TRENDS AND DETERMINANTS OF LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN TAMIL NADU: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS FROM NSSO DATA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Tamil Nadu's Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) trends from 1993-94 to 2021-22 and their comparison with national data. It aims to uncover LFPR determinants, including family size, education, age, gender, marital status, and caste, and tests three hypotheses related to gender, education, and family size impacts on LFPR. Results reveal nuanced LFPR patterns, with rural areas seeing gradual declines, possibly reflecting shifting economic opportunities and gender-specific employment dynamics. Urban areas display relatively stable LFPR for males but a slight dip for females. Tamil Nadu generally exhibits higher LFPR than India, particularly among males and in rural areas. Policy recommendations emphasize gender-specific initiatives, education investment, job creation, urban-rural balance, smaller families, and female workforce encouragement for inclusive economic growth.

Keywords: Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Family Size, Education, Tamil Nadu, Logit, Odd Ratio.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Tamil Nadu boasts a diverse and robust economy that contributes significantly to India's overall economic growth. With a Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) consistently ranking among the highest in the country, Tamil Nadu's economic vibrancy is evident. Key economic sectors driving growth include manufacturing, services, agriculture, and information technology. The state's industrial prowess is particularly noteworthy, with major industrial clusters encompassing automotive manufacturing, textiles, electronics, and pharmaceuticals. Chennai, the state capital, is a prominent IT and business hub, further bolstering economic activity.

Geographically, Tamil Nadu offers a spectrum of landscapes, from its picturesque coastline along the Bay of Bengal to the fertile plains of the Kaveri River delta. The Western and Eastern Ghats border the state, providing natural beauty and ecological diversity. A favorable climate, with distinct monsoon seasons, supports agriculture and horticulture, contributing to the state's food production.

Tamil Nadu's social fabric is woven with diversity, reflecting its rich cultural heritage. The state is home to various linguistic and religious communities, with Tamil being the predominant language. Social indicators, such as education and healthcare, have seen significant improvements over the years, resulting in a relatively high Human Development Index (HDI) for the state. Tamil Nadu has a legacy of social reform movements and has been a pioneer in social welfare initiatives.

However, within this diversity lie disparities. Gender roles and expectations continue to shape societal norms, influencing labour force participation patterns. Caste dynamics, prevalent in many aspects of life, also impact economic opportunities.

The Rationale for the Study:

Given the economic dynamism, geographic diversity, and social intricacies of Tamil Nadu, understanding LFPR trends and their determinants is crucial. Economic growth, gender dynamics, urbanization, and education play pivotal roles in shaping the labour force landscape. Therefore, this study aims to analyze LFPR trends in Tamil Nadu over the past few decades, identify the factors influencing participation, and offer insights to inform policymaking for more inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

In the subsequent sections, we delve into the literature review, objectives, hypotheses, research questions, methodology, and findings of our study, providing valuable insights into the labour force dynamics in Tamil Nadu against the backdrop of its economic, geographic, and social tapestry.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Labour force participation is a crucial aspect of a region's economic activity, reflecting the engagement of its population in various work-related activities. In the context of Tamil Nadu, several pertinent studies have provided valuable insights into the factors influencing labour force participation rates (LFPR) and the impact of various determinants. This literature review synthesizes key findings from relevant studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of labour force dynamics in Tamil Nadu.

Sundaravaradarajan et al. (2011): This study conducted in Perambalur, a less resource-endowed district of Tamil Nadu, aimed to identify the major causes and correlates of agricultural labour migration. The research discovered that economic factors were primary drivers of migration. Specifically, the lack of continuous employment at the place of origin, low wages, and the economic conditions of families were identified as key factors pushing individuals to seek work opportunities elsewhere. This underscores the significant influence of economic considerations on labour force decisions in Tamil Nadu.

Saravanan et al. (2019): Focusing on industrial labourers in India, with special reference to Tamil Nadu, this study emphasized the importance of minimum wage regulations and job security policies in promoting worker welfare. The research highlighted variations in employment growth and real wages, both of which are critical factors affecting labour force participation. It pointed out that rapid growth in employment and real wages should be key priorities for improving the economic well-being of workers.

