

Q. A comprehensive approach is the need of the hour to reverse the declining trend of female labour force participation in India. Analyse. (200 words)

A. India's female labour force participation rate ^(FLPS) has declined in recent years, for a multitude of reasons -

shrinking of agricultural labour requirements with growing mechanisation, social attitudes, that equate prosperity to women not having to work, and more.

This requires a multidimensional approach:

(to increase FLPS)

1. Social -

- We must popularise the viewpoint that there is 'dignity in labour' and that women should work.
- Replace patriarchal norms in the workplace, with modern attitudes - in recruitment, in assigning tasks and in letting go of employees. These ^{gendered} norms should be a part of stated company policy.
- Through education, men and women must be taught to cherish the constitutional values of equality and non-discrimination.

2. Political

- Whether in the workplace or in the government, strong female leaders at the top levels will encourage young girls to dream big. It will also make policies and programmes gender inclusive.
- Women and inconvenience - Whether it is the implementation of the Maternity Benefit Act or the extension of social security schemes to gig workers or equal pay for equal work, creating amenities for employees should be standard practice in all workplaces, not an inconvenience.

3. Economic and Infrastructure

- SHGs such as SEWA and Kudumbasree can help absorb women into the economic fold, especially in the cottage industry.
- Workplaces should be flexible in their demands on people's 'time' and should limit their demands to getting work done.
- Safe transport, child care centres, accessible and friendly workplaces as well as guidance and education can go a long way.

Women's participation in the economy is not just a matter of GDP gains, but also a question of facilitating half the population to use their creative faculties to grow and enjoy the world.