

The Role of Education in Mitigating Wage Inequality and Enhancing Female Labor Force Participation

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Abstract: This study examines the role of education in addressing wage inequality and promoting female labor force participation. It establishes the fact that education is a key determinant in reducing wage disparities and enhancing women's economic empowerment. The paper reviews empirical studies that demonstrate higher educational attainment correlates with increased earnings although wage inequality persists across demographic groups. It also explores how education supports female labor market participation, noting from the evidence that better education provisions lead to the employment of more women. It also identifies the interplay between education and cultural norms on gender roles, indicating that policy making through education can modify attitudes to improve gender sensitivities. The need for focused educational policies that improve access and, at the same time, enhance education quality as a catalyst for economic growth and social equity was emphasized in the study.

Keywords: Economic empowerment, Education, Educational policies, Female labour force participation, Gender roles, Wage inequality.

I. INTRODUCTION

Issues of "wage inequality and female labor force participation" are at the main issue of contemporary labor economics, impacting economic growth and social equity. Education has thus proved to be an important determinant in addressing the problems while catalyzing the reduction of wage disparities and women's participation in the workforce. This introduction examines the multilateral role that education plays in reducing wage inequality and encouraging women to take part in labor force activity, based on empirical studies and theoretical frameworks.

- *Education and Wage Inequality*

Education has a significant effect on wage structures, and higher education attainment generally increases earnings, although

wage inequality persists among different demographic groups. For example, Tansel and Bodur (2012) [1] employed a quantile regression approach to analyze in Turkey the wage inequality and returns on education. They showed that education plays an important role in generating wage disparities at different points of the wage distribution.

Wage inequality and informality in Mexico, indicating that educational attainment influences wage distribution, especially in informal areas (Binelli, 2016) [2]. The heterogeneity of the gender wage gap in the United States, citing the importance of understanding these impacts varying with education on wage disparities in various groups (Chernozhukov and Spindler, 2018) [3].

Their implication is that education policies ought to be calibrated towards certain types of inequalities in the labor market.

- *Education and Female Labor Force Participation*

There is extensive evidence relating education to female labor force participation. Better education for women increases labor market participation. According to Jayachandran (2015) [4], to explain the origin of gender-based inequality in developing nations, education has been essential in expanding women's economic empowerment. to identify determinants the participation of female force and labor, shedding light on the importance of education in enabling women to go to work (Cabegin and Gaddi, 2019) [5].

The access to preschool education and its effect on female labor force participation. They found that increased accessibility of early childhood education facilities enables mothers to participate in paid employment, thereby bringing indirect impacts of education to labor force dynamics (Halim *et al.*, 2019) [6].

- *Education, Cultural Norms, and Gender Roles*

Education not only teaches a person how to do things, but also forms cultural beliefs and gender roles, which are crucial in helping the individual perform within the labor market. Fernández, Fogli, and Olivetti (2004) [7] studied intergenerational gender role transmission and found that

maternal employment influences sons' preferences, thereby influencing their spouses' labor force participation. This shows the role of education in making societal attitudes toward gender and work change.

The inclusion of gender equality into the national curriculum, their results, indeed, demonstrate that education with a gender equality theme leads to an increase in female labor market participation and molds social norms more towards gender equality roles (Galindo-Silva and Herrera-Idárraga, 2023) [8].

- *Policy-making Implications*

The evidence, therefore, reveals that the prospects of educational policies aimed at lowering wage inequality and enhancing female participation in the labor force are best influenced by both direct and indirect effects of education. Investments should focus more on both increasing accessibility as well as quality plus relevance to labor market needs. Educational curricula that challenge myths of traditional gender norms can play a significant role in changing societal attitudes and promoting the inclusion of gender equality in the workforce.

In conclusion, education plays an essential role in wage inequality and female labor force participation. Education empowers people with skills and progressive cultural trends—this makes room for a better distribution of labor. Policymakers must understand the complex roles of education and use strategies that provide space to exploit such power towards social and economic development.