Novotny and Kubelková (2015): This study explored the effects of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) on subjective well-being in rural Tamil Nadu. The research found that the widespread implementation of MGNREGS was associated with higher global life satisfaction and a reduced perception of poverty. This suggests that social security-oriented interventions can positively impact subjective well-being, which, in turn, may influence individuals' decisions regarding labour force participation.

Shivshankar and Audinarayana (2021): Investigating the work participation of elderly individuals in Tamil Nadu using BKPAI data from 2011, this study revealed important determinants of elderly work participation. It found that economic independence and perceived health status were significant factors influencing the work participation of the elderly. Additionally, the study showed that age, education level, and wealth index played crucial roles in shaping labour force engagement among the elderly population.

Collectively, these studies shed light on the intricate interplay of economic, social, and demographic factors in shaping labour force participation patterns in Tamil Nadu. Economic considerations, including wage levels, job availability, and household economic conditions, emerge as crucial determinants of labour force decisions. Furthermore, social welfare schemes and programs, such as MGNREGS, have demonstrated potential in influencing labour force decisions by improving subjective well-being.

In addition to these insights from Tamil Nadu, recent studies by Singh and Singh (2022, 2023) have explored labour force participation trends and determinants in other Indian states (Haryana and Bihar), providing comparative insights that could inform policies addressing regional disparities in labour force dynamics. Similarly, research by Singh and Meena (2023) offers valuable insights into labour force participation trends in Uttarakhand, emphasizing the importance of demographic, social, and economic factors in shaping labour force dynamics in the region. These studies contribute to a broader understanding of labour force dynamics across diverse Indian states, enriching the contextual framework for the present research.

Based on the reviewed literature, it is evident that there is a dearth of research specifically focused on the changing trends in LFPR in Tamil Nadu by latest period, especially in relation to rural-urban differences and gender dynamics. While studies have been conducted in India and other regions, the unique context of Tamil Nadu necessitates a more in-depth investigation. By examining the LFPR trends in Tamil Nadu and identifying the key determinants using logistic regression, our study aims to bridge this research gap and provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing by the working age group (15-64 years) to participate in the labour force of Tamil Nadu.

Understanding the changing LFPR trends in Tamil Nadu and comparing them to national trends will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the state's labour market dynamics. Additionally, exploring the influence of family size, education, age, gender, caste, and marital status on LFPR will shed light on the factors affecting labour force participation in Tamil Nadu. This knowledge can inform policymakers, government agencies, and

other stakeholders in designing targeted interventions and policies to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the state.

In summary, this study aims to fill the research gap by focusing on Tamil Nadu's labour force changing trends in rural and urban areas, with a specific emphasis on gender dynamics. By examining the LFPR trends, identifying determinants using logistic regression, and considering factors such as family size, education, age, gender, caste, and marital status, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the labour market dynamics in Tamil Nadu and contribute to evidence-based policymaking.

III.   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

• To examine evolving trends in Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in Tamil Nadu from 1993-94 to 2021-22 and compare them with national trends.
• To identify the primary determinants of LFPR in Tamil Nadu using logistic regression analysis.
• To explore the impact of socioeconomic and demographic factors, including family size, education, age, gender, marital status, and caste, on LFPR within the state.

Hypothesis of the Study

Hypothesis 1: Gender and LFPR

• Null Hypothesis (H0): There's no significant difference in LFPR between males and females in Tamil Nadu.
• Alternative Hypothesis (HA): There's a significant difference in LFPR between males and females in Tamil Nadu.

Hypothesis 2: Education and LFPR

• Null Hypothesis (H0): There's no significant link between education level and LFPR among individuals aged 15-64 in Tamil Nadu.
• Alternative Hypothesis (HA): There's a significant link between education level and LFPR among individuals aged 15-64 in Tamil Nadu.

