased, though marginally by 1.3 million. However there was a decline in total FWPR. There was an increase in non-agricultural employment in rural areas by 5 million from 2005 to 2012. The construction sector was the main driver of the increased employment in non-agricultural area. It was found that manufacturing and service sector together employed only 18% of the total female workforce in rural areas whereas it employed 28% of the total women in urban areas. 74% of the total women

employed in manufacturing are self-employed, with half of them being the unpaid family members. Tobacco, textiles and apparel industries are the top three sub-sectors of manufacturing which employ 68% of the women. Within services, women are confined to education (25%), retail trade (16%) and domestic workers (15%). In urban areas, significant numbers of women are employed as domestic workers. The authors identified various factors behind falling FWPR. Some of them are mechanization in agriculture, rise in household income, increase in the number of women engaged in domestic duties etc. there are structural factors as well such as lack of entrepreneurship, lack of skills, informalization etc that contributed to a fall in female workforce participation rate. They suggested measures to encourage female workforce participation rate. Few of the measures are creation of educated work force, focus on skill development vocational training, strengthening of the sectors predominated by women-education and health and encouraging entrepreneurship.

Nasreen Khan and Adil Amin Bhatt (2015) in their paper have studied the concept of women entrepreneurship in India. The study showed that of all the units owned by women entrepreneurs, 76% are located in rural areas while 24% are located in urban areas. Female enterprises contribute 13.62% to the MSME sector in India. Rural female SMEs (15.27%) are more than urban female SMEs (12.25%). Micro enterprises (14.19%) are the major contributor to female enterprises followed by small enterprises (5.06%) and medium enterprises (4.21%). According to the authors, there is a need that women identify their skills that can be transformed into livelihood earning opportunities. There is a need to spread awareness among female entrepreneurs regarding the scope in entrepreneurship. The unexplored talents of women should

be identified and trained that can be used by the industrial sector to increase their productivity.

Paramasivan C, Mari Selvam P (2013) Suggested that Micro, small and medium enterprises are powerful segment of the industrial development of a country. These sectors performed well with multidimensional aspects of the socio-economic aspects. Growth and progress of MSME in India is an emerging aspects which directly associated with the sustainable development in the country. This article is focused on the Progress and Performance of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in India with reference to MSME in of India.

Danabakym M and Swapna Kurian (2016) conducted a study to identify the motivating factors of women entrepreneurs and contributing factors to the success. The authors have also analyzed the relationship between industries related factors and success of entrepreneurs. The convenience sampling method was used to select 100 respondents in and around Chennai city. The statistical tests that are used be the authors include percentage analysis, weighted average rank analysis and chi-square test. It was found that of all the total respondents surveyed, 77% owned manufacturing division while 23% owned retail industry. The first motivating factor came out to be education/ previous experience and government assistance/policies followed by social/economic independence. The most important factor to keep success in their job was found out to be achievement motivation and human relation followed by hard work and honesty. 39.33% of the respondents are highly successful in their business and 26.08% fall under low success category. There was a significant relationship between industrial related factors and success of women entrepreneurs. MSMEs played an important role in widening the base of industrial entrepreneurship in India.

Saud Ilahi (2018) in his paper have examined the obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs and suggested the initiatives that should be taken to uplift female entrepreneurs. The author has analyzed the findings of NSS 73rd round of NSSO. It was found that the share of women entrepreneurs in rural areas (22.24%) was more than the urban areas (18.72%). The share of female owners was decreasing with the increase in size of enterprises. Micro enterprises (20.44%) have the major share of women followed by small (5.26%) and medium enterprises (2.35%). The share of female enterprises was highest in West Bengal which is 23.42%. Tamil Nadu has the second largest share with 10.37% followed by Telangana with 7.85%. The biggest states such as UP and Rajasthan were the worst performers with 6.98% and 3.07% respectively. The author suggested that the holistic approach is needed to spread the awareness about entrepreneurship among women.

3. Objectives:

1. To find out the decennial FWPR from 2021 to 2061 for the rural and urban areas of the states in India.

To demonstrate the prospect of women participation on the MSMEs in India post COVID-19.

4. Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature. Secondary sources of data were used and were collected from the ILO reports, Periodic Labor Force Survey 2017-18, Annual reports of the Government of India, Decade wise census reports, MSME census report, various journals and research papers. An in-depth analysis is done on the basis of the changes in the FWPR for the rural and urban areas of the states of India separately from 1961 to 2011. With the secondary data analysis the study tried to forecast the changes in FWPR from 2021 to 2061 in rural and urban areas separately using the R software. The two states Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand are grouped together into

one state due to the non-availability of data as Uttarakhand was formed on 9 November 2000. The study also tries to demonstrate the prospects of women participation on MSMEs in India post COVID-19, which is the period starting from September 2020, as stated by the

Directorate General of Health Services of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in qualitative terms (India.com News Desk, 2020). Various secondary sources were also studied to obtain a clear picture of the situation of women in MSMEs in India.

5. Findings and Discussion

Rural area:

Figure 1

Quadrants showing change in FWPR for Rural Area based on Table A1

Haryana Himachal Pradesh Mizoram Rajasthan I	Andhra Pradesh Karnataka Kerala Odisha Punjab Sikkim Tamil Nadu Tripura II
Bihar Goa Madhya Pradesh III	Arunachal Pradesh Gujarat Maharashtra Manipur Meghalaya Nagaland Uttar Pradesh West Bengal IV

The 4 different quadrants in the figure 1 indicate the classification of the rural areas of the states in Indian according to the trend they showed in the forecasted values.

Quadrant I consists of the states that showed very high increasing FWPR.

Quadrant II consists of the states that showed moderately high increasing FWPR.

Quadrant III consists of the states that showed no significant change in the FWPR.

And quadrant IV consists of the states that showed a decreasing FWPR.

Analysis of Quadrant I

All the four states mentioned in quadrant 1 are expected to have a high increasing FWPR from 2021 to 2061. There are various factors that have influenced in the forecast of the same. They are as follows:

- Falling birth rates:** All the four states have witnessed continuous falling birth rates since 2008 in the rural areas. The birth rate fell from 24.2 in 2008 to 21.9 in 2017 in Haryana, 18.2 in 2008 to 16.3 in 2017 in Himachal Pradesh, 22 in 2008 to 17.7 in 2017 in Mizoram, and 28.8 in 2008 to 25 in 2017 in Rajasthan. This indicates a fall in the maternity leaves and quitting the work after pregnancy over the years which enables more women to take up work. Thus, more women in the productive age group of 15-49 will be available for work.
- Increasing literacy rates:** The states have seen an increase in their literacy rates for females in the rural areas from 2001 to 2011 as it increased from 49.27 to 60 for Haryana, 65.68 to 74.6 for Himachal Pradesh, 77.26

to 79.8 for Mizoram, and 37.33 to 45.8 for Rajasthan. This has provided the female youth a chance to opt for a better job for a better living and to know their rights which helps to prevent the income disparity at work.

- **Increased female participation in agriculture:** The states have seen an increase in the participation of women in agriculture from 1981 to 2011 as it increased from 12.29 to 20.83 for Haryana, 33.4 to 47.4 in Himachal Pradesh, 2.16 to 41.86 in Mizoram, and 24.99 to 42.68 for Rajasthan. More women are participating in the production activity over the years along with offering themselves for various other jobs.

Analysis of Quadrant II

All the eight states in the second quadrant are expected to obtain increasing FWPR from 2021 to 2061. The various factors that have influenced in the forecast of the same are as follows:

- **Gradually falling Birthrate:** The states have witnessed a fall in their birthrates from 2008 to 2017 in the rural areas as it decreased from 19.1 to 16.5 for Andhra Pradesh, 20.9 to 18.2 for Karnataka, 14.6 to 14.1 for Kerala, 22 to 19.3 for Orissa, 18 to 15.5 for Punjab, 18.7 to 15.2 for Sikkim, 16.2 to 15 for Tamil Nadu, and 16 to 14.1 for Tripura. Like in the case of first quadrant even this shows a situation of less maternity leave and less quitting of work after pregnancy which improves the women participation.
- **Improving literacy rates:** All the states in this quadrant has seen a notable increase in their literacy rates from 2001 to 2011 in the rural areas as it increased from 43.5 to 51.5 for Andhra Pradesh, 48.01 to 59.7 for Karnataka, 86.69 to 90.8 for Kerala, 46.66 to 60.7 for Orissa, 57.72 to 65.7 for