Study purpose is to check the role of education to reduce “wage inequality and promote female labor force participation”. The paper attempts to investigate the access of education towards workforce engagement in regional, and assess “the relationship between educational attainment and wage disparities of women”, evaluating the impact of skill development and vocational training in enhancing female workforce and reducing the wage gap. That is, in understanding these dynamics, the study aims to inform policies that leverage education as a tool for promoting gender equality and economic empowerment.

The paper has seven parts. Section I has paper presentation and in Section II, a previous study on the “The Role of Education in Mitigating Wage Inequality and Enhancing Female Labor Force Participation”. Section III Objectives of the Study. Section IV has examined the methodology, including objectives, data collection, tools and techniques. The findings have been detailed in Section V. It has been succeeded by a discussion of the results in Section VI. Conclusions is in Section VII followed with references in the last.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Silva *et al.* (2024) [9] showed the global and continental impact of the “Human Development Index and the Tertiary School Enrollment Rate of Females non Female Labour Force Participation”. Data was collected from sixty countries between 2000 and 2020. These countries were spread across nine

continents: “Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America”. For the purpose of country-level analysis of the effects, “Multiple Linear regression model” was utilized, and “Panel regression model” was adopted to examine the effects at areas. HDI and TSEF are two influential factors affecting FLPR, which is discovered by the research. Considering the nature of the chosen country, it has been found that FLPR for each variable differs in their nation-specific results when examined. The findings will benefit policymakers because they provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of HDI and TSEF on FLPR. This understanding will inform the development of updated strategies to increase women's employment and, by extension, economic growth. The HDI and TSEF variables were the primary focus of the investigation because they have never been used together in prior research on FLPR.

Klasen *et al.* (2021) [10] examined the micro-level factors influencing the labor force membership of urban married women in eleven middle-income and lower-income countries: “Bolivia, the Philippines, India, the nation of Indonesia, Jordan, South Africa, Tanzania, and Vietnam”. To comprehend the factors influencing variations in civic engagement during the early 2000s, we develop a cohesive empirical methodology that facilitated comparative analysis across temporal and spatial dimensions. The returns associated with the unique features of women as well as their families vary significantly among nations, accounting for the majority of the disparities in participation rates between countries. The materials as well as institutional limits influencing women's labor force participation are predominantly specific to each country. Nevertheless, increasing educational attainment and decreasing fertility rates consistently enhanced participation rates, whereas rising family incomes adversely affected involvement in relatively impoverished nations, indicating that a significant proportion of women engage in labor due to economic need.

uz Zaman *et al.* (2021) [11] stated the “relationship among education spending, female employment, renewable energy usage, and CO₂ emissions in China”. Study utilized a comprehensive dataset including 25 years between 1991 to 2015; the data source utilized is the World Bank. Various econometric methodologies, including “We have used ADF, P.P., Bound test, ARDL, and fully FMOLS to get our empirical results”. The test indicates a long-term link among the examined variables. The study indicated education spending, female employment, and renewable energy usage are negatively correlated with “CO₂ ignition. The findings suggested that augmenting educational investment; the rising proportion of female companies, China may reduce its CO₂ ignition in the short and long term by increasing the proportion of its energy consumption that comes from renewable sources. The “FMOLS method” has been utilized in the study. This report offers significant suggestions for policy aimed at mitigating greenhouse gas emissions in the interests of the planet.

A. Aldan (2021) [12] investigated the correlation between female participation in employment and gender salary disparities utilized geographic information from Turkey. The workforce

engagement of women in Turkey considerably trails that of developed nations; however, it is on the rise. The raw gender wage disparity is quite low by international standards, although it was nevertheless on the rise. Study employed regional variation to examine the relationship amongst female labor force participation along with salary disparities in two phases. Initially, study calculate the unreported wage disparity, which excludes gender variations in productivity attributes for every state and year from 2009 to 2018, utilized Household Occupational Force Survey data. I subsequently examined the correlation including gender disparity, “female labor force participation, and other geographical variables using panel data regression”. Raw and unexplained salary inequalities are positively correlated with women’s labor force participation, according to the results. When the female employment rate increases, there is a positive link. This is because women who have less innate talents or less motivation to pursue a job join the labor field.

