

Work Participation of Currently Married Women in Pakistan: Influence of Socio-Economic and Demographic Factors

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Introduction

The study of trends and structure of female labour force participation in developing countries has attracted considerable attention over the past few years. Several international comparisons based on religious as well as socio-cultural and demographic differentials have been made. See, for example, Youssef [23, 24 and 25], Denti [6] and Boserup [4]. The primary focus of most of such studies consists of analysing female labour force participation rates and structure by controlling for one or two background factors like age or family structure. Fong's study [9] of West Malaysian women seems to be one of the few studies that have concentrated on analysing in a detailed and exhaustive manner the social and economic correlates of female work participation.

Among the studies relating to labour force participation of Pakistani women, historical trends (Farooq [7]), structural set up (Farooq [8] and Bean [1 and 2]), and socio-cultural factors (Papanek [15], Pastner [16] and Saeed [17]) have been analysed. Attempts have also been made at studying the correlates of labour force participation, both for males and females [26 and 8].¹ These studies have been referred to in the following sections wherever felt relevant.

Purpose and Scope

The present paper is an attempt at analysing the following three sets of factors which are hypothesized to exert an influence on whether a woman takes part in the labour force or not.

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¹A preliminary report on the correlates of female labour force participation was prepared by Bhatti and Alam [3] based on the 1961 Census data.

(1) Demographic factors like age or number of living children which could operate on work participation in different ways. It was argued in a recent paper [19] that some demographic factors, e.g. family size, might 'push' mothers into the labour force.

(2) Socio-economic characteristics, like education, which might make certain jobs more available to some subgroups of women. On the other hand, a high family income might greatly reduce the necessity of augmenting income by involving women in the labour force. Other variables like family structure and observance of *purdah* have been included to examine whether a given pattern constitutes a constraint in terms of women's work participation.

(3) Certain 'modernization' variables which seem to affect female work participation. Favourable attitudes and behaviour towards fertility control might be regarded as some aspects of modernization which might have an indirect influence on female work by operating through factors like family size and age of the youngest child.

In the case of women who might have been 'pushed' into the labour force partly as a result of a large family, it could be expected that such women would have more favourable attitudes towards fertility control (and perhaps higher knowledge and use of contraception). Since this latter argument would hold true only for a certain period in the women's life cycle, it is difficult to hypothesize in clear terms the causation or direction of relationships involved. In the present study, the data have been analysed to measure the effect of work participation on attitudes and knowledge about family planning.

In addition to the three sets of factors mentioned above, there are other relevant influences which could exert a significant impact on wife's participation in the labour force. Examples of some such factors, which could not be analysed in the present study due to non-availability of data, are: availability of jobs that are culturally, socially and economically acceptable; suitable housing near the place of work; attitudes of husbands and wives towards working outside the home; community and extended-family reactions towards female work, etc.

Data and Methodology

Data from the Pakistan National Impact Survey, 1968-69, have been used for the present study. A few comparisons with census data have been made wherever felt possible. The Impact Survey was designed essentially to collect baseline data on knowledge, attitudes and practice related to family planning. Currently married, widowed and divorced women from about 2500 households were interviewed. In addition to gathering family planning KAP information, several relevant questions were asked about background variables like education, economic status, employment, family structure, observance of *purdah*, etc.² The present study concentrates only on the sample of currently married women and analyses their involvement in labour force in relation to the three sets of factors discussed in the preceding section.

The restriction of the sample to currently married women jeopardizes its representativeness in so far as women who are not married and those who are

²For details of the survey, see [20], [21], and [22].

widowed or divorced might be making a significant contribution to the labour force.³ The overall proportion of single women in Pakistan is, however, relatively small. Only 11 percent of the women age 15 or more were reported as single in the 1961 Census for West Pakistan.⁴ The 1961 Census provides a cross classification of economic activity by marital status only for females in non-agricultural labour force. Using women in different marital status categories as denominator we get the following activity rates for different groups of women:

<i>Marital Status (for women age 10+)</i>	<i>Percentage in non-agricultural labour force (age 10 and above)</i>
Never married	0.7
Married	1.4
Widowed	6.1
Divorced	12.1

Source: [13, Table 4] and [14, Table 13].

Since the participation rates of the widowed and divorced women are considerably higher than the rates of married women, it would have been desirable to include such women in the present analysis. However, we do not have available to us from the Impact Survey data on widowed and divorced women to enable us to analyse all ever-married women.