Hypothesis 3: Family Size and LFPR

• Null Hypothesis (H0): There's no significant connection between family size and LFPR among individuals aged 15-64 in Tamil Nadu.
• Alternative Hypothesis (HA): There's a significant connection between family size and LFPR among individuals aged 15-64 in Tamil Nadu.

Research Questions of the study

• How have the labour force participation rates in rural and urban areas of Tamil Nadu changed over time, and how do they compare to the national trends?
• What are the key determinants that influence labour force participation among individuals aged 15-64 years in Tamil Nadu?
• To what extent do demographic factors such as family size, education, age, gender, caste, and marital status impact labour force participation rates in Tamil Nadu?
• What is the relationship between the number of jobs held by the family and its impact on the likelihood of a person in participating in the labour force in Tamil Nadu?
• Does income inequality, as measured by income percentiles, have any association with labour force participation rates in Tamil Nadu?
• How do factors such as education, age, and marital status differently affect labour force participation in rural and urban areas of Tamil Nadu?

IV.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The research methodology employed in this study aims to investigate the labour force participation rate (LFPR) trends in both rural and urban areas of Tamil Nadu, considering gender disparities. To achieve this objective, we utilized data from various rounds of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) household surveys focusing on 'Employment-Unemployment,' which encompass a wide range of employment and unemployment dimensions. Specifically, we extracted and analyzed data from the most recent four thick rounds of NSSO quinquennial surveys, spanning the 50th round (1993-94), 55th round (1999-2000), 61st round (2004-05),

and 68th round (2011-12). Additionally, we incorporated data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for the years 2017-18 and 2021-22, which provide valuable insights into employment and unemployment dynamics.

To process and analyze this extensive dataset, we employed appropriate software tools. Our study focused on individuals within the age group of 15-64 years, aligning with the working-age group definition outlined by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The primary analytical approach applied in this research is the logit model, which allows us to discern and quantify the key factors that influence an individual's likelihood of participating in the labour force within the context of Tamil Nadu. This logit model was specifically applied to the unit-level household data extracted from the PLFS for the year 2021-22 in Tamil Nadu, enabling us to identify the primary determinants associated with the probability of labour force participation in the both rural and urban area of Tamil Nadu.

Basic Description of the Variables and Mathematical form used for the Logit Model are:

Labour force participation is a qualitative characteristic. An observation consists of noting whether the characteristic is present. Thus, the dependent variable, designated as Y, is dichotomous and takes a value of 1 if a person between the ages of 15-64 years had a job or was looking for work and a value of 0 if not in the labour force.

Dependent Variable:

• Labour Force Participation (LFP) = 1 if a person worked/looking for work = 0 otherwise

The factors influencing labour force participation include **(Independent Variables**):

• Family Size

• Years spend in education

• Number of Jobs in his/her family

• Income Group (dummy variable) 0-40, 40-80 and Top 20 Percentile based on Family Income. Here base Income Group is 0-40 percentile which has zero value.

• Age Group (Dummy variable) 15-29, 30-44 and 45-64 year age. Here base Age Group is 15-29 years which has zero value

• Marital status (dummy variable) Unmarried, Currently Married and Widow/Divorcee. Here base Martial status is unmarried which has zero value.

• Social Group (dummy variable) SCST (combined) , OBC and General Caste

• Gender (dummy variable) Male/Female here male is base variable which has zero value and female is one.

• Sector (dummy variable) Rural/Urban　Here Rural is base variable which is considered zero and in against it Urban is One.

Logit Model for Labour Force Participation of a Person in Tamil Nadu:

$$L_i = log\left[\frac{P_i}{1 - P_i}\right] = \alpha + \beta_1(FamilySize) + \beta_2(YearinEducation) + \beta_3(No.ofJobs) + \beta_4(40 - 80/0 - 40Percentile)$$

$$+\beta_5(Top20/0 - 40Percentile) + +\beta_6(30 - 44/15 - 29Age) + \beta_7(45 - 64/15 - 29Age)$$
$$+\beta_8(Married/Unmarried) + \beta_9(Widow/Unmarried) + \beta_{10}(OBC/SCST) + \beta_{11}(General/SCST)$$
$$+\beta_{12}(Female/Male) + \beta_{13}(Urban/Rural) + Error\ term$$