Punjab, 58.01 to 72.4 for Sikkim, 55.28 to 65 for Tamil Nadu, and 60.5 to 79.5 for Tripura. With improved education and literacy, women got a platform to come out of the social norms that prevented them to undertake certain activities which were considered to be reserved for men.

- **Considerable increase in female participation in Agriculture:** There has been a considerable improvement in the participation of women in agriculture as there has been an increase in the women participation rate in agriculture from 1971 to 2011 as it increased from 27.4 to 44.65 for Andhra Pradesh, 15.8 to 38.79 for Karnataka, 14.1 to 20.24 for Kerala, 6.8 to 29.69 for Orissa, 0.7 to 14.34 for Punjab, 3.16 to 44.63 for Sikkim, and 17.6 to 41.22 for Tamil Nadu. Improved women participation in the mainstream agriculture will enable them to explore new aspects of agricultural markets.

Analysis of Quadrant III

All the three states in the third quadrant are expected to maintain similar FWPR from 2021 to 2061. The various factors that have influenced in the forecast of the same are as follows:

- **Not much fall in the Birth rate:** The states does not show considerable fall in their birth rates in the rural areas as during the time period from 2008 to 2017 they just fell from 29.7 to 27.2 for Bihar, 13.4 to 12.1 for Goa, and 30 to 26.8 for Madhya Pradesh. The women in the working group are still exposed to the volatility in the women participation in work caused by maternity leaves and then quitting the work there after.
- **Considerable improvement in literacy rate:** There has been an improvement in the female

literacy in the rural areas during the time period from 2001 to 2011 as it increased from 29.61 to 49 for Bihar, 71.92 to 81.6 for Goa, and 42.76 to 52.4 for Madhya Pradesh. This could be considered as the driving force for the probable minute increase in the FWPR in the coming decades.

- **Combination of increase and decrease in agricultural participation:** There has been a considerable increase in the participation of rural women in agriculture in Bihar as the women participation rate in agriculture increased from 14.6 in 1981 to 20.16 in 2011. On the contrary, there has been a fall in the rural female participation in the agriculture from 35.8 in 1981 to 30.25 in 2011 in Madhya Pradesh. This could be another reason for the FWPR to not show an improving trend in the coming decades.
- **Increasing violence against women:** There has been an increase in the rape cases against women in these states over the span of 2 years. The incidence of rape per one lakh female population has increased from 4.03 in 2011 to 9.67 in 2013 in Goa and 9.73 in 2011 to 12.11 in 2013 in Madhya Pradesh. This could have prevented various women from going out of their homes in search of work.

Analysis of Quadrant IV

All the eight states in the fourth quadrant are expected to witness falling FWPR from 2021 to 2061. The various factors that have influenced in the forecast of the same are as follows:

- **Nominal fall in the Birth rate:** There has not been any significant fall in the birth rates in the rural areas of most of the states during the time period from 2008 to 2017 as it fell

from 23.1 to 18.3 in Arunachal Pradesh, 24.1 to 19.9 in Gujarat, 18.4 to 15.7 in Maharashtra, 15.9 to 14.8 in Manipur, 27.3 to 24.8 in Meghalaya, 17.8 to 14 in Nagaland, 30 to 27 in Uttar Pradesh, and 19.4 to 16.7 in West Bengal. Since the situation is similar to that of the third quadrant, it could be assumed that the states are volatile to the risk of quitting the jobs after pregnancy.