S. Qing (2020) [13] examined the influence of entrenched cultural norms on conventional feminist views and their effect on wage disparities among men and women, use intermediate variable alongside various causal inference methodologies to identify causal relationships. According to the 2013 Chinese Nationwide Social Survey, conventional gender role beliefs significantly adversely “impact women’s earnings, while exerting no notable influence on men’s incomes”. The study utilized “Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition” to demonstrate that varying effects of attitude toward gender roles on the salaries of men and women significantly contribute to the gender earnings difference. Moreover, gender role beliefs exert an indirect and extensive influence on gender disparities in wealth via educational attainment, participation in the labor force, hours of employment, as well as occupational position. These findings offer a novel approach for comprehending the persistence and processes of gender income inequality notwithstanding institutional equivalence and have ramifications for gender equality programs.

A. Ratho (2020) [14] stated that the labor force involvement rate of women in India is markedly inferior to that of men, and within the female demographic, urban women’s job opportunities significantly lower than those of rural women. Utilized the results obtained to 2018. “(PLFS) published in 2019, offers an assessment of the current status of female labour force participation in metropolitan India”. It examined data on vocational schooling and job placement, schooling and job hunting, rural versus urban employment, and employment among socioeconomic groupings. The brief proposes measures to halt the decrease in urban women’s participation in the labor. It delineated the methods by which the skilling, education, and labor departments can collaborate to equip the workforce with skills appropriate to their educational qualifications, while also broadening the sectors in which trained and educated individuals may find employment.

S. Klasen (2019) [19] noted that the swift fall in childbearing rates, significant growth in female education, and advantageous

economic conditions ought to have facilitated increased “female labor force participation in countries” that were developing. “Trends in female labor force participation rates” have exhibited significant heterogeneity, with substantial increases in “Latin America, stagnation in most other regions, modest gains in the Middle East, and a decline in South Asia”. These tendencies contradict secular ideas like the feminization U hypothesis, indicated a complex interaction of beginning circumstances, monetary system changes in structure, and endured gender standards and beliefs. Study saw that disparities in levels are significantly influenced by historical variations in the economic environment that continue to constrain women’s economic possibilities today. Shocks can induce significant transformations, with the introduction of communism being the most pivotal shock to woman’s labor force participation. Trends are significantly influenced by the extent to which women’s role in the workforce is contingent upon their household’s financial standing, the growth of jobs suitable for more educated women when compared to their supply, the promotion of female employment through growth strategies, and the degree to which women can dismantle job duties barriers within their most prevalent sectors.

N. Sudo (2017) [16] examined the correlation in “women’s labor force participation” and household inequality of income suggest that enhanced the former has a balancing impact on the latter; conversely, other studies argue that increasing women’s labor force participation exacerbates household income inequality due to the propensity for assortative marriage. Consequently, the correlation among women’s employment status along with household income disparity remains ambiguous in the research. The study seeks to elucidate the process by which the interplay amongst household income along with marriage generates social inequality through mathematical along with simulation-based methodologies. The findings indicate that increasing female workforce participation temporarily exacerbates household income inequality, but mitigates it over the long term. They assert that assortative marriage does not merely extend household financial inequalities, but rather exacerbates it. Ultimately, by implementing the model of that process in Japan, study analyzed alterations in household income disparity within the nation.