V.　FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Labour force participation rates (LFPR) provide valuable insights into the economic activity of a region or population. Analyzing LFPR trends and factors affecting participation can shed light on the dynamics of employment and workforce engagement. In this analysis, we examine the LFPR in Tamil Nadu, India, focusing on gender differentials and urban-rural disparities. The analysis encompasses two subsection: 1st subsection presents the LFPR trends in Tamil Nadu and India for different groups based on gender and location, while subsection 2 showcases the results of a logit model that explores the determinants of labour force participation in Tamil Nadu during 2021-22.

1. Analysis of LFPR Trends in Tamil Nadu in Comparison with India

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of LFPR trends in Tamil Nadu and India, divided into rural and urban areas. The data spans multiple years, ranging from 1993-94 to 2021-22, and includes LFPR figures for males, females, and the overall population. By examining these trends, we can identify patterns and disparities in labour force participation among different segments of the population.

Table 1: Trends of LFPR (per thousand) of working age (15-64 years) population in Tamil Nadu and India

	Year	Tamil Nadu			India		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
Rural	1993-94	897	680	786	896	512	707
	1999-2k	884	591	734	878	477	679
	2004-05	888	663	771	884	518	701
	2011-12	843	525	679	835	375	607
	2017-18	829	414	616	798	261	532
	2021-22	838	530	677	818	388	604
Urban	1993-94	861	351	606	824	248	551
	1999-2k	835	320	582	814	219	531
	2004-05	843	345	595	821	257	553
	2011-12	821	286	551	796	217	516
	2017-18	820	305	557	786	217	505
	2021-22	821	323	572	796	256	532
All	1993-94	884	563	721	877	445	666
	1999-2k	866	497	680	860	409	639
	2004-05	869	538	700	866	448	660
	2011-12	833	418	621	823	328	579
	2017-18	824	364	589	794	248	524
	2021-22	830	439	629	811	350	583

The data on Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) per thousand individuals in Tamil Nadu post-1993 provides valuable insights into the dynamics of the labour market in the state, with several notable trends observed across different categories.

In rural areas, the LFPR for males has exhibited a gradual decline over the years, moving from 897 in 1993-94 to 838 in 2021-22. This indicates that a slightly smaller proportion of rural males are actively participating in the labour force in recent years, reflecting potential changes in economic opportunities or other factors affecting male employment.

The LFPR for females in rural areas has shown a more substantial drop during the same period, falling from 680 in 1993-94 to 530 in 2021-22. This significant decline signifies a pronounced decrease in female labour force participation in rural Tamil Nadu. It is essential to explore the underlying reasons for this decline, which may include changes in educational attainment, social norms, or job opportunities.

Consequently, the overall LFPR for the entire rural population, which combines both male and female participation, has followed a similar declining trend, moving from 786 in 1993-94 to 677 in 2021-22. This indicates a general trend of reduced labour force engagement in rural areas during this period.

In contrast, urban areas have displayed different labour force participation dynamics. The LFPR for urban males has remained relatively stable over the years, experiencing only minor fluctuations and remaining close to 838 in 2021-22, which is comparable to the 861 recorded in 1993-94. This suggests a consistent male labour force participation rate in urban areas.

Urban females, on the other hand, have shown a slight decrease in LFPR, declining from 351 in 1993-94 to 323 in 2021-22. Although this decline is relatively modest compared to rural areas, it still signifies a reduction in female labour force participation in urban Tamil Nadu.

When considering the entire population of Tamil Nadu, including both rural and urban areas, the overall LFPR has exhibited a slight decline from 721 in 1993-94 to 629 in 2021-22. These trends highlight a nuanced picture of labour force participation in Tamil Nadu, influenced by various factors, including economic opportunities, education levels, and gender dynamics. A comprehensive analysis would require further investigation into the underlying causes and implications of these trends for the state's economy and society.

