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## LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS OF KERALA: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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**ABSTRACT**

Most of the studies used female economic power and control over resources as a proxy for the status of women. It has been argued that labour force participation enhanced woman's domestic autonomy by giving them independent source of income. Economic independence in turn leads to greater sense of personal autonomy and improves their capacity to exercise control in shaping their own destiny. Kerala a southern state of India, which has historically displayed egalitarian gender development indicators but shows noticeable gender difference in labour market outcomes, brings out an important research question. Though, female economic participation is a leading issue at present day gender studies in Kerala, there is no such study analyzed the change in the profile of female labour market which is relevant for proper labour market strategies. Present study tries to fill this gap. Study uses NSS 55<sup>th</sup>, and 61<sup>st</sup> round quinquennial survey unit level data and 64<sup>th</sup> round employment unemployment report. Migration Monitoring data also used for the analysis. It is found that the structure of Kerala's female labour market is changing slowly in favor of educated and the government sponsored women empowerment strategies are not seems to create sufficient positive influence on labour supply.

**KEYWORDS**

Female labour Market, Gender Economics, Kerala, Structural change, Women empowerment.

**INTRODUCTION**

Female economic power and control over resources are considered to be a proxy for their status. (U.N. 1975). It has been argued that labour force participation enhanced woman's domestic autonomy by giving them independent source of income. Economic independence in turn leads to greater sense of personal autonomy and improves their capacity to exercise control in shaping their own destiny (Cain, Syeda and Shamsun 1979). Though, female economic participation is a leading issue at present day gender studies in Kerala, there is no such study analyzed the change in the profile of female labour market which is relevant for proper labour market strategies. Present study tries to fill this gap. Study uses NSS 55<sup>th</sup>, and 61<sup>st</sup> round quinquennial survey unit level data and 64<sup>th</sup> round thin survey report along with Migration Monitoring data for the analysis. The study is basically an empirical one.

Historically Kerala, the south-western region of India, has been quite different from the rest of the country in terms of the indicators of women's development. Kerala has a favourable sex ratio of 1084 in 2011. This should be compared to the all India figures, which stood at 940 (Census India, 2011). The 2001 census reflects that Kerala is the only Indian State where the sex ratio is above one and it is worth mentioning that Kerala has never had a female-male ratio below unity at any time in the century (Kerala Economic Review, 2009, p.429). Similarly in terms of literacy, life expectancy, and mean age at marriage, women in Kerala score higher than any other state in the country. Human Development Index (HDI), Gender Equality Index (GEI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) Kerala stands first (ibid, p.432). Similarly Kerala has the lowest total fertility rate and lowest percentage of women with anemia. Kerala's maternal mortality rate is also much lower than the all India average. But the economic and political participation of women, the most important dependent variable affecting gender relations at the household level and society, is very low. Hence women empowerment strategies basically should address the labour market issues in Kerala. Proper labour market strategies can be adopted only with the help of proper labour market information. The present study tries to unveil the change in the structure of female labour market in Kerala during 1999-2008 periods. The study starts with the general profile of Kerala's labour market in comparison with India and move on to a detailed analysis of female labour market.

**GENERAL PROFILE**

The profile of the labour market of Kerala in comparison with India is discussed here. This section gives the picture of the worker population ratio, labour force participation ratio, and unemployment details of Kerala in comparison with India with special emphasis on gender. The analysis is carried out for the three time periods, 1999-00, 2004-05 and 2007-08. For the years 1999-00 and 2004-05, the study uses 55<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> rounds quinquennial survey unit level data and for 2007-08 details it uses thin survey report.