In this paper, female labour force participation has been defined in terms of three categories, namely, women who reported that they had never worked, those who reported to be self-employed and those who reported that they were employed by some person other than a relative. This distinction between the self-employed and other-employed categories has been made here because the nature of work in terms of cash (or kind) payment, place of work, authority structure and hours of work might be quite different for these two types of work arrangements.⁵ This would be particularly true in urban areas where occupational arrangements are more highly institutionalized. The nature of work could be related to the availability of jobs in terms of both supply and demand. Thus, the factors examined in this study might not affect the two types of activity in an identical manner.

Definition of Labour Force Participation

Besides the nature of the sample in the present study, definitional and conceptual problems that often confound the measurement of labour force participation in censuses also characterize the Impact Survey data. As Farooq notes in his historical account of labour force participation rates in Pakistan

³Also, this study does not include women who were (currently) not employed at the time of interview but were looking for work. Although the proportion of women who reported themselves to be in this category was negligible (0.80%) in our sample, this group is theoretically important since it represents women who could potentially be in the labour force.

⁴In the Population Growth Survey of 1968, 14% of the women age 15 and above were reported to be single in West Pakistan.

⁵In an earlier paper [19] where work participation was used as an intervening variable it was shown that fertility desires of self-employed and other-employed women were distinctly different from each other after controlling for certain independent factors.

[7], one of the difficulties in measuring labour force participation rates is due to the variation in definitions of the labour force in various censuses. The 1961 Census of Pakistan included a person 10 years or over in the labour force if he or she was working for profit or earning wages or salary, helping any member of his/her family or was not working but looking for work. The 1951 Census used a different age criterion, setting the minimum age limit for economic enumeration at 12 years. Also, a person had to be 'self supporting' or partially 'self supporting' to be included in the labour force in 1951. The sequence of the questions which were used in the Impact Survey to measure female labour force participation were:⁶

Q. No. 1. Have you ever done any work other than housekeeping at any time?

Yes.....No.....

Q. No. 2. Have you worked at anything other than housekeeping during the past week?

Yes.....No.....

Q. No. 3. What kind of work other than housekeeping do (did) you usually do?

Description of work.....

Q. No. 4. When you work other than housekeeping, is this mainly for yourself or for someone else?

For someone else.....Self employment.....

Q. No. 5. Do (did) you work mainly for a relative?

Yes.....No.....

As is evident from these questions, the definition of labour force participation in the Impact Survey was rather loose and did not specify any conditions about cash (or kind) wages or about being self-supporting. The respondent's perception in terms of what constituted work other than housekeeping could vary from sub-group to sub-group. The definition of extra familial work can be particularly problematic in rural areas where a large majority of the women and children might be making significant contributions to production but are not recognized as doing so. In the case of women, certain kind of farm work might be regarded as an extension of their household activities. For example, cutting and bringing home fodder for the animals might be regarded as such an extension.

Table 1 gives some indication of the possible ambiguity of the questions in rural areas. When the occupational category of the respondent was cross-classified by employment status in terms of self-employed or other-employed, about one-fourth of the landless agricultural labourers in rural areas reported themselves as being self-employed. It is likely that some of these women might have been interpreting the question differently from what was intended.

⁶Throughout this paper, the categories of work participation have been defined in terms of whether the women have ever done any work besides housekeeping. If the woman had been working for herself, she was defined as being *self-employed*. If she had been working for someone else (not a relative) she was defined as being *other-employed*.

Table 1

Classification of Currently Married Urban and Rural Women as Self-employed or Other-employed by their Occupational Categories

Occupational Category	Total Number of Women	Self-employed		Other-employed	
		Number	As percent of Total Women	Number	As percent of Total Women
URBAN					
Professional, e.g. nurses, teachers, clerical workers.	16	2	12.5	14	87.5
Skilled workers, e.g. tailors, cobblers, weavers etc.	62	47	75.8	15	24.2
General labourers	24	11	45.8	13	54.2
Saleswomen, cooks, ayahs, hawkers etc.	50	16	32.0	34	68.0
Total All Categories	152	76	50.0	76	50.0
RURAL					
Professional	5	2*	40.0	3*	60.0
Agriculturists and dairy workers	113	96	85.0	17	15.0
Skilled workers, e.g. tailors, weavers, cobblers	52	36	69.2	16	30.8
Landless agricultural labourers	193	51	26.4	142	73.6
General labourers	55	32	58.2	23	41.8
Saleswomen, cooks, ayahs, hawkers etc.	36	17	47.2	19	52.8
Total All Categories	454	234	51.5	220	48.5

*The number is less than 10.

The same could have happened in some of the other occupational categories but is not very easily discernible. The varying interpretations could have resulted in considerable under-reporting or over-reporting of female labour force participation. This is discussed in the next section which examines activity rates of women.