Bjerge et al. (2021) [17] explained that employer-sponsored training is often regarded as a crucial mechanism for closing the skills gap between the workforce and private sector requirements. There is less knowledge regarding the efficacy of such training in mitigating the male to female wage gap. Study utilized a matched employer-employee household dataset to evaluate the reasons firms provide training and the impact of formal training on pay outcomes in Vietnamese SMEs. Training is typically employer-sponsored and specialized in nature. Training correlates with increased salaries for trained women relative to both untrained women and men. Nevertheless, study not observed a statistically significant income disparity comparing trained women and men. Moreover, the salary increment is only linked to on-

the-job training. Study suggested that, at least in Vietnam, employer-sponsored on-the-job training may enhance women’s labor productivity and hence aid in narrowing the gender wage disparity.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine how access to “education impacts female labor force participation” across different regions.
- To analyse the “relationship between educational attainment and wage inequality among women in the labor force”.
- To assess the role of skill development and vocational training in reducing the gender wage gap.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Study involves a “mixed-methods approach by combining qualitative and quantitative methods to comprehensively examine the subject”. It focuses on all of India, targeting women in the workforce as the population of interest. The study

uses a purposive sampling technique to ensure the inclusion of participants most relevant to the research goals, resulting in a sample size of 150 women. Descriptive and exploratory research design-the aim here would be to describe existing patterns and, at the same time, bring new insights into the relationship between education, wage inequality, and female labor force participation. “Data collection was into both the primary and secondary sources”. “Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire” primarily designed to capture key variables such as access to education, educational attainment, wage inequality, female labor force participation rates, skill development and vocational training, and gender wage gap. Secondary data was sourced from published reports, academic studies, and government records to complement and validate the findings. To analyze the data, statistical tools like MS Excel and SPSS are employed. “Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, are used to summarize the data, while “inferential techniques like correlation and regression analysis are applied to examine the relationships among the variables”. This comprehensive methodology ensures a robust understanding of how education influences wage inequality and enhances female labor force participation in India.

V. RESULT AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE I

Sr. No.	Demographic Variables	Characteristics	N	%
1	Age	18-24 years	24	16.0
		25-31 years	18	12.0
		32-38 years	17	11.3
		39-45 years	20	13.3
		46-54 years	31	20.7
		54 & above	40	26.7
2	Marital Status	Divorced	38	25.3
		Married	59	39.3
		Single	17	11.3
		Widowed	36	24.0
3	Educational Attainment	No Formal Education	100	66.7
		Primary Education	20	13.3
		Secondary Education	30	20.0
4	Access to Education	Formal Education	23	15.3
		Non-Formal Education	71	47.3
		Vocational Training	56	37.3
5	Work Experience	1-5 years	42	28.0
		11-15 years	21	14.0
		16+ years	17	11.3
		6-10 years	28	18.7
		Less than 1 year	42	28.0

Sr. No.	Demographic Variables	Characteristics	N	%
6	Region	Rural	58	38.7
		Semi-Urban	73	48.7
		Urban	19	12.7
7	Occupation Type	Semi-skilled labor	57	38.0
		Skilled labor	19	12.7
		Unskilled labor	74	49.3

Table I, Demographic characteristics of the sample of women in the work force Aged (46-54 years and above 54 yrs) 26.7 20.7 Married Divorced Single 39.3 25.3 11.3 Table notes the age distribution, which is the largest population from 54 years and above - 26.7% was recorded, followed by the 46-54-year age group, 20.7%. Nearly all respondents were either married with 39.3%, or divorced at 25.3%, while 11.3% were single. More than half do not possess formal education (66.7%), and the most significant segment receives non-formal education (47.3%), followed by individuals who have received vocational training (37.3%). The workforce is relatively young with 28% having less than one year experience or 1-5 years of experience. It primarily hails from semi-urban backgrounds, accounting for 48.7%, followed by rural ones (38.7%), and lastly urban/other categories (12.7%). Most women are either unskilled labor (49.3%) or skilled/semi-skilled labor (12.7% and 38%). The profile indicates a significantly disproportionate concentration of the workforce in low-skilled positions with access to mainly formal education and limited access to job vocational training.

Objective 1: To examine how access to education impacts female labor force participation across different regions.

TABLE II: MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.162 ^a	.026	.020	4.41265

a. Predictors: (Constant), Access to education.

