

Q.1

According to WB data,
India's female LFPR has fallen to 27%,
in 2018, from 37% in 2005. Yet, curiously
we witness a consistent rise in female
participation in MGNREGA of above 50%,
as per MoRD figures.

Reasons:

- ① The Act itself mandates for ^{min.} 33% of employment for women, thus raising awareness of among them
- ② Lack of skills with them, make them suitable for works under MGNREGA
- ③ Proximity of work in the nearby neighbourhood doesn't hamper their family activities
- ④ Wages earned help in supplementing family income further
- ⑤ Men usually migrate to cities for better semi-skilled / skilled activities

These rising participation rates have had an all-encompassing impact on the women in these rural areas.

Changes brought to women:

① Social:

- They have broken the social taboo of being restricted to household activities
- Greater respect & dignity within society
- Promotes welfare of children through higher spending on health, education

② Economic:

- It has led to economic empowerment, development of SHG's, CSO's
- Greater say of women in decision-making of household

③ Political:

- Sense of ownership of assets created through jobs
- Greater participation in Gram Sabha, Panchayats, voting in elections [MGNREGA card is accepted as voter id]

Though it is a healthy trend, but efforts by the govt. need to be made in following aspects:

- ① enhance skilling of women [PMKVY]
- ② setup textile, leather industries in the semi-urban, rural areas to enhance female participation

The base built by MGNREGA of women coming out to work needs to be utilised to involve them in the formal economy. Higher female LFPR will boost economic growth of India as well as help us achieve SDG 5 i.e. "gender equality".