Trends and Structure of Female Work

A comparison of the labour force participation rates reported in the 1961 Census with those given by the Impact Survey shows that more women were reported as being economically active in 1968-69 than in the earlier period.⁷

Table 2

Crude Female Labour Force Participation Rates, 1961 Census and National Impact Survey (1968-69)^a

Categories of Women (age 15-44 years) in Labour Force	Percentage of All Women, Age 15-44		
	Total	Rural	Urban
<i>1961 Census</i>			
Women in agriculture or related agricultural activity	7.1	—	—
Women in non-agricultural activity	2.9	—	—
<i>National Impact Survey (1968-69)</i>			
Women currently engaged in pursuits beyond housework	18.7	22.3	9.0
Women in agriculture or related agricultural activity	13.8	18.5	1.3
Women in non-agricultural activity	10.0	9.2	12.0

Source: [12, Table 2, pp. 80-81] and [22].

^aIt must be emphasized that the 1961 Census did not provide a breakdown of women into agriculturists and non-agriculturists by marital status. We therefore had to compare "all women" in the relevant age groups in the Census with "currently married" women from the Impact Survey. Also, in the 1961 Census, data for relevant age groups of women engaged in different types of activity were not available by rural and urban residence.

Due to the different definitions used for measuring economic activity, the comparison here is made between women in 1961 Census currently engaged in agricultural and non-agricultural activity and women in the 1968 survey who were currently engaged in any economic activity. The figures for the agricultural and non-agricultural activity reported in the Impact Survey pertain to women who have ever done any work besides housework.

⁷See Farooq [7] for an account of the growth of labour force from 1901 to 1961.

The data given in Table 2 show that the crude participation rate of women in the labour force went up from 10% in 1961 to 19% in 1968. Given the rather liberal definition used to measure economic activity in the Impact Survey, it is difficult to state what proportion of this rather substantial increase is a 'real' increase in labour force participation. An accurate estimate of the possible change in activity rates can be obtained only from sources using definitions comparable to those given in the Census. Something more definite can perhaps be concluded once the results of the Housing, Economic and Demographic (HED) Survey become available.⁸ Until then, it might be reasonable to assume that female participation in the labour force has increased by a few percentage points over the last decade.

As for the structure of female work in terms of the types of occupations the women were pursuing, 41 percent in urban areas reported to be engaged in some kind of skilled work like weaving, tailoring, cobbling, etc. (Table 1). Another one-third of the urban women were what could be called unskilled workers, e.g. hawkers, ayahs (i.e. nannies) cooks, etc. Almost 11 percent of the urban women reported that they were engaged in professional occupations while only one percent of the rural women qualified for this category. The majority (67 percent) of the rural women reported that they were involved in agricultural work—42 percent of them were landless agricultural labourers while 25 percent were working on their own land. The other major categories in which rural women were working were those of general labourers and skilled workers like weavers, tailors, cobblers, etc. Thus, the structures of jobs in rural and urban areas are quite different, the latter requiring a relatively more skilled labour force.⁹

Demographic Correlates of Female Labour Force Participation

Table 3 presents data on the relationship between female work and selected demographic characteristics for rural and urban areas. As mentioned above, despite an apparent gain in activity rates, the proportion of women in the labour force is still quite small, particularly in the urban areas. The age of wife seems to have a significant positive association with employment, particularly for other-employed women in both rural and urban areas. Bean [1] showed that the labour force participation curve for Pakistani women in 1961 was quite flat when age was controlled for. He also found this to be true for other developing Muslim countries. Fong [9] found that the proportion of working women was noticeably higher among older Malaysian women who were currently married.

Other demographic variables that are highly correlated with age in a woman's life cycle, i.e. duration of marriage, number of living children and number of living sons, showed small positive associations (not always statistically significant) with female work. This was true specifically for rural women who were other-employed. The relationship for women who were self-employed was either not clear or was in the opposite direction. Thus, among rural women,

⁸The HED Survey was a postcensal survey conducted in 1972 in order to supplement the rather limited information collected as a part of the 1972 Census. The HED survey reports relevant data on nature and type of employment by sex.

⁹For a discussion of female work by employment status based on 1951 and 1961 Censuses, see Bean [1]. Also for detailed discussions by industrial structure, see Farooq [8].