**TABLE 1: LABOUR MARKET PROFILE INDIA AND KERALA (PERCENT)**

Category	India			Kerala		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
<b>1999-00</b>						
Worker Population Ratio (WPR)	36.5	52.0	20.2	33.3	52.6	15.7
Labour force participation rate	37.5	53.5	20.7	37.8	57.1	20.3
Proportion Unemployed (PU):	1.0	1.5	0.5	4.5	4.5	4.6
Unemployment Rate (UR):	2.7	2.9	2.4	12	7.9	22.5
<b>2004-05</b>						
Worker Population Ratio (WPR)	38.0	53.6	21.5	33.9	52.2	17.1
Labour force participation rate	39.2	55.1	22.4	40.8	57	25.9
Proportion Unemployed (PU):	1.2	1.5	0.9	6.9	4.8	8.7
Unemployment Rate (UR):	3.1	2.7	4.1	16.8	8.5	33.7
<b>2007-08*</b>						
Worker Population Ratio (WPR)	37.1	54.1	19.0	34.2	53.8	16.4
Labour force participation rate	38.2	55.7	19.5	37.9	57.1	20.5
Proportion Unemployed (PU)	1.1	1.6	0.5	3.7	3.3	4.1
Unemployment rate	2.87	2.87	2.56	9.76	5.77	20

Source: Computed from NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> rounds, unit level data. Thin sample report, 2007-08(NSSO)

\* Not on the basis of quinquennial survey, sample size is smaller than 55<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup>.

Worker Population Ratio (WPR) or Work Participation Ratio: Number of employed/hundred of total population

Labour force participation rate (No. of employed persons ÷ no of unemployed)/ hundred of total population

Proportion Unemployed (PU): number of unemployed/hundred of total population.

Unemployment Rate (UR): number of unemployed persons/ hundred of total labour force

## WORKER POPULATION RATIO

Considerable change in the work participation ratio is not visible both in India and Kerala for the periods 1999-00 to 2007-08. The work participation ratio slightly increased from 33.3 percent in 1999-00 to 33.9 percent in 2004-05 and again increased to 34.2 percent in 2007-08 for Kerala. In all India, male work participation ratio shows an increasing trend for all the three periods. But for Kerala, male work participation ratio was 52.6 percent in 1999-00 which declined slightly to 52.2 percent in 2004-05 and increased to 53.8 percent in 2007-08. In the case of work participation ratio of female in all India, it increased by 1.3 percent during 1999 to 2005 and later declined by 1.5 percent during 2005 - 2008 periods. In the case of Kerala, it increased from 15.7 to 17.1 during 1999-00 to 2004-05 periods and declined to 16.4 percent in 2007-08.

## LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

In 2004-05, the labour force participation rate at all India level was 39.2 percent while that of Kerala it was 40.8 percent. Among male 57 percentage of total population is in labour force in Kerala while that of India, it is only 55.1 percent. In the case of female, it is 25.9 percent in Kerala and 22.4 percent in India (table 4.1). Comparison of the labour force participation rate with the worker population ratio is an indicator towards the demand supply mismatch in labour market. Gender specific comparison shows that for the female, the worker population ratio was 17.1 while the labour force participation ratio was 25.9, that is, a gap of more than 8 percent. For male the mismatch was less than 5 percent.

Over the year, at the all India level the demand for and supply of labour shows only slight variations. This change in supply can be attributed to a corresponding increase in demand for labour during this time periods. In Indian context labour supply movements are similar to the labour demand movements (table 1).

While examining the case of Kerala, noticeable fluctuation is visible among female labour supply during the study period. The rate of labour supply in 1999-00 was 20.3 percent which increased to 25.9 percent in 2004-05, a considerable increase of 5.6 percent. Meanwhile the increase in demand (worker population ratio) for the same period was only 1.4 percent. In 2007-08, labour force participation rate of female reduced by 5.4 percent, while worker population ratio reduced by 0.7 percent. This shows that in Kerala during the time period of the study, some external forces must have influenced the female labour supply. (table.1). Migration monitoring survey data also support the findings emerged from NSSO data, that the change in female labour supply was not in accordance with a change in labour demand during 1998-2007 period(table.2). This may be due to the impact of women empowerment programme, Kudumbashree<sup>1</sup>, an important movement which influenced female labour market. Being a women empowerment programme, the main focus was to increase the willingness among the women to join in labour force through setting up of micro enterprises. This may be an influencing factor that has increased the labour force participation among women. But the programme failed to create corresponding increase in employment opportunities, the unemployment increased. Increased labour supply, not able to find a job in labour market went back to their original place as non-economic work during 2007 (discouraged worker effect<sup>2</sup>). The male labour force participation remained more or less the same during the study period.