A regression model’s output is displayed, providing a description of the predictor’s connection with the dependent variables. The R-value of 0.162 is attributed to the simple correlation among the predictor and the dependent variables; it explains a weak positive relationship between them. As the dependent variable shows that “R Square value is 0.026,” we may deduce that “access to education explains 2.6%” of the total variation. Taking into account the sample size and the number of predictors, the adjusted R Square value is 0.020, which is significantly lower and further confirms that the model has extremely little explanatory power. These values indicate that, although access to education may have little effect, other

factors probably have a larger influence on the determinant variable.

TABLE III: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	77.616	1	77.616	3.986	.048 ^b
	Residual	2881.778	148	19.471		
	Total	2959.393	149			

a. D V: Female Labor Force Participation Rate.
b. Predictors: Access to education.

This ANOVA table tests the significance of the regression model explaining Female Labor Force Participation Rate by access to education. The regression explains a negligible fraction of total variance. Its Sum of Squares is just 77.616, contrasting with residual variance as high as 2881.778. Total variance in the dependent variable is 2959.393. Having 1 df for the predictor and 148 df for the residuals, Mean Square for Regression is 77.616, and Mean Square for Residual is 19.471. The regression model does explain some variance, but its overall explanatory power seems to be very low, as is consistent with the low R Square of 0.026.

TABLE IV: COEFFICIENTS^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	14.218	1.211		11.737	.000
	Access to education	1.040	.521	.162	1.997	.048

a. D V: Female Labor Force Participation Rate.

A description of the correlation between educational opportunities and the percentage of women in the labor force may be found in the table of coefficients. Assuming no change in educational opportunities, the expected rate of female labor

force participation (the constant, or intercept) is 14.218. A female labor force participation rate increase of one unit is represented by the unstandardized coefficient for access to education, which is 1.040. Beta, the standardized coefficient, is 0.162, suggesting a very tenuous positive correlation. The effect size is small, but the association is statistically significant at the 5% level (t-value: 1.997, p-value: .048).

Objective 2: To analyse the relationship between educational attainment and wage inequality among women in the labor force.

TABLE V: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Educational Attainment	1.5333	.80824	150
Wage Inequality	14.4467	3.19298	150

The summary of the data of the independent variable, Access to Education, as well as the dependent variable, “Female Labor Force Participation Rate”, is conducted based on a sample size of 150 observations. There is moderate variance in educational access in the sample, as indicated by the mean value of 1.5333 and standard deviation of 0.80824 for Access to Education. With a mean of 14.4467 and a standard deviation of 3.19298, the female labor force participation rate is rather constant and shows little variation. These values contextualize understanding the range and distribution of the data used in the regression analysis.

TABLE VI: CORRELATIONS

		Educational Attainment	Wage Inequality
Educational Attainment	Pearson Correlation	1	-.176*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.031
	N	150	150
Wage Inequality	Pearson Correlation	-.176*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	
	N	150	150

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

It delves at the correlation between level of education and wage disparity. Two variables are extremely weakly correlated with each other, with a Pearson Correlation value of -0.176. This suggests that there is less of a disparity in pay between those with greater levels of education. Statistical significance is established at the 0.05 level with a p-value (Sig.) of 0.031; so,

the observed connection cannot be attributed to chance alone. There are 150 data points for both the variables, so this analysis will have a strong basis. The weak correlation notwithstanding, because it is statistically significant, other factors may also be at play in determining wage inequality.

Objective 3: To assess the “role of skill development and vocational training” in reducing the gender wage gap.

TABLE VII: MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.469 ^a	.220	.215	2.92474

a. Predictors: (Constant), Skill Development and Vocational Training.