Table 3

*Employment Status of Currently Married Women in Relation to Selected Demographic Factors**

Demographic factors	URBAN WOMEN				RURAL WOMEN			
	Total Number	Percentage reporting as			Total Number	Percentage reporting as		
		Never worked	Self-employed	Other-employed		Never worked	Self-employed	Other-employed
<i>Age of Wife</i>								
< 30	598	89.6	5.2	5.2	931	75.0	13.8	11.2
30—39	386	83.9	8.3	7.8	527	69.4	15.4	15.2
40+	191	83.8	6.8	9.4	256	75.4	10.2	14.5
		(X ² Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Significant at .05 level)		
<i>Number of living children</i>								
None	155	89.0	5.8	5.2	270	79.6	12.6	7.8
1—2	317	89.6	5.7	4.7	544	72.8	15.6	11.6
3—4	329	86.6	6.1	7.3	484	71.7	14.7	13.6
5+	374	83.7	7.7	8.6	416	71.9	11.0	17.1
		(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Significant at .05 level)		
<i>Number of living sons</i>								
None	292	87.3	7.9	4.8	485	76.1	14.6	9.3
1—2	530	87.9	5.9	6.2	836	71.0	14.6	14.4
3+	353	84.7	6.2	9.1	392	74.7	11.0	14.3
		(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Significant at .05 level)		

—Continued

Table 3

*Employment Status of Currently Married Women in Relation to Selected Demographic Factors**

Demographic factors	URBAN WOMEN				RURAL WOMEN			
	Total Number	Percentage reporting as			Total Number	Percentage reporting as		
		Never worked	Self-employed	Other-employed		Never worked	Self-employed	Other-employed
<i>Age at 1st Marriage</i>								
< 14 years	47	87.2	4.3	8.5	87	78.2	11.5	10.3
14—15 "	551	85.8	8.0	6.2	884	71.0	13.9	15.0
16—17 "	278	87.8	6.1	6.1	384	74.5	14.0	11.5
18—19 "	157	89.2	5.7	5.1	189	75.1	16.4	8.5
20+ "	142	85.9	2.8	11.3	170	78.2	10.6	11.2
		(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)		
<i>Duration of Marriage</i>								
< 5 years	195	93.3	4.1	2.6	323	78.0	14.2	7.8
5—14 "	451	87.8	5.8	6.4	670	73.9	13.7	12.4
15—24 "	377	82.5	9.0	8.5	505	69.5	14.9	15.6
25+ "	152	86.2	5.3	8.5	216	73.6	10.7	15.7
		(X ² Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Significant at .05 level)		
<i>Age of the Youngest Child</i>								
< 2 year	442	89.1	4.8	6.1	635	73.4	14.2	12.4
2—4 years	317	84.0	9.5	6.5	479	71.0	13.2	15.8
5+ "	261	85.1	6.1	8.8	330	71.5	14.9	13.6
		(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)		

*The X² test results shown in Tables 3-7 tested the difference between the categories of never worked, self-employed and other-employed. The results remained practically the same when the two work categories were aggregated and the difference between never worked and ever worked categories was tested.

a greater proportion of women who were in the later stages of their life cycle reported that they were working (for someone other than a relative) than women who were in the earlier stages of their life cycle. That is, a greater proportion of those who were 30 years of age or more, had been married for 15 or more years and had five or more living children were in the labour force (Table 3). The relationship for urban other-employed women followed a similar direction, although the differentials were much smaller. Fong [9] found similar positive relationships between demographic factors and female work for her sample of West Malaysian women.

The two demographic variables which did not show a significant relationship with female work participation were respondent's age at first marriage and age of the youngest child. It was expected that a low age of the youngest child could have had a dampening impact on work participation particularly if the wife was working outside the house and did not have helper(s) who could look after the baby. Since most of the jobs that Pakistani women are engaged in do not pose this problem of the mother-role and working-role conflict, having a young child in the house probably does not discourage work participation.

Fong [9] found work participation before marriage to be the best predictor of working after marriage in Malaysia. Also, the older the age at which women got married, the greater was the likelihood of their involvement in the labour force before marriage. Although the difference was not statistically significant we found age at marriage and employment to be positively related in the case of the urban other-employed women in Pakistan.

Thus, it is typically the older women with four or five children and/or married for fifteen or more years who constitute the largest group of workers, particularly in the rural areas. We feel that such women are driven to work outside the home out of sheer necessity. The pressure on the resources within the household is very great and the wife has to get involved in the labour force so that she can bring some additional income (cash or kind) into the family.¹⁰ Another important reason for the greater work participation of older women who had been married for longer duration could be that it was socially and culturally more permissible for such women to work. The constraints in terms of mobility and *purdah* which could act as social sanctions to discourage work participation were probably less rigid in the case of older women who were no longer regarded as young brides. The data provide some indication that the typical working woman in the rural (and to a lesser extent in urban) areas belongs to the relatively poor socio-economic strata within the rural set-up. This hunch is partially examined in the next section.