TABLE 2: ACTIVITY STATUS OF WORKING AGE FEMALES IN KERALA (Percent)

Occupational status	1998	2004	2007
Employed	18.1	16.1	15.9
Unemployed	5.7	12.2	6.2
Not in Labour force	76.2	71.7	77.9

Source: Computed from Migration Monitoring Data, for the years, 1998, 2004 and 2007.

## PROPORTION UNEMPLOYED & UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

In India, the proportion unemployed is only 1.2 percent while that of Kerala it is 6.9 percent in 2004-05. This indicates the seriousness of demand and supply mismatch problem in Kerala compared to all India. Among male, proportion unemployed is 1.5 percent in India, while that of Kerala it is 4.8 percent. Among female it is 0.9 percent and 8.7 percent respectively. The unemployment rate at all India level is only 3.1percent while that of Kerala it is 16.8 percent, which is five times more compared to all India level. Among the male in 2004-05 the unemployment rate at all India level is 2.7 percent and for female it is 4.1 percent whereas in Kerala during the same year the unemployment rate was 8.5 percent among male and 33.7 percent among female.

This is a pointer towards the role of female labour force in raising the total unemployment rate of Kerala to 16.8 percent compared to 3.1 percent at the all India level. The labour force participation itself is very low for female and one third of its labour force is unemployed, highlights the relevance of the study of female labour market for a better understanding of Kerala's labour market.

The proportion unemployed and the unemployment rate over the time periods 1999-00, 2004-05 and 2007-08 also gives a picture relevant for labour market analysis. At the all India level, the proportion unemployed and unemployment rate does not show significant variation. In Kerala, the proportion unemployed increased from 4.5 percent in 1999-00 to 6.9 percent in 2004-05 but later declined to 3.7 percent in 2007-08. The unemployment rate also increased from 12 percent in 1999-00 to 16.8 percent in 2004-05 and then declined to 9.8 percent. The proportion unemployed of male slightly increased from 4.5 percent in 1999-00 to 4.8 percent in 2004-05 and fell to 3.3 percent in 2007-08. This may be attributed to the slight decrease in demand during 1999-00- 2004-05 period and a slight improvement in demand during 2004-05 - 2007-08 periods.

For the female, at all India level the proportion unemployed did not significantly vary, while the share of unemployed in total labour force increased from 2.4 percent in 1999-00 to 4.1percent in 2004-05 which later declined to 2.6 percent in 2007-08. In case of Kerala, the female proportion unemployed increased from 4.6 percent in 99-00 to 8.7 percent in 2004-05 and then sharply declined to 4.1 percent in 2007-08. The unemployment rate which was a high rate of 22.5 percent in 1999-00 further increased to 33.7percent in 2004-05 and then declined to 20 percent in 2007-08.

Gender difference, in Kerala, in respect of the influence of demand and supply forces is more visible from the analysis. In case of males, any decrease or increase in work participation brings about a corresponding change in unemployment rates. Whereas, with respect to females, work participation rate and labour force participation rate increase were accompanied by an increase in proportion unemployed and unemployment rate in 2004-05 and decrease in WPR and LFPR for the year 2007-08 followed by a decrease in proportion unemployed and unemployment rate in 2007-08.

1 Kudumbashree, the largest women empowerment program, launched by the Government of Kerala in 1998 has 37 lakh members and covers more than 50 of the households in Kerala ( [www.kudumbashree.org/](http://www.kudumbashree.org/))The scheme aims at improving the living levels of the poor women in rural and urban areas. It seeks to bring the poor women folks together to form the grass root organizations to help enhance their economic security. The project aims at removing poverty among rural women households through setting up of micro-credit and productive enterprises. The activities such as micro-credit and micro-enterprises under the scheme were undertaken by the locally formed Community Development Societies consisting of poor women (Raghavan, 2009).