- **Considerable increase in literacy rate:** There has been an improvement in the female rural literacy rate in the states from 2001 to 2011 as it increased from 36.9 to 52 for Arunachal Pradesh, 47.84 to 61.4 for Gujarat, 58.4 to 68.5 for Maharashtra, 56.62 to 68.9 for Manipur, 53.24 to 68.4 for Meghalaya, 57.52 to 71.5 in Nagaland, 36.9 to 53.7 in Uttar Pradesh, and 53.16 to 65.5 in West Bengal. This could be considered as the supporting factor for not allowing the FWPR to fall much in the coming decades. Literate women could shift their area of residence in search of a better job which results in the outflow of potential female workers which could also result in the fall of rural FWPR for the particular state.

High risk of women molestation: There has been a considerable increase in the rape cases in the states during the time period from 2011 to 2013. During the span of 2 years the incidence of rape per one lakh female population has increased from 6.27 to 10.7 in Arunachal Pradesh, 1.52 to 2.54 in Gujarat, 3.14 to 5.52 in Maharashtra, 4.14 to 5.77 in Manipur, 8.81 to 13.74 in Meghalaya, 2.41 to 2.82 in Nagaland, and 2.14 to 3.09 in Uttar Pradesh. Increased violence against women could have restricted themselves to their house which again could be the reason for the fall in the FWPR in the coming decades.

transforming their ideas into innovative solutions. Nearly 88.2% of women are literate in Himachal Pradesh and so it shows a very high increasing FWPR.

Analysis of Quadrant II

All the fifteen states in the second quadrant are expected to obtain increasing FWPR from 2021 to 2061. The various factors that have influenced in the forecast of the same are discussed below:

Moderately High increasing FWPR:

Around 20% of the urban females receive vocational training to upgrade their skills. There has been an increase in the training received in skills which are traditionally 'female domain', such as handlooms and apparels. The sectors which showed a larger number of women getting training, is related to nutrition, childcare, pre-schools etc. Recent NSSO survey found out that garment workers, domestic cleaners and directors and chief executives are the most common jobs for urban women. Nearly 99% of the women are self-employed. Gujarat has the highest number of women working in garment sector followed by Rajasthan because of the large handloom industry in these states. Women in Haryana, as entrepreneurs they manage smaller firms and concentrate in less-profitable sectors. In terms of formal employment, they are concentrated in "female" occupation and sectors. In Uttarakhand, women are playing a central role in earning livelihood primarily through providing their labor in cultivation and allied activities. Most of the women in Kashmir are either engaged in apple industry or in the handloom industry. They make purse, shawls, and various other handicraft items. They also provide their services in the apple industry either in plucking apple from the trees or processing those apples in the factories. Goa is increasingly coming up with cafes and due to rise in urban culture during the tourist season women are entering the labor force. The north-eastern states like Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and

Arunachal Pradesh have experienced an increase in FWPR because of the rise in small and medium cottage industries. Being rich in natural resources and art, these states have the large number of women in making wooden items and handicrafts. They are turning into small entrepreneurs as well.

Discussion on women participation in MSMEs

From the study of various secondary sources it is observable that the MSMEs being the second largest employer after agriculture in India create more than a million jobs annually. Agriculture and its allied activities are still predominant in rural India. There has been a considerable improvement in the female participation of agriculture in rural areas in most of the states however a few states are still exposed to the low participation of women. Despite of the various economic variables considered for the evaluation of women participation affecting the female work participation in the rural areas, the FWPR is expected to rise in 12 of the 23 states selected to study the rural performance. This could be possible as there is an increase in the female participation in the MSMEs. There has been a 38% increase in the enterprises established by women under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Program. Agro-based industries like Coir industry producing in states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, Tripura etc. belong to the states that are expected to experience a moderately high increasing FWPR in the coming 5 decades and they have extended the potential of exports of the coir industry by value addition through technological interventions and diversified products like Coir Geotextiles etc. It is observed that female participation in labor force tends to rise with the reduction in time-cost of unpaid work, when shared equally with men or made compatible with market work. Women are considered to provide unique