Comparison with India:

When comparing the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of Tamil Nadu to that of India as a whole, some notable trends emerge from the data provided. In rural areas, Tamil Nadu generally exhibits a slightly higher LFPR for both males and females compared to the national average. For instance, in 2021-22, the LFPR for males in rural Tamil Nadu was 838, while it was 818 for India. Similarly, the LFPR for females in rural Tamil Nadu stood at 530, whereas it was 388 for India. This suggests that a relatively larger proportion of the working-age population in rural Tamil Nadu is actively engaged in the labour force compared to the national average.

In urban areas, Tamil Nadu also tends to have a somewhat higher LFPR, particularly for males. For example, in 2021-22, the LFPR for urban males in Tamil Nadu was 821, whereas it was 796 for India. However, for urban females, the LFPR in Tamil Nadu (323) was closer to the national average (256).

Considering LFPR for the entire population (combining both rural and urban), Tamil Nadu consistently demonstrates a higher LFPR compared to the national average for both males and females. This indicates that, in general, a larger share of the working-age population in Tamil Nadu is actively participating in the labour force compared to the overall Indian population.

These variations in LFPR between Tamil Nadu and India may be influenced by factors such as regional economic conditions, educational opportunities, and cultural factors. Further analysis would be necessary to understand the underlying causes and implications of these differences in labour force participation between Tamil Nadu and the rest of India.

2. Determinants of Labour Force Participation in Tamil Nadu

Table 2: Odd Ratio or a Persons (15-64 Age) during 2021-22 in Tamil Nadu: Logit Model

VARIABLES	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural+Urban**
LFPR	.	.	.
Family Size	0.589***	0.557***	0.581***
Year in Education	1.026***	1.069***	1.035***
No. of Jobs in Family	4.824***	5.508***	4.936***
40-80/0-40 Percentile	0.932	0.796***	0.871***
Top 20/0-40 Percentile	0.769**	0.736***	0.833***
30-44/15-29Age	12.142***	5.729***	7.946***
45-64/15-29Age	4.598***	2.076***	2.923***
Married/Unmarried	3.994***	2.579***	2.994***
Widow/Unmarried	5.838***	5.128***	5.103***
OBC/SCST	0.917	0.870	0.910*
General/SCST	0.858	0.825	0.837
Female/Male	0.090***	0.045***	0.064***
Urban/Rural			0.629***

Constant	0.472***	0.766	0.907
Observations	7,998	8,528	16,526
Log Likelihood	-3047	-3533	-6761
Df	12	12	13
Chi2	3909	4628	8432
Prob>Chi2	0	0	0
Psedo Rsquare	0.391	0.396	0.384

Note: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Source: Authors' estimation from NSO unit-level data of PLFS 2021-22

The Odd Ratio results from the Logit Model for determining the factors influencing the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in Tamil Nadu during 2021-22 offer a comprehensive perspective on the relative impact of various variables on LFPR, providing insights into both rural and urban areas individually, as well as in the combined rural and urban context.

Family Size: The odds ratios, which are 0.589 in rural areas, 0.557 in urban areas, and 0.581 in the combined setting, indicate that smaller family sizes are associated with a higher likelihood of labour force participation. This suggests that individuals in smaller families may be more inclined to seek employment, possibly due to economic necessities.

Year in Education: With odds ratios of 1.026 in rural areas, 1.069 in urban areas, and 1.035 in the combined setting, this variable has a consistent positive influence on LFPR. It implies that higher levels of education tend to correlate with a greater likelihood of participating in the labour force, likely due to increased skill levels and job market opportunities for those with more years of education.

No. of Jobs: The significant odds ratios of 4.824 in rural areas, 5.508 in urban areas, and 4.936 in the combined setting highlight that having more job opportunities increases the odds of being part of the labour force. This suggests that labour force participation is strongly influenced by employment availability in the family.