2 Lack of job search because of the belief that no work is available for them(Elliott and A. M. Dockery 2006 pp.4)



Relating the different variables in labour market-demand, supply and unemployment- it is visible that unemployment rate is a good measure of labour market problem of male only. In Kerala for the year 1999-00, unemployment as a percentage of total population among male was 4.5 percent and which increased to 4.8 percent in 2004-05 due to a slight reduction in worker population ratio (demand). It reduced to 3.3 percent in 2007-08 due to increase in demand. This clearly speaks that among male, demand plays an active role in determining the unemployment rate rather than supply. The unemployment measures serve as an indicator of labour market problem among male. Among female in Kerala, the proportion unemployed was 4.6 percent in 1999-00, which increased to 8.7 percent in 2004-05 and later decreased to 4.1 percent in 2007-08. On the other hand, the demand for labour (worker population ratio), increased from 15.7 percent in 1999-00 to 17.1 percent in 2004-05 and later declined to 16.4 percent in 2007-08. This shows that the increase in unemployment is not due to a reduction in demand and vice-versa. Contrary to this, unemployment relates with the changes in labour supply. The proportion unemployed females in Kerala increased from 4.6 percent in 1999-00 to 8.3 percent in 2004-05 and the unemployment rate also increased from 22.5 percent to 33.7 percent. During the same time period labour force participation rate (labour supply) also increased from 20.3 percent in 1999-00 to 25.9 percent in 2004-05. In 2007-08 when the labour force participation rate decreased to 20.5 percent, the proportion unemployed and unemployment rate also decreased to 4.1 percent and 20 percent respectively. This indicates, the influence of labour supply on the rate of unemployment prevailing among females. Therefore, while analysing female labour market, the emphasis should be more on supply and the issues related to it.

**SPATIAL DYNAMISM IN ACTIVITY STATUS**

A disaggregated analysis of the female labour market during 1999-2005 periods is given in table 3. Out of total working age female population (15-59), only 22.8 percent was employed in 1999-00 while in 2004-05, it increased to 24.1. The unemployed percentage increased from 7.1 to 13.3 during this period. Another important variable that should be mentioned here is the percentage of females engaged in domestic duties only. They constitute 57.2 percent of total working age females in 1999-00, which reduced drastically to 48.8 in 2004-05. This shows that during 1999-2005 periods, employment opportunities increased slightly while that of labour supply increased drastically through a reduction in non-economic work (domestic duties). Due to this the unemployment shoots up during the period.

In rural Kerala, only 22.7 percent of total working age females are employed in 1999-00 which later increased to 25.2 percent in 2004-05. This indicates an increase in employment opportunities in rural Kerala during the time period. While in urban Kerala, the employed percentage declined from 23.1 percent to 20.7 percent. Thus it may be concluded that the increased employment among female in Kerala during 1999-2005 period was contributed by rural employment. Though employment increased in rural Kerala, unemployment also increased due to a reduction in non-economic worker category (those who are engaged in domestic duties). The percentage of persons engaged in non-economic work in rural Kerala was 58.3 percent in 1999-00 which later declined to 48.6 percent in 2004-05, created an increase in unemployment rate from 6.5 to 12.2. In urban area also the percentage of working age females engaged in non-economic work declined from 54 to 49.4, along with a reduction in employment opportunities increased the unemployment rate from 8.5 to 17 percent.

The analysis clearly shows that the slight improvement in labour demand was seen in Kerala's labour market during 1999-2005 periods as a result of the increased employment opportunities in rural areas. But entire Kerala, irrespective of rural or urban, the supply of labourers increased through a reduction in the percentage of females engaged in domestic duties. This again supports our argument that it may be due to the impact of Kudumbashree, the women empowerment programme. A more disaggregated analysis will be useful for the better understanding of the dynamics in female labour market during this period. A region wise analysis may be useful for reaching better conclusions.

**TABLE 3: DYNAMICS IN THE ACTIVITY STATUS OF WORKING AGE FEMALE IN KERALA (Percent)**

Activity status	2004-05			1999-00		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
Employed	24.2	25.2	20.7	22.8	22.7	23.1
Domestic duty	48.8	48.6	49.4	57.2	58.3	54.0
Unemployed	13.3	12.2	17.0	7.1	6.5	8.5
Others	13.7	14.0	12.9	12.9	12.5	14.40

Source: Computed from NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> round level unit level data.