set of skills and perspectives that men do not provide with. Therefore, women's inclusion in these firms and activities may provide better insights into consumer's needs, as women make the majority of household decisions. Manipur, Mizoram and Telangana are the states with maximum number of women owned MSMEs because of the large handicraft sector in these states. The government introduced stimulus packages to deal with COVID19 pandemic that primarily focuses on MSMEs. They have targeted MSMEs for the path of economic recovery. The introduction of the Rs.3lakhcrore emergency credit line by the government will ensure that 45 lakh units will have access to working capital to resume business activity and safeguard jobs. For the MSMEs that are considered as non-performing assets, the government made the provision of Rs.20000crore as the subordinate debt. The financial institutions that serve the MSME sector will get a financial support of Rs.30000Crore that will be fully funded by the government. The COVID-19 pandemic, which is disturbing the stability of the economies across the globe due to the shortage of personal hygiene materials have opened a new scope for the MSMEs in the country. Various MSMEs in the country have undertaken the manufacturing of different varieties of hand sanitizers varying from alcohol based to ion based sanitizers, manufacturing of masks, creation of ventilator facilities etc. which provides a new area to explore for the existing and prospective MSMEs. As a long term strategy for the sustainability of MSMEs, collateral free small loans under the MUDRA Yojana is adopted in order to encourage women to take up entrepreneurship. Despite of the various packages provided by the government in order to boost the MSMEs as well the female participation in the country; certain other economic factors remain untouched. The states observed with no

improvement in the FWPR and decreasing FWPR in the coming decades faces various economic evils that have to be addressed at a grass root level. North Eastern states like Mizoram, Sikkim, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh etc. are reported to have 17.8, 14.58, 13.74, and 10.7 rapes per lakh female population respectively. Female security must be assured in the states and lack of female safety measures have resulted in the probable fall of female participation in the coming years. The holistic framework that will focus on multiple scenarios is required to be set up to serve the dual purpose of the continuation of business activities and containment of spread of the virus. The framework will consider the measures to mitigate the impact on MSME Labor workforce. With nearly 99% of the enterprises categorized as micro enterprises, the majority of the workforce is in informal enterprises. There is need to incentivize this workforce by providing them with the wage subsidy assistance. The need of the hour is to design the curriculum that will impart the basic knowledge of entrepreneurship and lobby the holistic policy to achieve the full potential of female entrepreneurs.

6. Limitations:

The study lacks uniformity in the availability of data since the data was collected from 1961 to 2011 however many states were formed after the 1960s and more towards the 1980s and 1990s. Limited availability of data and missing values in between acted as a hindrance in the forecasting the FWPR for states. The study considers the census data for obtaining the FWPR which only shows the decadal trend but not the annual trend thus not providing a clear picture of the female participation in the rural and urban areas of the state.

7. Conclusion

From the above analysis, it is observed that the FWPR is expected to rise in 12 out of 23 states in rural area and 7 states

showing very high increasing FWPR in urban area using forecasted values. Some of the factors responsible for a rise in FWPR include increase in literacy rate, fall in birth rate, rise in urban female population and rise in educational enrollment of young women. Women, being the harbingers of the change, play a significant role in the MSME sector of the country. It is forecasted that the states will show a rising FWPR in the coming 10-20 years which represents the better picture of Indian labor market and thus closing the wide prevalent gender gap in the labor market. The women inclusion in MSME sector will not only enlighten the prospective area of further expansion of economy but it will also give an idea on feasible small scale manufacturing sectors which can be strengthened by clustering similar value added industries.

8. Suggestions

Suggestions to improve women participation in rural areas:

- Kerala 'Kudumbashree' model: The Kudumbashree model works with a socially representative leadership. The community farms run by Kudumbashree groups are now acknowledged as a critical avenue for the rejuvenation of agricultural production in Kerala (The Hindu, 2018). The Kudumbashree model can be converged with the MGNREGA for converting fallow land into cultivable land. Income could be enhanced by linking joint liability groups to the market (Kudumbashree).
- Increase in the disbursement of Agricultural loans: More funds should be disbursed to the states falling in the fourth quadrant initially and then to those in the third quadrant. During the year 2016-17 among the states in the fourth quadrant, Arunachal Pradesh received a total of Rs.132.59crores, Manipur received Rs.251.12crores, Meghalaya received Rs.368.31crores,

and Nagaland received Rs.129.39crores. This shows an inequitable disbursement of the agriculture loan in the North-East Region compared to the rest of the country and this should be improved.

