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## Employment Trend of Scheduled Caste Women in Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Sector of Kolhapur District

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### Abstract

*Scheduled Caste women are considered to be the most backward group; they face discrimination at various levels of society. Participation in employment is a very important factor for the social and economic advancement of these women. The present study has analyzed the participation rate of Scheduled Caste women in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in Kolhapur district. This shows their perspective and tendency towards employment. This study is based on secondary data and for this, the 2001 and 2011 Kolhapur district census reports have been used. The changes in employment have been reviewed by calculating the Work Participation Rate (WPR) of women. The conclusion shows that there has been an increase in the population of these women between 2001 and 2011, but there has been a decrease in employment. The WPR has declined from 37.21% to 30.08%. The labor participation rate in the agricultural sector has declined from 28.51% in 2001 to 20.69% in 2011, while the employment participation rate in the non-agricultural sector has increased by 0.7%. This shows that the employment trend of women is increasing in the non-agricultural sector. Their employment has declined in this decade. Factors such as social norms and traditions force them to forego employment opportunities. This is why the labor participation of these women in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors is declining. As a solution to this, measures such as increasing their skills and employment-oriented education are needed.*

**Keywords:** Work Participation Rate (WPR), Scheduled caste women, Agriculture and Non-Agriculture sector, Employment etc.

### Introduction

The Scheduled Castes are the most deprived and socially and economically backward section of Indian society. (Bullard E. C., 2025) Women from Scheduled Castes face more discrimination than other women. In addition to caste discrimination, there is also double discrimination based on gender inequality. (Asad Islam, 2021) Considering the rural areas, the Scheduled Castes are mainly affected by low level of education, social restrictions, limited availability of resources required for employment and inability to do business due to lack of training. The role of women from these castes is considered important. To improve the socio-economic status of women, it is necessary to know about the current employment status of these women. It is necessary to study how their perspective towards employment is or how employment has changed over time.

In Kolhapur district of Maharashtra, agriculture and industrial sectors are mainly considered. People from Scheduled Castes in this district are seen working in agriculture and non-agricultural sectors. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in rural areas. Modern developments such as mechanization in the 21st century have seen a large portion of the population moving to urban areas, resulting in an increase in the employment period of people from the agricultural sector to the non-agricultural sector. (Asmina Herawaty Sinaga, 2020)

It is important to know the employment outlook, employment trends and employment patterns of Scheduled Caste women. The number of these communities is found to be higher in rural areas. It is useful to know the changes in the rural economy and its impact on this community as well as to assess the participation of Scheduled Caste women in employment,

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mainly in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. In this study, an attempt has been made to examine the changes in the employment patterns of Scheduled Caste women in Kolhapur district.

#### **Objectives:**

1. To study the participation rate of Scheduled Caste women in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in Kolhapur district based on the 2001 and 2011 census data.
2. To analyse the changes in the occupational structure of women and the changes in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

#### **Review of the Literature:**

**1) Chinmayee Mohanty (2023)** in her study "Employment Status of SC and ST Women in India" describes the employment status of women from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For decades, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have faced social exclusion and discrimination in various opportunities due to their position in society. Caste barriers also limit access to employment opportunities. In addition, women from this community are considered inferior to men. This study uses the PLFS (Periodic Labor Force Survey) report from 2017 to 2021 to study the employment status of women from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It is found that gender inequality was found in these castes and schedules. The participation of men and women from these groups in employment is limited. This research analyses some programs for the relevant groups, mainly for disadvantaged women.

**2) P. Hanumantha Rayappa, Deepak Grover (1979)** "Employment Planning for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes" This paper reviews the problems of employment and unemployment among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, a group considered weak in the society, their current living conditions, and the efforts made by the government for this. Illiteracy, economic backwardness, increase in debt, poverty, social restrictions are found among the people in rural areas. This study shows that these problems are found strongly only among the Scheduled Castes. This study is not only done at the national level but also at the state and local levels. The largest population of this caste is engaged in the agricultural sector for employment. The population of this caste is found in a scattered form. While determining policies, it is necessary to make efforts based on detailed information rather than taking temporary measures regarding living conditions and employment.