Socio-Economic Correlates of Female Labour Force Participation

The socio-economic factors examined in this section are husband's and wife's education, observance of *purdah* by wife, perception of whether living was adequate during the twelve months prior to interview, ownership of agricultural land and certain durable items, and family type. The association

¹⁰Another possible reason for greater work participation among older wives with more children could be that older children can look after the younger ones while the mother is at work.

between wife's education and work participation is negative (though statistically not significant) for all subgroups except for the other-employed women in urban areas (Table 4). Eleven percent of the urban other-employed women with six or more grades of education reported that they had ever worked compared with 7 percent of women who could not read or write and 5 percent of women who had passed only 5 or less grades. Thus, it seems that it is only above a certain threshold level that female education begins to affect women's entry into the labour force.

The level of husband's education was found to have a distinct negative effect on female employment in both rural and urban areas. This relationship probably implies that as husbands generally earned more with their higher educational achievements, the need for their wives' participation in the labour force was considered proportionately less strong. Husband's education had a positive correlation ($r=0.141$ in rural and 0.219 in urban areas) with perception regarding adequacy of living during the 12 months prior to the interview. Relatively high positive correlation between husband's education and the number of durable items owned ($r=0.472$ in rural and 0.536 in urban areas) provides some indication of the economic status of the more educated couples.¹¹ Hence, it appears that the more educated couples have a reasonable income and an adequate standard of living (as perceived by the respondent)—factors which could have a dampening influence on wife's propensity to work. The small subgroup of the highly educated women in urban areas who are engaged in professional types of occupations can be regarded as an exception to this general set-up. The total number of such women in our sample is, however, too small to allow any refined analysis.

Further evidence on the negative relationship between perceived adequacy of living and work participation can be found in Table 4. Significantly more women who reported that their living was not adequate were working as compared with women who reported that they had an adequate living during the 12 months prior to the interview. The differential was quite large in rural areas, particularly for the other-employed women. Eighteen percent of the rural other-employed women who perceived their living as inadequate reported that they had ever worked compared with only 4 percent of the women who perceived their living to be more than adequate.

Observance of *purdah* is another factor that has been suggested to play an important role in influencing female work participation as well as the nature of jobs women are likely to pursue [15]. A striking rural-urban differential was found with regard to observance of *purdah*—82 percent of the urban women said that they were observing *purdah* compared with only 37 percent of the rural women (Table 4).¹² We also found a positive association between

¹¹The corresponding correlations (r) for the relationships between wife's education and ownership of durable items were 0.299 in rural and 0.458 in urban areas.

¹²One of the problems in the measurement of *purdah* observance was its lack of specificity. The question was left to the interviewer's discretion. We do not know, therefore, whether the interviewers asked specifically whether the women wore a *burqa* or whether they asked in general about *purdah* observance. Furthermore, we are not sure how the respondents interpreted the question.

Table 4

Employment Status of Currently Married Women in Relation to Selected Socio-economic Factors

Social and Economic Factors	URBAN WOMEN				RURAL WOMEN			
	Total Number	Percentage reporting as			Total Number	Percentage reporting as		
		Never worked	Self-employed	Other-employed		Never worked	Self-employed	Other-employed
<i>Wife's education</i>								
Cannot read or write	862	86.4	6.8	6.7	1637	73.0	14.0	13.0
Passed 0-5 grades	201	89.5	6.0	4.5	64	84.4	9.41	6.2
Passed 6+ grades	112	84.8	4.5	10.7	12	83.3	8.3	8.3
		(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)		
<i>Husband's education</i>								
Cannot read or write	444	84.7	6.8	8.5	1169	69.5	14.5	16.0
Passed 0-5 grades	268	84.0	9.3	6.7	240	73.0	16.5	9.5
Passed 6-9 grades	208	89.4	6.7	3.9	198	86.0	9.0	5.0
Passed 10+ grades	249	91.2	2.8	6.0	105	93.3	5.7	1.0
		(X ² Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Significant at .05 level)		
<i>Family type</i>								
Nuclear	486	84.6	8.0	7.4	767	67.7	15.9	16.4
Non-nuclear	689	88.4	5.4	6.2	946	78.0	12.0	10.0
		(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Significant at .001 level)		

—Continued

Table 4

Employment Status of Currently Married Women in Relation to Selected Socio-economic Factors

