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Working hours choice of married women in informal sector activities: A case study of Kesargarh village, Purulia district

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Abstract

Women's participation in the labour market varies greatly across countries. Female labour force participation plays a significant role for the development of an economy. The participation of women is the outcome of various macro and individual factors. In developing countries the participation of married women in the labour force (Informal sector) is complex.

Against this backdrop the present study is an attempt to analyse the determinants of working hours choice of married women informal sector. Informal employment is generally a major source of employment in the developing countries. The study is based on an individual survey conducted in a village (namely Kesharghar from Hura block) of Purulia district, West Bengal. Most of the employed married women of this village are depends on agriculture and labour Working as their main source of income. Some of women respondents are joint with maid, vegetable seller, tuition teacher etc. In case married women labour supply curve is not backward bending which shows a direct relation between working hour and labour income. Working Hours of Married Women in Informal Sector is depends upon two determination namely labour income and work nature. To our knowledge not much of works in this direction was done in the context of West Bengal.

Keywords: Working hours, married women, Kesargarh village, Purulia district

1. Introduction

Female's participation in the labour force affects economic growth and development. More and more women join the workplace after World War II because many male soldiers died during war so women from those families joined the work force to keep their livelihoods and economic afloat. Developing country typically shows positive relationship between high rate of women's participation in the labour force and poverty. The high rate of women's participation in labour force reflects the poor condition of developing country. Women earn relatively less than men and they are more usually associated with insecure jobs in most cases. According to the inequality report of Oxfam 2018 the gender pay gap in India was 34%. Women get 34 per cent less compared to men for doing the same job with same skill and qualifications. India is one of the lowest in the world in terms of women's participation in the labour force. Although Women make up half of India's population, less than a quarter of women join the workforce. According to the Deloitte report 2018 the female workforce participation in India has decreases from 36.7% (2005) to 26% (2018) and 95% or 195 million women are employed in the unorganised or informal sector. The reasons for the decline in female participation in the workforce are social and economic barriers, deteriorating education system. A major part of Indian economy is associated with unorganised or informal sector and more than 90% of the workforce is involved in this sector. More than 50% of the national product comes through this unorganised or informal sector. Women's participation in the labour market helps to standardised the education levels and develop social norms. Women's participation in the labour market directly affects economic development. Women's participation in labour market also improves access to childcare and fertility rates. In developing countries the participation of married women in the labour force (Informal sector) is complex. Against this backdrop the present study is an attempt to investigate the several aspects of women labour supply in the context of West Bengal.

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We have done our study based on an individual survey conducted in a Kesargarh village of Purulia district, West Bengal. In a micro-level study conducted in purulia district, Bhattacharya (2020) ^[1] investigated the factors influencing the married woman's participations in informal sector activities. But it did not highlight the working hour aspect of women informal labour force. The specific objective of our study is to analyse the determinants of working hours choice of married women informal sector. We briefly review the underlying theory explaining women's labour supply and workforce participation on the respect of developing countries. Lachaud (1993) conducted a comparative study based on six sub-Saharan African countries – Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, Guinea, Madagascar and Mali. They showed that women participation in the labour market increases as their age and education increases but it is inversely related with income of the other family member if leisure is a normal good having positive income elasticity. They also conclude that the tendency of women to participate in labour force is greatly influenced by the employment status of the head of the household. They also acknowledge that female labour supply in Africa is too lower than men, especially where the incidence of social norms is high. According to Okojie (1981), Urama and Obinna (2003) the decision for women to participate in labour market is influenced by several socioeconomic factors and variables such as family size, husband's education, labour market condition and other environmental variables in Nigeria. There is a lot of work to be done in developed economy regarding the women labour supply (El-Hamidi, 2003) ^[2]. In 1986 Killingsworth and Heckman gives a comprehensive list of positive estimates of wage elasticity and in 1979 Nakamura, and Cullen lists assumption about

negative uncompensated wage elasticity. These studies are generating broad estimates of the elasticity of labour supply in respect of wages and income. No such work done regarding the determinants of working hours choice of married women informal sector in west Bengal and also in our purulia district.