- Promotion of Agri-Clinics: To provide expert advice and services to female farmers, agri-clinics should be promoted.
- Strict laws to deal with female molestations and creation of a support system to uplift the victims like the zero tolerance approach to domestic violence and sexual abuse adopted by Australia (UN Women).
- Conjunction of FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO) with the Government of India (GOI): FLO and GOI can work together to establish a National Women Entrepreneurship Fund and undertake gender-sensitization training for various agencies to make women contribute more economically (Shah, 2013).

Suggestions to improve women participation in urban areas:

- Reduction in time burden on women in child care support: Child care subsidies free up the women's time to enter into the labor force and thus increasing the female participation.
- Introduction of skill training program: Several programs aimed at transforming the traditional skills of women into income earning opportunity enhance the probability of women entering into the workforce.
- Vocational training: 3.3% of females received formal vocational training while 6.2% of females received non-formal vocational training in fields like handicrafts, media, journalism, IT, Communication and office related work.
- Establishment of Women Industrial Training institutes, National Vocational Training Institutes and

Regional Vocational Training Institutes.

Suggestions to combat covid19 through financial support:

- The monetary policy that is accommodative in nature such as reduction in interest rate, relaxation in reserve rate and targeted liquidity provisions.
- Active fiscal policies with a primary focus on social protection measures which include both targeted transfers

as well as automatic stabilizers, such as unemployment benefits along with tax relief for MSMEs.

Financial support in order to support specific sectors especially, MSMEs and targeted lending to protect enterprises. Investment in health care system is the need of the hour against COVID-19 that will also provide an opportunity for the creation of decent jobs.

Appendix Table A1

Region wise FWPR for states from 1961-2011 and the forecasted FWPR from 2021-2061

States	Region	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021	2031	2041	2051	2061
Andhra Pradesh	Rural	46	27.4	40.03	42.48	43.24	44.6	45.93	47.26	48.59	49.92	51.25
	Urban	18.7	11.05	11.81	11.94	12.62	19.1	24.83	30.1	35.93	41.75	47.58
Arunachal Pradesh	Rural	NIL	NIL	47.64	40.86	41.33	39.5	38.32	37.15	35.98	34.81	33.63
	Urban	NIL	NIL	11.62	11.94	16.69	21.3	13.97	17.54	21.11	24.68	28.25
Assam	Rural	32.4	5.6	NIL	23.27	22.28	23.7	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
	Urban	9.9	4.25	NIL	7.52	10.29	14.9	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Bihar	Rural	28.5	9.3	14.65	16.26	20.19	20.2	20.8	21.12	21.45	21.77	22.1
	Urban	10.4	6.42	4.78	5.11	6.83	10.4	13.97	17.5	21.11	24.18	28.25
Goa	Rural	NIL	NIL	24.99	24.31	25.71	22.6	22.27	21.59	20.91	20.23	19.55
	Urban	NIL	NIL	15.22	15.54	17.84	21.5	20.88	24.96	29.03	33.12	37.25
Gujarat	Rural	34.1	12.1	26.85	35.6	39.04	32	26.54	21.08	15.62	10.16	4.7
	Urban	9.2	5.74	6.52	10.09	9.11	11.4	13.45	17.89	21.32	24.56	27.89
Haryana	Rural	NIL	3.17	12.29	12.62	34.18	20.8	40.48	46.4	52.31	58.22	64.13
	Urban	NIL	3.17	4.45	5.08	10.27	12.1	15.66	19.7	23.45	27.67	30.23
Himachal Pradesh	Rural	NIL	22.37	33.37	36.61	46.47	47.4	52.69	55.95	59.22	62.48	65.74
	Urban	NIL	7.51	11.26	14.09	14.96	19.9	20.88	24.96	29.03	33.12	37.2
Jammu & Kashmir	Rural	29.5	4.2	37.08	NIL	25.84	20.8	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
	Urban	5.8	3.45	9.39	NIL	9.5	14.5	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Karnataka	Rural	36.8	15.8	30.66	36.6	39.86	38.8	39.08	39.37	39.66	39.95	40.23
	Urban	NIL	NIL	11.83	12.9	16.06	20.8	20.88	24.96	29.03	33.12	37.2
Kerala	Rural	20.9	14.1	17.72	16.86	15.88	20.2	21.76	24.38	26.99	29.61	32.22
	Urban	13	10.5	11.76	13.02	13.55	16	19.89	21.34	24.56	27.04	30.02
Madhya Pradesh	Rural	48.6	20.7	35.78	39.26	40.68	39.3	38.87	38.44	38.02	37.59	37.17
	Urban	14.5	7.62	9.63	10.24	11.7	15.1	18.13	21.35	24.57	27.78	31.08
Maharashtra	Rural	46.7	24.4	40.85	46.06	46.52	42.5	40.43	38.37	36.31	34.25	32.19
	Urban	13.4	9.16	10.14	11.44	12.72	16.8	20.88	24.96	29.03	33.12	37.2