Social and Economic Factors	URBAN WOMEN				RURAL WOMEN			
	Total Number	Percentage reporting as			Total Number	Percentage reporting as		
		Never worked	Self-employed	Other-employed		Never worked	Self-employed	Other-employed
<i>Wife purdah observing</i>								
Yes	915	90.7	5.4	3.9	796	87.2	8.2	4.6
No	204	69.6	10.8	19.6	892	60.9	18.8	20.3
		(X ² Significant at .001 level)				(X ² Significant at .001 level)		
<i>Adequacy of living during last 12 months</i>								
Not adequate	524	83.2	7.8	9.0	622	70.1	12.1	17.8
Adequate	607	89.5	5.8	4.7	1013	74.3	15.2	10.5
More than adequate	43	93.0	—	7.0	73	87.7	8.2	4.1
		(X ² Significant at .01 level)				(X ² Significant at .01 level)		
<i>No. of Durable items owned</i>								
None	375	80.8	7.5	11.7	1126	68.2	15.2	16.6
One	215	87.0	7.4	5.6	290	78.6	12.4	9.0
Two or Three	395	90.1	5.8	4.1	240	86.7	10.4	2.9
Four+	174	91.4	4.6	4.0	50	94.0	4.0	2.0
		(X ² Significant at .01 level)				(X ² Significant at .01 level)		
<i>Ownership of agricultural land</i>								
Own land	175	93.7	3.4	2.9	823	78.7	17.4	3.9
Don't own land	999	85.6	7.0	7.4	890	68.3	10.5	21.2
		(X ² Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Significant at .01 level)		

husband's (and wife's) education and *purdah* observance.¹³ This indicated that it was the relatively affluent women in our sample who observed *purdah*. It is my impression that the poorest women could not afford this 'luxury', perhaps because many of them had to work outside the home. Work participation, however, might not be a very important reason for non-observance of *purdah*. Many working women probably do observe *purdah*.¹⁴ Our data simply point out that work participation was greater among non-*purdah* observing women.

Significantly more women who were not observing *purdah* reported that they were working compared with women who were observing *purdah* in both rural and urban areas (Table 4). Twenty percent of the non-*purdah* observing (other-employed) women in both rural and urban areas reported that they were doing some work other than housekeeping compared with only 5 percent of rural and 4 percent of urban (other-employed) women who were observing *purdah*. Similar differentials between the *purdah*-observing and non-*purdah* observing women were present among women who were self-employed, particularly in the rural areas.¹⁵ Thus, *purdah* seems to have both direct and indirect influences on the work participation of wives. The direct influence probably works through reduction of physical mobility while the indirect influence works through the higher socio-economic status that the *purdah*-observing women enjoy. It is by virtue of this higher status that such women have a smaller financial need for working outside the home, and they are therefore not 'pushed' into the labour force like the poorer (non-*purdah* observing) women.

The negative impact of a higher socio-economic level of wife's work participation was further emphasized by a comparison of women who owned some agricultural land and durable items with those who did not.¹⁶ Significantly more of the women who reported that they did not own any durable items or land were working compared with women who owned these (Table 4). The most striking differences were present among the other-employed women in both rural and urban areas. Twelve percent of other-employed urban women who did not own any durable items reported that they were working compared with only 4 percent of women who owned four or more items; the corresponding proportions among rural women were 17 percent and 2 percent respectively.

The effect of family structure on work participation was significant only in the rural areas where more women who were residing in nuclear families

¹³The correlation coefficients (r) between husband's education and *purdah* observance were 0.319 in rural and 0.196 in urban areas. The coefficients for wife's education were much smaller but similar in direction, 0.147 and 0.007 in rural and urban areas respectively. Also, the positive relationship between the ownership of durable items and *purdah* observance further emphasizes the argument of greater *purdah* observance among relatively affluent couples 0.347 in rural and 0.137 in urban areas).

¹⁴Other factors related to *purdah* observance might be (1) the status and 'fashion' value attached to it among some subgroups, (2) rural life is relatively cohesive and the need for *purdah* may not be as great in rural as in urban areas and (3) in some subgroups, traditional attitudes may be an important factor in observance of *purdah* regardless of the socio-economic status.

¹⁵One important explanation for this differential in the rural areas could simply be the types of jobs that were available to women. If more jobs, 'suited' for the relatively higher socio-economic women had been available, participation of these women in the labour force might have been higher regardless of the observance of *purdah*.