2. Sample selection

We have randomly selected one namely Kesharghar village as our survey area. The Kesharghar village is located in rural area of Purulia district of West Bengal. It is the under of Hura block of Purulia district. Now we discuss about the Village profile through census 2011. According to Census 2011, the total numbers of households in kesharghar village are 937. Total population of this village is 4626, out of this 2340 are males and 2286 are females. The total geographical area of Kesharghar village is 1398.7 hectares. Purulia is the nearest town to Kesharghar which is approximately 26km away. The survey was conducted at individual level in Kesharghar village of purulia district and the target population was married women. The present study is an attempt to analyse the determinants of working hours choice of married women. The main informal activities of the survey areas were identified by consulting with local government bodies. Out of 120, 82 women respondents are employed in the informal sector and 38 are unemployed. We have surveyed them using a constructed questionnaire. The questions are primarily on five aspects- (i) details of women respondent (ii) labour market details of women respondent (iii) family details of the women respondent (iv) other details of women respondent's household. Table 1 gives the descriptions of those variables which are used in our econometric analysis.

Table 1: Description of variables

Variable	Description
Category	UR/SC/ST/OBC
Age	Age of the married woman respondent
Hhsize	Household size of the married women respondent
Work	Employment (informal) status of the married women respondent. We set work =1 if employed and 0 otherwise.
Work nature	Nature of the Informal work (like vegetable seller, vendor, maid, labour, tuition teacher, etc.)
Work hour	Working hour of the married women respondent.
Self-income	Self-income of the married women respondent. So, if she is unemployed then it becomes 0.
Non-self-income	Total Income of the household except the married woman respondent's income (if employed). We collect women respondent's husband income and other family members' income data separately and then we take the summation of these to find the non-labour income.
Child	Number of children in the age group less than 14 yrs.

3. Descriptive statistics

Now, we present the descriptive statistics of our sample in the Table 2 and try to analyse the basic characteristics of the relevant variables. Form the table 2 we found that mean age of married women respondents is about 33 years and

standard deviation is high which indicates that there is a deviation in terms of age. We found maximum and minimum age are 60 and 17. The average household size is 5, with the maximum of 8. The data shows not much dispersion in the household size.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of sample household

Variable	Observation	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	120	32.692	9.746	17	60
Hhsize	120	4.927	1.576	2	8
Work hour	82	5.841	1.341	2	8
Self-income	82	3860.891	1091.769	1000	7500
Non-self-income	120	7766.676	3802.771	0	22570
Work member	120	2.627	0.683	1	6
Child	120	1.543	0.817	0	3

Source: Own calculation

There are 82 married women in our sample who are employed in the informal sector works like vegetable seller, maid, labour, tuition teacher etc. The mean working hours of the employed women is 5 hours and standard deviation is not so high that means there are not so much deviation in working hours among the female workers involved in the mentioned works. Mean self-income of women labour income is near about 3861. In our data set maximum self-income of a married woman respondent is 7500 and minimum is 1000. Mean of the other family members' income is 7776 and we can't be ignoring the standard deviation here. A women doing job or not is directly depend on the other family member income. The mean of working member in households is near about 2.5. When we calculate the mean of women respondents has children it becomes near about 1.5. In our sample we take all the married women as our respondent but some women not having any child at that moment for this reason mean is not so high. During our survey we asked the married women respondent regarding their category status. We found all types of social category say General (25), ST (20), SC (30) and OBC (45).

4. Methodology and econometrics analysis

This model is dedicated to the analysis of working hour decision of the Married Women in Informal Sector. We are mainly interested to investigate the issue of working hours of the employed women so

$$WORKHOUR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AGE + \beta_2 LABINCOME + \beta_3 NONLABINCOME + \beta_4 CHILD + \alpha_2 D2 + \alpha_3 D3 + \alpha_4 D4 + \alpha_5 D5 + u$$

D2 = 1, if the woman works as domestic help, 0 otherwise
 D3 = 1, if the woman works as labour in the construction activities, 0 otherwise
 D4 = 1, if the woman works as vegetable seller, 0 otherwise
 D5 = 1, if the woman works in the shops as casual worker, 0 otherwise.