Manipur	Rural	44.18	43.24	43.38	43.22	43.2	41.2	40.26	39.32	38.38	37.44	36.5
	Urban	25.54	27.23	28.61	27.88	32.28	33.2	34.83	36.31	39.29	43.45	47.67
Meghalaya	Rural	NIL	NIL	42.05	38.85	38.92	35	32.56	30.13	27.69	25.26	22.82
	Urban	NIL	NIL	16.12	17.22	19.15	23.6	17.17	21.02	24.87	28.71	32.56
Mizoram	Rural	NIL	NIL	42.81	47.11	54.73	41.9	60.01	64.31	68.61	72.91	77.21
	Urban	NIL	NIL	21.88	39.37	40.5	31.1	18.13	21.35	24.57	27.78	31
Nagaland	Rural	NIL	50.22	48.3	42.78	42.92	52.3	32.94	34.86	36.78	38.78	41.23
	Urban	NIL	9.08	10.93	12.09	14.87	25.9	27.67	29.07	31.23	33.09	35.03
Odisha	Rural	27.4	6.8	21.09	22.62	27.1	29.7	32.94	36.07	39.2	42.33	45.46
	Urban	13.1	7.1	9.49	8.1	9.76	13.2	17.17	21.02	24.87	27.01	32.56
Punjab	Rural	16.5	1.4	6.9	4.37	23.15	14.3	22.52	25.07	27.63	30.18	32.73
	Urban	4.7	3.01	4.2	4.49	9.24	13.2	17.57	21.92	26.17	30.63	34.98
Rajasthan	Rural	40.8	9.3	24.99	33.25	40.7	42.7	45.59	48.49	51.39	54.29	57.19
	Urban	10.1	5.4	5.88	7.22	9.24	12	14.76	17.52	20.28	23.04	25.8
Sikkim	Rural	39.8	40.76	41.37	31.47	40.67	44.6	44.03	44.99	45.95	46.91	47.87
	Urban	12.34	14.45	15.58	18.75	21.42	24.8	26.91	29.02	31.13	33.24	35.35
Tamil Nadu	Rural	37.1	17.6	33.55	38.5	41.33	41.2	42.26	43.33	44.4	45.47	46.54
	Urban	9.87	10.1	11.97	13.1	18.42	21.83	26.15	30.49	34.82	39.16	43.5
Tripura	Rural	11.23	12.5	13.28	14.58	22.86	26.3	29.6	32.91	36.21	39.52	42.83
	Urban	6.78	7.02	8.73	9.27	12.09	16	19.69	25.57	27.5	31.42	35.34
Uttar Pradesh	Rural	19.9	7.3	9.04	14.16	18.89	18.3	17.71	17.12	16.53	15.94	15.35
	Urban	5.3	4.07	3.46	4.78	6.85	11.3	15.75	20.2	24.65	29.1	33.05
West Bengal	Rural	10.6	4.6	8.89	13.07	20.7	19.4	19.63	19.21	18.79	18.37	17.95
	Urban	5.1	4.74	5.59	6.21	11.13	15.4	20.07	24.78	29.89	34.2	38.91

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