**3) Kashmiri Saikia, Madhusmita Konwar (2023),** "Dalit Women and Economic Marginalization: The Role of Labor and Exploitation" This current study analyzes the current working conditions and exploitation of

Dalit women in employment and attempts to identify the reasons behind their economic deprivation. Dalit women face discrimination due to many factors. This study studies their social, economic, political and cultural factors. And examines the factors that contribute to their exploitation. Caste, gender and group oppression have a profound impact on the economic condition of Dalit women. Despite legal reforms to address these inequalities, they continue to face these difficulties. This is an attempt to study caste, gender inequality and exploitation in employment of Dalit women in India from a comprehensive perspective.

**4) Amrita Datta, Tanuka Endow, Balwant Singh Mehta (2020),** "Education, Caste and Women's Work in India" The present study examines the work participation rate and employment patterns of women based on education and caste based on PLFS (Periodic Labor Force Survey) 2017-18. The focus is particularly on highly educated women. The work participation rate (WPR) of women varies according to caste. The WPR is lowest among upper castes and increases as one goes down the caste ladder. Women from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are more likely to be employed in the public sector because they have access to opportunities due to reservation. The employment participation rate of women suggests that despite higher education, there is still a gap between social groups.

#### **Methodology**

The present study is completely based on secondary sources. The secondary material has been collected using the Census of India report, Kolhapur District Census Handbook 2001, 2011 and Employment Office Statistics 2023 Annual Report. Microsoft Excel has been used for the analysis of the study.

#### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The number of Scheduled Castes is quite visible in Kolhapur district. This number is more in rural areas. It is necessary to shed light on what is the current situation regarding the employment of women from Scheduled Castes or in which employment these women are more involved. An attempt was made to find out the changes in employment using secondary data using the 2001 and 2011 census reports. Women from this caste are seen to be employed in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. Employment is an important factor for the development of these women, to gain a place in society and to make them self-reliant. The present study has tried to provide information on how the role of women in employment is changing and the changes in employment i.e. increase or decrease from 2001 to 2011.

### Work Participation Rate (WPR) of SC Women in Kolhapur District

Year	Total SC Women Population	SC Women Worker		Total Workers	WPR (%)
		Main	Marginal		
	2001	2011	2011	2001	2011
2001	221563	59763	22683	82446	37.21
2011	251071	59814	15714	75528	30.08

**Source:** District Census Handbook, Kolhapur. 2001-2011 Series-28, Part XII-B.

Table 1 shows the Workforce Participation Rate (WPR) of Scheduled Caste women in Kolhapur district. According to the data of 2001 and 2011, there has been an increase in the number of women. Workers are divided into main and marginal. But it is seen that there has been no

increase in employment as per the population. There has been a decrease in the number of workers. The workforce participation rate in 2001 was 37.21% while in 2011 the workforce participation rate was 30.08%. That is, there has been a decrease of about 7.13%.

Table 2: Work Participation Rate of SC Women in Agriculture Sector			
Year	Work Category	SC Women Worker (Main + Marginal)	WPR (%)
2001	Cultivators	18219	8.22
	Agricultural Labourers	44966	20.29
	Total	63185	28.51
2011	Cultivators	16673	6.64
	Agricultural Labourers	35267	14.05
	Total	51940	20.69

**Source:** District Census Handbook, Kolhapur. 2001-2011 Series-28, Part XII-B.

Table 2 shows the Work participation rate of Scheduled Caste women in the agricultural sector. The division into cultivators and farm labourers is seen. Comparing 2001 and 2011, there is a decrease in the number of workers in the agricultural sector and the Work participation rate.

In 2001, a total of 63185 women workers were working in the agricultural sector, while in 2011, 51940 women were working. There has been a decrease of about 11245 women workers. When considering WPR, a decrease of 7.82% is seen in these 10 years.