**TABLE 4: REGIONAL DYNAMICS IN FEMALE LABOUR MARKET OF KERALA (WORKING AGE) (Percent)**

Activity status	North						South					
	2004-05			1999-00			2004-05			1999-00		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
Employed	18.3	19.6	13.2	19.8	20.8	16.5	28.2	29.2	25.1	25.0	24.1	27.2
Domestic duty	55.1	54.0	59.1	64.3	64.5	63.6	44.5	44.7	43.8	52.2	53.9	47.9
Unemployed	10.9	10.0	14.3	5.4	4.9	6.9	15.0	13.9	18.6	8.3	7.8	9.6
Others	15.7	16.4	13.4	10.6	9.8	12.9	12.3	12.2	12.6	14.6	14.3	15.3

Source: Computed from NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> round level unit level data.

A clear north south difference in labour market outcomes is visible in table 4. In 2004-05, out of total working age female population, only 18.3 percent is employed in north while it was 28.2 percent in south. The same values in 1999-00 were 19.8 percent and 25 percent respectively which indicates the widening of regional disparity within Kerala. During 1999-2005 periods, the employed percentage among working age female in south increased while that of north declined. But unemployment rate increased drastically all over Kerala during the same time period. The increase in unemployment rate is not commensurate with the increase in demand. The reason for the high level unemployment noticed in 2004-05 is due to a reduction in the percentage of working age female engaged in non-economic activity. Irrespective of north and south, the percentage of non-economic work share among working age females decreased in 2004-05 period and a corresponding increase is visible in labour supply. In south the non-economic workers (domestic duty) constitute 52.2 percent in 1999-00 declined to 44.5 percent in 2004-05 (7.7 point increase). The share of employed (demand) increased from 25 percent to 28.2 percent during this period, less than the increase in supply. Hence the unemployment rate increased. In North, labour demand declined (from 19.8 percent to 18.3 percent) on the one side and labour supply increased on the other, (due to a reduction in the share of non-economic worker; domestic duty, percentage from 64.3 percent to 55.1 percent) resulted an increase in unemployment rate.

In northern Kerala, irrespective of rural and urban the employment percentage declined during 1999-2005 period. The employed share among working age females in urban area of north Kerala was 16.5 percent in 1999-00 declined to 13.2 percent in 2004-05. During the same period, the non-economic worker share declined from 63.6 percent to 59.1 percent leads to a corresponding increase in labour supply. Reduction in demand and increase in supply together pushed the unemployment rate from 6.9 percent to 14.3 percent in urban area of north Kerala. The same pattern of change is visible in rural area of northern Kerala and

the urban area of southern Kerala. A difference is noticed in this pattern of change in rural area of south, where demand and supply increased together, but the increase in supply surpasses the increase in demand caused an increase in unemployment rate.

The analysis provides an interesting picture of the change in the female labour market outcomes of Kerala during 1999-2005 periods. The increased unemployment rate noticed in 2004-05 was the outcome of the increase in labour supply all over Kerala, irrespective of south, north, rural and urban. But the increased demand for labour was noticed only in rural south of Kerala. Hence it can be argued that the increased work participation of Kerala during 1999-2005 periods was mainly due to the increased female employment in rural south of Kerala.

The analysis clearly indicates that there is an increase in female labour supply during 1999-2005 period, but the employment opportunities increased only in rural south. Here the argument is valid that the increased supply can be a byproduct of the awareness campaigns conducted after 1998 as a part of women empowerment programme, but it failed to create a corresponding increase in employment opportunities. A religion and social group wise analysis may be useful for a clear idea about the labour dynamics during the study period.

**TABLE 5: DYNAMICS IN THE FEMALE LABOUR OUTCOMES WITHIN RELIGION (WORKING AGE) (Percent)**

	2004-05			1999-00		
	Employed	Unemployed	Domestic duty	Employed	unemployed	Domestic duty
Hindu	21.5	9.7	34.0	19.9	4.9	39.0
Muslim	6.7	6.2	43.1	6.7	2.9	48.5
Christian	18.6	9.1	37.2	14.6	5.5	42.1

Source: Computed from NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> round level unit level data.

**TABLE 6: DYNAMICS IN THE FEMALE LABOUR OUTCOMES WITHIN SOCIAL GROUPS (WORKING AGE) (Percent)**

	1999-00			2004-05		
	Employed	Unemployed	Domestic work	Employed	Unemployed	Domestic work
ST	34.7	3.6	36.2	30.6	8.7	29.7
SC	27.0	5.1	30.4	26.1	10.2	28.4
OBC	14.1	4.3	43.2	14.2	8.3	38.4
others	14.1	4.9	43.3	19.6	9.1	37.4

Source: Computed from NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> round level unit level data.