Hence, controlling all the regressors age, SELF INCOME, non SELF INCOME and child,

- The average working hours of a woman in the domestic work is given by

$$E(workhour|D2 = 1, D3 = 0, D4 = 0, D5 = 0) = (\beta_0 + \alpha_2) + \beta_1 age + \beta_2 labincome + \beta_3 nonlabincome + \beta_4 child$$

- The average working hours of a woman working as labour in the construction activities is given by

$$E(workhour|D2 = 0, D3 = 1, D4 = 0, D5 = 0) = (\beta_0 + \alpha_3) + \beta_1 age + \beta_2 labincome + \beta_3 nonlabincome + \beta_4 child$$

- The average working hours of a woman working as a vegetable seller is given by

$$E(workhour|D2 = 0, D3 = 0, D4 = 1, D5 = 0) = (\beta_0 + \alpha_4) + \beta_1 age + \beta_2 labincome + \beta_3 nonlabincome + \beta_4 child$$

- The average working hours of a woman in the shops as casual worker is given by

$$E(workhour|D2 = 0, D3 = 0, D4 = 0, D5 = 1) = (\beta_0 + \alpha_5) + \beta_1 age + \beta_2 labincome + \beta_3 nonlabincome + \beta_4 child$$

- The average working hours of a woman working as an agricultural labour worker is given by

$$E(workhour|D2 = 0, D3 = 0, D4 = 0, D5 = 0) = (\beta_0 + \beta_1 age + \beta_2 labincome + \beta_3 nonlabincome + \beta_4 child)$$

This implies the slope coefficients $\alpha_2, \alpha_3, \alpha_4, \alpha_5$ tell, *ceteris paribus*, by what extent the mean working hours of the women working as domestic-help, labour, vegetable seller and shop-worker differ from the mean working hour of the women working as agriculture labour respectively.

To analyse employed married women's working hour we use multiple regression model, our results are given below in our Table3.

Table 3: Determination of working hours of married women in informal sector

Dependant variable-work hour	Coef.	t
Self-income	.003765	2.89
Age	.0038111	0.18
Non-self-income	-.0000181	-0.44
Child	.0097169	0.04
D2	-.469706	-1.37
D3	1.104845	2.29
D4	-.0702636	-0.12
D5	1.834144	3.26
Constant	5.631736	4.72

Source: Own calculation

In our model R² and adjusted R² are quite high near about 70% and 68% that indicates goodness of fit very high. From our result (Table 5) we found that wage income (SELF INCOME) has a significant and positive impact on working hours. Since the coefficient of labour income is positive that implies labour supply curve is not backward bending - as working hour increases labour income also increases. The regression results show the average working hour of women involved in agriculture (labour) is about 5.6 hours, whereas that of women in construction-labour category is higher by nearly 1.10 hours, and that of women working as a domestic help is around 50 minutes lower. However, the differences in the average working hours (from the mean working hour of women involved in agriculture as labour) are not significant for the women working as domestic-help and vegetable-seller. The women working as labour in the construction activities and working in shops as representatives (assistant) have average working hours, which are significantly different from the mean working hour of women involved in agriculture as labour and they (former two) have average working hours of around 7 hours each.

5. Conclusion

Present statistics of women labour force motivate us to analyse the determinants of working hours choice of married women informal sector. So we select Keshargarh village as our survey area. We surveyed 120 married women and out of them 82 married women respondents are employed in informal sector. We found all types of social category in

Keshargarh village. Most of the employed married women of this village are depends on agriculture and labour Working as their main source of income. Some of women respondents are joint with maid, vegetable seller, tuition teacher etc. In case married women labour supply curve is not backward bending which shows a direct relation between working hour and labour income. Working Hours of Married Women in Informal Sector is depends upon two determination namely labour income and work nature. The average working hour of women involved in agriculture (labour) is about 5.6 hours, whereas that of women in construction-labour category is higher, and that of women working as a domestic help is lower. However, the differences in the average working hours (from the mean working hour of women involved in agriculture as labour) are not significant for the women working as domestic-help and vegetable-seller are significantly different from the mean working hour of women involved in agriculture as labour for the women working as labour in the construction activities and working in shops as representatives.

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