

# Driving Diversity: Nudging Towards Gender Balance in India's Workforce

**Monika Jain**

*Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH), India*

**Abstract.** In India, despite significant strides in economic development and social progress, women continue to face substantial barriers to their participation in the labour force. Numerous factors contribute to this disparity, including cultural norms and societal expectations that prioritize women's roles within the household over formal employment. Additionally, structural challenges such as limited access to education and vocational training, inadequate childcare support systems, and gender-based discrimination in the workplace further hinder women's entry and advancement in the labour market. These barriers result in a pronounced gender gap in labour force participation rates, with women significantly underrepresented in various sectors of the economy. The case focuses on how government and organizations can employ nudging for promoting gender equality in developing economies like India. When organisations emphasise gender equality and actively engage in efforts to cultivate an inclusive and varied workplace, they can obtain competitive advantages from having a greater diversity of skilled individuals who can contribute to economic expansion.

**Keywords:** gender inequality, female infanticide, organisation behavior, workplace.

## 1. Background

India established its first school for girls in 1848 when Savitribai Phule and her husband Jyotirao Phule opened one of the earliest schools in India exclusively for female students. It may seem that 175 years would be plenty of time for India to transition from its initial acceptance of the first female school to achieving gender parity in the labour force. However, regrettably, that is still not the case in 2023. As India overtook China to become the world's most populated country, an estimated 670 million women have been left behind. The number of Indian women in the labour market has declined for years, already ranking India among the 20 lowest globally. If India's projected 670 million women are left behind as its population grows, it will significantly threaten the country's economic objectives.

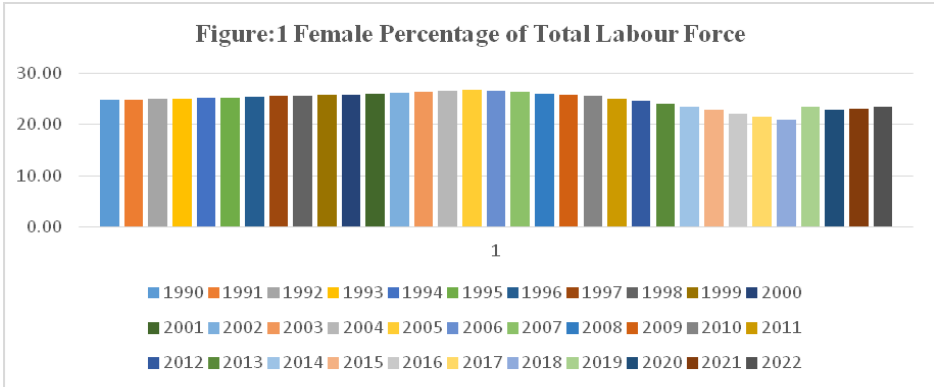
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*Any enquiries, please contact the Publishing Editor, Peter Neilson [pneilson@neilsonjournals.com](mailto:pneilson@neilsonjournals.com)*

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Source: World Bank

According to the World Bank, while the Indian economy has grown more than tenfold since 1990, the proportion of women in the workforce has declined from 30% in 1990 to 19% in 2021. The reduction was particularly significant during the past 15 years when female workforce participation dropped from 32% in 2005 to 19% in 2021 (see Figure 1). It slightly increased to 24% in 2022. Also, in 2022, the proportion of female representation in the national parliament of India amounted to 14.9%, and the proportion of women employed in senior and middle management positions amounted to 16.2%. According to the Global Gender Gap Index report of 2022, India was ranked 135th out of 146 countries by the World Economic Forum (WEF). India was even ranked lower than its smaller neighbouring countries, including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal, as evident in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1: Comparison of Labour Force Participation Rate for the year 2022

S No	Countries	Labour Force Participation rate (2022)
1	United States	56
2	United Kingdom	59
3	United States of Emirates	55
4	Singapore	63
4	Saudi Arabia	28
6	China	61
7	Canada	61
8	Brazil	54
9	Indonesia	54
10	South Korea	70
11	Phillipenes	46
12	Bangladesh	38
13	Srilanka	33