Table 3: Work Participation Rate of SC Women in Non-Agriculture Sector			
Year	Work Category	SC Women Worker (Main + Marginal)	WPR (%)
2001	Household Industry	3673	1.66
	Other Workers	15588	7.04
	Total	19261	8.69
2011	Household Industry	3077	1.23
	Other Workers	20511	8.17
	Total	23588	9.39

**Source:** District Census Handbook, Kolhapur. 2001-2011 Series-28, Part XII-B.

Table 3 shows the non-agricultural work participation rate of women belonging to Scheduled Castes. The non-agricultural sector includes Household Industry and other workers. In 2001, a total of 19261 women were working in the non-agricultural sector and 23588 women were working in the non-agricultural sector in 2011. This means

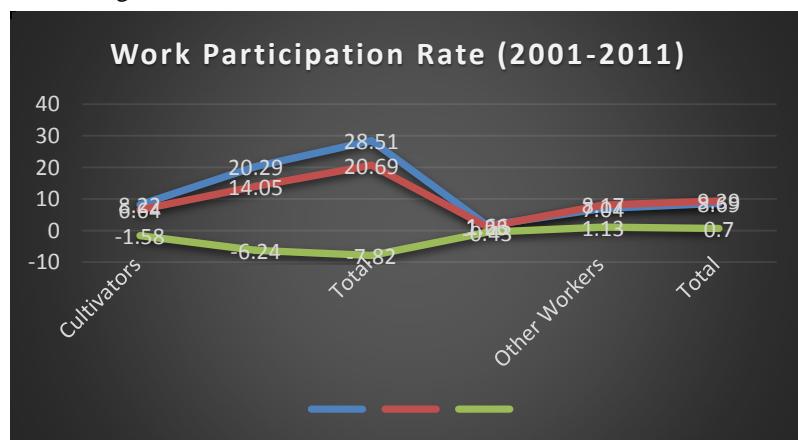
that the number of women workers in the non-agricultural sector has increased. In terms of WPR, it was 8.69% in 2001 and 9.39% in 2011. This means that the non-agricultural work participation rate (WPR) has increased by 0.7% during the period 2001 to 2011.

Table 4: Comparison of WPR (%) in Agriculture and Non-Agriculture Sector				
Sectors	Work Category	WPR (%)		Gap/Change (%)
		2001	2011	
Agriculture	Cultivators	8.22	6.64	-1.58
	Agricultural Labourers	20.29	14.05	-6.24
	Total	28.51	20.69	-7.82
Non-Agriculture	Household Industry	1.66	1.23	-0.43
	Other Workers	7.04	8.17	+1.13
	Total	8.69	9.39	+0.7

**Source:** District Census Handbook, Kolhapur. 2001-2011 Series-28, Part XII-B.

Table 4 presents a comparative study of the work participation rate of Scheduled Caste women in agriculture and non-agriculture. This table reviews the increase or decrease in the participation rate of workers in both sectors. Considering 2001 and 2011, there is a decrease of -1.58% in WPR in cultivator. While there is a decrease of -6.24% in Agricultural Labourers.

Overall, there was a decrease of -7.82% in the total agricultural sector in 2011 compared to 2001. In the non-agriculture sector, there was a decrease of -0.43% in Household Industry in 2011 and an increase of +1.13% in other workers. Overall, there was an increase of +0.7% in the non-agriculture sector.



A study of the work participation rate revealed that there was a change in the overall work rate between 2001 and 2011. There was a decline in work participation in 2011 compared to 2001. However, the increase in the non-agricultural sector is nominal.

There are many factors that contribute to the low employment participation rate of women. These include their social and economic factors. Factors such as education, fertility rate, age at marriage, urbanization affect their participation rate. Along with this, social norms and traditions also limit their employment. Along with this, their work participation rate is decreasing due to major factors such as lack of job opportunities, increase in household income and educational enrollment. (Chaudhari, 2014)

### Conclusion

While studying the work participation rate of scheduled caste women in Kolhapur district, it was found that the work participation rate of women is decreasing. After studying the census reports of 2001 and 2011, it is clear that the

population of Scheduled Castes in Kolhapur district has increased, but there has been no increase in employment to the same extent. Their work participation rate has decreased from 37.21% to 30.08% in 2001 and 2011. Their participation rate in the agricultural sector has decreased and in the non-agricultural sector it has increased slightly, i.e. by 0.7%. That is, it can be said that the employment trend of these women is now towards the non-agricultural sector, the reason for this is the increase in education. There has been no increase in employment opportunities according to the population. Even today, social and economic factors are becoming obstacles in the employment of Scheduled Caste women. Due to factors like social norms and traditions, they have to give up many opportunities, hence concrete policies are needed to increase the labor participation rate of these women in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. It is necessary to increase employment opportunities for their all-round development. Women's development can be achieved through skill development or training through various schemes, encouragement and

empowerment for employment and participation in industry.

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### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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