¹⁶Durable items included: bicycle, radio/transistor, clock, sewing machine, kerosene, gas or electric stove, iron, water or tea-set, torch, patromax, motor/scooter, and dressing table with mirror.

reported that they were working than those who lived in non-nuclear families (Table 4).¹⁷ It has been found that the number of living children and age of wife are related positively to the proportion of couples living in nuclear families [11] and [19]. As discussed above, the pressure of large families seems to be one of the factors which push wives, who are in the relatively later stages of their life cycle, into the labour force. Hence it appears that demographic factor like age of wife and number of living children might be affecting positively both women's work participation rates and nucleation of families. Further analysis might reveal interactions between family type and demographic variables in influencing work participation.

Thus, two specific influences on work participation become evident from the preceding analysis. The first factor might be labelled as the 'economic well-being' of the women, and the second as the 'demographic pressure' on the family resources. Economic well-being was found to exert a negative influence on work participation while demographic pressure had a positive effect on such activity.

'Modernization' Correlates of Female Labour Force Participation

Tables 5-7 were prepared in order to measure the effect of female work participation on certain factors that have been denoted as 'modernization' factors, namely, attitudes towards family planning, ideal family size and use of contraceptive methods. It was suggested above that such factors might have indirect influences on female work by operating through variables like family size and age of the youngest child. It was hypothesized that women who had been 'pushed' into the labour force because of large families could be expected to have higher knowledge of and favourable attitudes towards family planning. This hypothesis was, however, not upheld by the data.

The relationship between work participation and the modernization variables was found to be statistically insignificant for both rural and urban areas, with one exception. Among the rural women a noticeably greater proportion (40 percent) of those who had never worked had knowledge of the concept of family planning compared with women who were other-employed—23 percent (Table 5). Also a larger proportion of women who had never worked reported a positive attitude towards family planning compared with self-employed and other-employed women. One of the major reasons for this negative relationship between work participation and knowledge (and positive attitudes) about family planning is probably the generally higher socio-economic status of the non-working women. Couples belonging to a higher socio-economic status have been found to be the more knowledgeable couples having favourable attitudes towards family planning and greater contraceptive use [18]. The hypothesized positive relationship between female work and the modernization factors might therefore be true only for the subgroup of urban working women who are in professional kinds of occupations and are working outside the home.¹⁸

¹⁷Families including only husband, wife and unmarried children were defined as nuclear families. Families which included any other persons in addition to husband, wife and unmarried children were defined as non-nuclear.

¹⁸This particular subgroup cannot be analysed further because of the small number of women who belong to this group in our cross-sectional sample.

Table 5

Attitudes of Currently Married Women Towards Family Planning (F.P.) in Relation to Employment Status

Employment Status	URBAN WOMEN				RURAL WOMEN			
	Total Number	Percentage reporting as			Total Number	Percentage reporting as		
		Don't know F.P.	Negative responses	Positive responses		Don't know F.P.	Negative responses	Positive responses
Never worked	1008	15.8	42.4	41.7	1250	59.9	20.8	19.3
Self-employed	76	14.5	47.4	38.1	234	71.4	14.5	14.1
Other-employed	76	27.6	38.2	34.2	219	76.7	11.9	11.4
		(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Significant at .01 level)		

Table 6

Ideal Family Size of Currently Married Women in Relation to Employment Status

Employment Status	URBAN WOMEN					RURAL WOMEN				
	Total Number	Percentage reporting as				Total Number	Percentage reporting as			
		1, 2 Children	3, 4 Children	5, 6 Children	7, 8 Children		1, 2 Children	3, 4 Children	5, 6 Children	7, 8 Children
Never worked	1017	9.6	53.4	23.9	13.0	1254	5.7	47.8	28.2	18.3
Self-employed	76	17.1	44.7	18.4	19.55	235	8.5	47.7	27.2	16.6
Other-employed	76	10.1	55.6	22.8	21.5	221	6.8	46.6	33.0	13.6

(X² Not Significant at .05 level)(X² Not Significant at .05 level)

Table 7

Use of Family Planning Methods Among Currently Married Women in Relation to Employment Status

Employment Status	URBAN WOMEN				RURAL WOMEN			
	Total Number	Percentage reporting as			Total Number	Percentage reporting as		
		Never used	Used in past	Currently Using		Never used	Used in past	Currently using
Never worked	1001	79.7	9.7	10.6	1217	90.6	5.1	4.3
Self-employed	75	82.7	9.3	8.0	232	91.0	4.7	4.3
Other-employed	76	80.3	14.4	5.2	216	88.9	9.8	2.3
		(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)				(X ² Not Significant at .05 level)		

The differentials in terms of ideal family size and contraceptive use in relation to employment status were insignificant, as stated above (Tables 6 and 7). The socio-economic status of the non-working women seems to constitute an influence also in terms of the use of contraceptive methods. More of the women (11 percent) who had never worked reported that they were currently using a method than of the women (5 percent) who were other-employed in urban areas (Table 7). In view of these findings, an analysis of the effect of female work on the stated modernization factors after controlling for the socio-economic factors would be a highly useful and relevant exercise.