Income Percentiles: The odds ratios for income percentiles show intriguing trends. The 40-80/0-40 percentile variable has an odds ratio close to 1 in rural areas but is more significant in urban (0.796) and combined (0.871) areas. Conversely, the top 20/0-40 percentile variable suggests that individuals in the top income bracket are less likely to participate in the labour force, with odds ratios of 0.769 in rural areas, 0.736 in urban areas, and 0.833 in the combined setting.

Age Groups: The odds ratios for different age groups are substantial, indicating a significant impact of age on LFPR. Individuals in the 30-44 and 45-64 age groups are more likely to participate in the labour force, with odds ratios considerably higher than 1, compared to those in the 15-29 age group.

Marital Status: Being married or widowed positively influences LFPR, as suggested by odds ratios greater than 1. In particular, the odds ratios for the Married/Unmarried and Widow/Unmarried variables are 3.994 and 5.838 in rural areas, respectively, indicating that married and widowed individuals are more likely to participate in the labour force.

Caste and Gender: Caste-based variables (OBC/SCST and General/SCST) have a moderate impact on LFPR, as indicated by odds ratios around 0.9. However, the Female/Male variable stands out with a significant impact, featuring very low odds ratios of 0.090 in rural areas, 0.045 in urban areas, and 0.064 in the combined setting, indicating that females are considerably less likely to participate in the labour force compared to males.

Urban/Rural: The urban/rural variable exhibits a strong influence on LFPR, with an odds ratio of 0.629 in the combined setting. This suggests that urban residents are significantly less likely to participate in the labour force than their rural counterparts, possibly due to differences in employment opportunities and lifestyles.

In sum, these detailed Odd Ratio results underscore the intricate interplay of various socioeconomic and demographic factors influencing LFPR in Tamil Nadu during 2021-22. Factors such as family size, education, job availability, age, marital status, caste, gender, and urban/rural residence all contribute to shaping labour force

participation patterns in the region. Policymakers and researchers can utilize these findings to develop targeted strategies aimed at enhancing labour force participation and addressing disparities across different segments of the population.

VI. CONCLUSION

The analysis of LFPR trends revealed distinct patterns in rural and urban areas of Tamil Nadu. In rural regions, there was a gradual decline in LFPR for both males and females, indicating potential shifts in economic opportunities or other influencing factors. Conversely, in urban areas, LFPR remained relatively stable for males but saw a slight decrease for females.

Comparing LFPR between Tamil Nadu and India as a whole, Tamil Nadu generally exhibited higher participation rates, particularly in rural areas. This suggests a relatively larger proportion of the working-age population in Tamil Nadu is actively engaged in the labour force compared to the national average.

The logistic regression analysis provided valuable insights into the determinants of LFPR in Tamil Nadu during 2021-22. Factors such as family size, education, job availability, age, marital status, caste, gender, and urban/rural residence all played significant roles in shaping labour force participation patterns. Notably, gender emerged as a crucial determinant, with females being considerably less likely to participate in the labour force compared to males.

Overall, this study contributes to a comprehensive understanding of labour force dynamics in Tamil Nadu and provides valuable insights for policymakers and researchers aiming to formulate targeted strategies to enhance labour force participation and address disparities within the population.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR POLICY MAKER

- **Gender-Specific Workforce Initiatives**: Prioritize initiatives that empower and support female participation in the labour force, including programs for skill development, childcare support, and equal opportunities.

- **Invest in Education and Skill Enhancement**: Increase investments in education and vocational training to improve employability, especially among marginalized communities.

- **Promote Job Creation**: Focus on policies that stimulate job creation, particularly in rural areas, to provide more employment opportunities, especially for the youth.

- **Address Urban-Rural Disparities**: Develop strategies to reduce the urban-rural divide by improving rural infrastructure, promoting rural industries, and incentivizing businesses to operate in rural areas.

- **Support Smaller Families**: Explore measures to support smaller families through family planning programs and financial incentives.

- **Promote Female Labour Force Participation**: Implement policies that remove cultural and social barriers, provide affordable childcare, and ensure workplace equality to boost female labour force participation.

These recommendations can help policymakers enhance labour force participation, drive economic growth, and promote inclusivity in the labour market.

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