In this model summary, the skill development and occupational training are predictor variables and how they relate to the dependent variable. Our independent variable and our dependent variable show a very slight positive link with an R-value of 0.469. The dependent variable was 22% explained by Skill Development and Vocational Training (R Squared = 0.220). With a slightly lower corrected R Squared value of 0.215 (after taking into consideration the sample size and the number of predictors), the results demonstrate consistent explanatory capacity. The standard error of the estimate shows that there is an average gap of 2.92474 between the actual and predicted values. There is still opportunity for other factors to influence these predictions, even if our system seems to be capable of making reasonable ones.

TABLE VIII: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	357.483	1	357.483	41.791	.000 ^b
	Residual	1266.011	148	8.554		
	Total	1623.493	149			

a. Dependent Variable: Gender Wage Gap.
b. Predictors: (Constant), Skill Development and Vocational Training.

With an F-value of 41.791 and a level of significance of 0.000, the ANOVA table confirms that the regression model accurately predicts the gender wage gap using the variables skill development and vocational training. Since the residual sum of squares is 1266.011 out of a total variance of 1623.493 and the sum of squares for regression is 357.483, it has succeeded in defining a portion of the overall variation. As a result, it’s clear that vocational and skill training programs significantly affect the gender wage gap.

TABLE IX: COEFFICIENTS^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	7.279	1.041		6.994	.000
Skill Development and Vocational Training	.512	.079	.469	6.465	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Gender Wage Gap.

The gender wage gap is shown to be associated with vocational training, skill development, and the coefficients table. When both skill development and vocational training are set to zero, the expected value of the gender wage gap is 7.279, which serves as the constant. The gender wage gap would widen by 0.512 units for every one unit increase in skill development and vocational training, according to an unstandardized coefficient of 0.502. A somewhat positive connection (Beta = 0.469) is produced by the standardized coefficient. The statistical significance of the link is confirmed by the t-value of 6.465 and the p-value of 0.000. Therefore, Skill Development and Vocational Training significantly affect the Gender Wage Gap.

VI. DISCUSSION

This study examines the role of education on lowering income disparity and increasing female labor force participation using empirical data and theoretical frameworks. Education boosts the skills of individuals, which may be key to better job opportunities and earnings; education tends to have a central role in dealing with the issues while having higher educational attainments often followed by increased wages although disparities still exist among various groups of people such as gender and socioeconomic status. Studies, therefore, show that the distribution of wage earnings is influenced by education. Access to higher education has been shown to reduce wage inequality, especially in developing countries.

There is also education with female labor force participation. Thus, this kind of access enhances their chances of joining the workforce. In some parts, preschool education has been found to impact women's employment positively as it enables mothers to enter the labor market. Education impacts the cultural myths and gender roles in that society and workforce by challenging traditional expectations concerning women's place. Research evidence shows that inclusion of gender equality in school curricula contributes to society's transition toward greater equality in labor market participation.

The paper also pays much attention to indirect and direct education effects on gender wage gaps and the underlying causes for that gap, particularly skill acquisition and vocational

training—the core issue being that, indeed, evidence does suggest that these programs can boost women's labor productivity and help to reduce income inequality. Evidence suggests that education investments need to focus not only on increasing access but also on issues of quality, and relevance to the labor market as well as breaking traditional gender norms to foster broader social and economic development.

VII. CONCLUSION

The conclusion reiterates the key role that education can play in reducing wage inequality and improving female labor force participation. Education not only provides the skills necessary to gain better jobs but also acts as an agent of social transformation in challenging gender norms, pushing for equality in the labor market. The research proves that education does positively impact earnings and workforce participation, but there are disparities based on demographic and regional differences. Investments in education, especially in the skill-development area and vocational training, have resulted in shrinking gender wage gaps and increasing women's participation in the workforce.

Policymakers need to focus on improving access to quality education and aligning educational programs with labor market demands. Adding gender-sensitive curricula further can also help in promoting progressive cultural attitudes for women's economic empowerment. Education policies can thus be targeted to reduce wage disparity and promote a more equal distribution of benefits from economic growth by directly and indirectly promoting increased skills and changed societal perceptions. On the whole, education comes out as being critically instrumental for attaining greater equity and sustainability in labour market dynamics.

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