In 1999-00 among the Hindus, 19.9 percent of total working age population was employed which increased to 21.5 percent in 2004-05. Among the Muslims the percentage of employed during the study period remains same, and among the Christians, employment percentage increased considerably from 14.6 percent to 18.6 percent during the time period. Moreover, among all the religious groups, unemployment percent increased due to the reduction in domestic duty category. Social group wise analysis may be more useful in this situation. Table.6 shows that during 1999-00 to 2004-05 period, among ST, employed percentage declined from 34.7 to 30.6 and the domestic work category declined from 26.2 percent to 29.7, hence the unemployment percent increased from 3.6 to 8.7 percent. The same trend is noticed among SC also. The percentage of employed declined from 27 to 26.1 and the domestic work category declined from 30.4 to 28.4 percent. Hence the unemployment rate increased from 5.1 percent to 10.2. Among OBC, employed percent remains more or less the same, but the percentage of unemployed increased from 4.3 to 8.3, due to the reduction in housewives category from 43.2 to 38.4 percent. Among general category, employed percentage increased from 14.1 to 19.6. This indicates that during the five year period, labour supply increased due to a reduction in the percentage of persons reported to be domestic worker in all most all sections of the society. The labour demand increased mainly among Christians and the social group analysis shows that employment among upper caste increased while that of lower caste declined. It is already mentioned that the increased labour supply is due to the active role of women empowerment programmes conducted during the period. But the evidence shows that it is not due to the impact of Kudumbashre or other women empowerment programmes that the employment percent increased. Hence it can be concluded that, the increased job opportunities may not be due to the influence of Kudumbashree because the poverty irradiation programmes which focused mainly on the lower income categories, especially the less educated.

**TABLE 7: EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF UNEMPLOYED FEMALE (Percent)**

Education category	Unemployed		Employed	
	2004-05*	1999-00	2004-05*	1999-00
Primary & below	7.5	4.0	42.0	51.3
Middle school	22.2	20.4	25.2	23.7
Secondary	20.7	36.2	11.7	13.8
Higher secondary	30.8	15.9	10.3	4.5
Graduates above	18.9	23.5	10.7	6.7

Source: Computed from NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> round level unit level data.

Table 7 shows that in 1999-00, 24.4 percentages of unemployed females were less educated (middle school below) where as in 2004-05, it increased to 29.7 percent. In the case of higher educated (graduates and above), the unemployed proportion was 23.5 in 1999-00, declined to 18.9 percent in 2004-05. It shows that the increased unemployment during 2004-05 period was mainly due to an increase in the labour supply of less educated coupled with a reduction in the proportion of employed in this category. The share of less educated in total employment decreased from 75 percent to 67.2 percent. The share of higher educated increased from 6.7 to 10.7 during this period. All these results together indicates a structural change in the relative importance of female employment during 1999-2005 period in favour of educated, and this benefited the upper caste people especially Christians.

The change in the structure of jobs gives further clarifications (table 8). It is seen that the share of self employment within total female employment increased from 32.1 percent to 35.5 percent during 1999-2005 period whereas the casual labour percent declined from 39.5 to 32.3. The reduction in work participation among SC/ST can be read in connection with the reduction in casual labour share in total demand for labour.

Unpaid family workers percentage share increased from 7.4 to 9.7 shows an increase in non-economic market work by female. The share of regular salaried job increased from 28.4 percent to 32.2 percent (by 3.8 percent increase). As it is found that the work participation of female increased during this period from 22.8 percent (for working age females) to 24.1 percent, the increase mainly due to the increase in either regular salaried job, or self employed (owner and unpaid family worker). Table 7 shows that the share of educated in labour demand increased while that of less educated decreased during 1999-2005 period. The

share of less educated in unemployed category increased while that educated declines. These results show that there was a change in the employment structure during 1999-2005 periods. Labour supply of less educated increased due to a reduction in the percentage of persons engaged in non-economic work (housewives). Less educated who were earlier doing casual work withdraw from that and become self employed. But data shows that self employed worker (Kudumbashree units will come under this) percentage share declined.

