ಸೃಜನಿ

SRUJANI: Indian Journal of Innovative Research and Development (SIJIRD)
Volume-5 Issue 2, May-June 2026, Pp. 171-174
Bi-Monthly, Peer-Reviewed, Open Access, Indexed Journal

I S S N: 2583-3510

SIRDF JOURNALS
editor@srujani.in
www.srujani.in

Socio-Economic Conditions of Working Women in India: A Sociological Study

Dr. Jahida Makandar
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Govt First Grade College Managuli, Vijayapur

Abstract:

Working women play a significant role in the economic, social, cultural and political development of India. Their contribution extends beyond paid employment to include household management, childcare, elderly care, agricultural activities and community development. Despite improvements in women's education and employment opportunities, many working women continue to face gender discrimination, unequal wages, occupational segregation, insecure employment and difficulties in balancing professional and family responsibilities. Their socio-economic conditions differ according to caste, class, religion, education, geographical location, marital status and type of employment. This research paper examines the socio-economic conditions of working women in India through a sociological perspective. It analyses their educational background, employment opportunities, economic independence, family responsibilities, social status, workplace challenges and access to government support. The paper also discusses the role of education, legislation, skill development and social awareness in improving women's working conditions. It concludes that genuine women's empowerment requires not only employment opportunities but also decent wages, safe workplaces, equal opportunities, social security and the equitable distribution of unpaid domestic work.

Keywords: *Working women, socio-economic conditions, gender inequality, employment, economic empowerment, social status, India.*

Introduction

Women constitute an essential part of Indian society and contribute significantly to the development of families, communities and the national economy. Their roles have changed considerably with the expansion of education, industrialization, urbanization, globalization and technological development. In

Please cite this article as: Jahida Makandar. (2026). Socio-Economic Conditions of Working Women in India: A Sociological Study. *SRUJANI: Indian Journal of Innovative Research and Development,* 5(2), 171–174

contemporary India, women work in education, healthcare, agriculture, industries, banking, information technology, government services, business, construction, domestic service and numerous other occupations.

The socio-economic conditions of working women must therefore be examined through the relationship between employment, income, family structure, education, social status and gender relations. Employment may improve women's independence and bargaining power, but its benefits depend on the quality, security and remuneration of work. The present study examines these issues in the Indian context and identifies measures that can contribute to women's social and economic empowerment.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the socio-economic conditions of working women in India.
2. To analyse the educational and occupational characteristics of working women.
3. To examine the relationship between employment and women's social status.
4. To analyse the effects of unpaid domestic work and care responsibilities on women's careers.
5. To understand the role of government policies and legal protections in improving women's working conditions.
6. To suggest measures for promoting gender equality and the socio-economic empowerment of working women.

Socio-Economic Profile of Working Women in India

Labour force participation - Women's participation in the labour force is an important indicator of their engagement with economic activities. According to PLFS 2023–24, the female labour force participation rate for persons aged 15 years and above was 41.7 per cent, compared with 78.8 per cent for men.

Educational status - Education is a major factor influencing women's socio-economic position. It improves literacy, awareness of rights, occupational skills and access to professional employment. Women with higher educational qualifications may find opportunities in teaching, medicine, administration, finance, technology and research.

Income and economic independence - Employment provides women with opportunities to earn income and contribute to household expenditure. Women's earnings may support children's education, healthcare, housing, food security and savings. Regular income can also strengthen their capacity to participate in family decisions.

Major Socio-Economic Challenges Faced by Working Women

- Gender discrimination
- Wage inequality

- Informal employment and job insecurity
- Unpaid domestic work
- Work–family balance
- Workplace safety and harassment
- Caste, class and social inequality
- Limited leadership opportunities

Government Initiatives and Legal Safeguards

Constitutional provisions-The Constitution of India establishes equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on specified grounds, including sex. Article 14 concerns equality before the law, Article 15 addresses non-discrimination, Article 16 concerns equality of opportunity in public employment, and Article 39 includes principles relating to livelihood and equal pay for equal work.

Maternity benefits-The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, as amended, provides maternity-related protections for eligible women in covered establishments. Such protections are intended to support maternal health and employment continuity.

Protection against workplace sexual harassment-The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, establishes mechanisms for the prevention and redressal of sexual harassment. Its effective implementation requires workplace awareness, appropriate complaint committees where legally required, confidentiality and protection of complainants.

Wage equality-The Code on Wages, 2019, contains provisions relating to wages and non-discrimination in remuneration on the ground of gender for the same work or work of a similar nature, subject to the applicable statutory framework.

Suggestions for Improving the Conditions of Working Women

- Improve access to quality education
- Promote equal pay and fair recruitment
- Strengthen social security
- Recognise and redistribute unpaid care work
- Ensure safe workplaces
- Encourage entrepreneurship
- Improve rural employment opportunities
- Strengthen financial independence
- Challenge discriminatory social norms
- Improve data and research

Conclusion

The socio-economic conditions of working women in India reflect both significant progress and continuing inequality. Women's participation in education, professional employment, agriculture, business and public life has expanded, creating new opportunities for financial independence and social participation.Ultimately, women's economic empowerment is not merely a matter of increasing employment numbers. It involves creating social conditions in which women can choose

their occupations, earn fair incomes, exercise control over their resources, participate in decision-making and pursue their aspirations without discrimination. A society that values women's paid and unpaid contributions and ensures equal opportunities is better positioned to achieve inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.

References

- Agarwal, B. (1994). *A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*. Cambridge University Press.
- Engels, F. (1884). *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.
- Government of India. (1961). *The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, as amended*.
- Government of India. (2013). *The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.*
- Government of India. (2019). *The Code on Wages, 2019.*
- Government of India. (2024). *Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS): Annual Report, July 2023–June 2024*. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- Government of India. (2025). *Economic Survey 2024–25. Ministry of Finance*.
- Government of India. *The Constitution of India*. *Legislative Department*, Ministry of Law and Justice.