As it is found that the employed percentage among females in south increased while that of north declined, a disaggregated analysis of the change in the structure of job will be useful to reach certain concrete conclusions.

The casual labour percentage is comparatively high in north than south whereas in the case of other two, the share is high in south. The reduction of employed in north is due to the decline in the share of casual jobs in total employment. In south casual labour share declined while that of self employed owner percentage and unpaid family worker percentage increased whereas the share of regular salaried job increased. In south an increase is visible in the share of self employed owners among educated.

**TABLE 8: TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALE IN KERALA (15-59 AGE GROUP) (Percent)**

Type of employment	1999-00	2004-05	2007-08
Own Account worker (Self employed worker)	22.4	21.1	33*
Own account worker (self employed owner)	2.3	4.7	
Unpaid family worker(self employed)	7.4	9.7	
Regular salaried job	28.4	32.2	33.5
Casual labourers	39.5	32.3	33.5

Source: Computed from NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> round level unit level data.

\* Self employment together (Own account worker+ owner+ unpaid worker), not from quinquennial

**TABLE 9: REGIONAL DIFFERENCE IN TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALE IN KERALA (Percent)**

Type of employment	North		South	
	2004-05	1999-00	2004-05	1999-00
Own Account worker(Self employed worker)	20.1	23.8	24.9	22.8
Own account worker (self employed owner)	7.1	2.4	5.0	3.9
Unpaid family worker(self employed)	8.3	4.4	10.1	8.7
Regular salaried job	26.7	20.5	31.7	30.8
Casual labourers	37.8	48.9	28.3	33.8

Source: Computed from NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> round level unit level data.

**TABLE 10: TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALE IN SOUTH KERALA, EDUCATION WISE (Percent)**

Type of employment	1999-00			2004-05		
	Middle school below	Secondary and HSS	Graduates above	Middle school below	Secondary and HSS	Graduates above
Own Account worker (Self employed worker)	76.2	21.0	2.8	80.8	15.0	4.1
Own account worker (self employed owner)	85.3	13.6	1.1	55.4	35.2	9.4
Unpaid family worker (self employed)	68.8	22.4	8.7	68.4	29.8	1.8
Regular salaried job	46.6	34.9	18.5	38.0	33.9	28.1
Casual labourers	91.9	8.0	.2	88.9	11.1	.0

Source: Computed from NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> round level unit level data.

Table 10 gives further clarifications to the conclusions drawn. The percent of casual labourers having education below middle school was 91.9, declined to 88.9 whereas the share of average educated in this job increased from 8 percent to 11.1 percent. The share of higher educated, among self employed and regular salaried, increased during this period. Knowledge based self employed increased in south. In 1999-00, 85.3 percent of self employed owners were less educated, but the share has declined to 55.4 percent in 2004-05. Moreover the share of higher educated in this category increased from 1.1 percent to 9.4 percent. This shows that during the five year period, educated females, due to lack of quality jobs available in the economy tried to start their own business. Educated females (especially Christians) entered the labour market as self employed owners along with an increase in the job opportunities created in government and aided sector (the separation of pre-degree from colleges and the starting of new plus two course in government and aided schools may increased the job opportunities for educated females) which increased the work participation of females in Kerala.

**CONCLUSION**

The analysis result shows that in Kerala, the work participation of female increased marginally during 1999-2005 periods and reduced marginally in 2007-08 period. The labour force participation rate increased drastically during 1999-00 to 2004-05 and declined sharply during 2007-08 periods. The disaggregated analysis shows that the demand for labour increased in the rural south of Kerala while the labour supply increased in entire Kerala made us to conclude that the increase in demand is due to an increase in job opportunities in government sector and self employed owner category, while the increase in labour supply is not in response to the increase in demand but due to the influence of women empowerment programmes. The increase in labour supply without a commensurate increase in demand, shoot the unemployment rate in its zenith form. . It is found that the structure of Kerala's female labour market is changing slowly in favor of educated and the government sponsored women empowerment strategies are not seems to create sufficient positive influence on labour supply.

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