Summary and Discussion

The effect of three sets of factors, namely demographic, socio-economic and 'modernization' factors, was analysed in relation to female labour force participation. The analysis was done separately for rural and urban areas. Data pertaining to the currently married women collected as part of a national sample survey were analysed for this purpose.

A relative increase in work participation was found in the 1968 survey over the participation rates reported in the 1961 Census. Ten percent of the women age 15-44 reported to be economically active in the 1961 Census. The corresponding proportion of (married) women who reported to be economically active at the time of interview in 1968 was 19 percent. The apparent participation in agricultural as well as non-agricultural activity was significantly greater in 1968 than in 1961. Caution has to be exercised, however, before too much reliance can be placed on such a comparison because of the difference in definitions as well as the differential quality of data collection in the two sources.

Of the three sets of factors that we analysed in relation to female work participation, two specific influences appeared as important—both statistically and theoretically. The first influence was constituted by demographic factors. We found that older ages of wives and longer durations of marriage and to a smaller extent the number of living children were positively related with participation in the labour force. In other words, a significantly larger proportion of the women who were in later stages of their life cycle reported work participation compared with those who were in the earlier stages. We regard work participation to be influenced in part by the "demographic pressure" in such families. Another significant factor in work participation is probably the greater social permissibility for older women to work.

The other relationship that was clearly discernible consisted of the influence of factors related to the economic well-being of the women. Work participation was significantly lower among women who had relatively higher education or whose husbands had higher education and who considered their living to be adequate (or more than adequate). Other indicators of economic well-being like the ownership of agricultural land and durable items, also showed a negative association with work participation. Thus, we can say that "economic pressure"—actual as well as that perceived by the respondent—on family resources is the other significant factor which is instrumental in 'pushing' certain women into the labour force. It must be emphasized that the highly educated urban women form an exception to this general conclusion.

The effect of demographic pressure on work participation might be indirect and routed through the socio-economic factors in many instances. For example, a large number of living children would reduce the per capita family income and the wife might have to work purely to maintain the family at a subsistence level. Among the relatively more affluent families a large size of the family might make the chances of children's education smaller and the wife might have to work in order to maintain an adequate standard of living. There might, however, be a direct influence of socio-economic status on work participation. One factor through which higher socio-economic status could exert a negative influence on work participation is the emphasis on *pardah* observance among the relatively higher socio-economic groups. Women who were observing *pardah* in our study had significantly lower participation rates than the women who were not observing *pardah* in both rural and urban areas.

A further analysis of the strength of the relationship between demographic and socio-economic factors and work participation was conducted and is presented in Appendix Table A.

Finally, we did not find any differentials between the working and non-working women with regard to their attitudes and behaviour towards family planning—variables that were assumed to represent certain aspects of individual modernization. The major reason for this lack of relationship, we feel, is that most of the working women belonged to the lowest socio-economic levels while a positive relationship between socio-economic status and modernization variables has been established. This means that the policy implications of women's work in terms of programmes like family planning are not clear from cross-sectional data of the kind analysed in the present study. An analysis of certain subgroups, e.g. the urban professional women, might reveal a positive influence of work on given modernization factors.

APPENDIX

Further analysis of the demographic and socio-economic factors related to female work was carried out in order to measure the strength of these relationships. Two measures of employment were used, as follows: (1) A scale of women who had never worked, those who were self-employed and those who were other-employed (2) A scale of women who had never worked and those who were other-employed. The distinction between these two types of employment was intended as a refinement in the rather loose definition of female work used in the survey, as discussed in the paper. Since other-employed women in many cases would be working outside the house, the constraints in such employment might be different from those faced by the self-employed women.

Table A shows the correlation coefficients (r) for these two types of employment. The following general conclusions can be made from the table. Most of the socio-economic variables have a much stronger relationship with female work participation than demographic variables in both rural and urban areas. The direction of relationships found in the bivariate analysis is reaffirmed by the correlation analysis. That is, demographic variables like number of living children and duration of marriage have a positive association with work participation, while a higher socio-economic status has a distinct negative impact on such participation.

Appendix Table A

Correlation Coefficients (r) between Types of Female Employment and Selected Demographic and Socio-Economic Variables: Rural and Urban Wives

Factors	RURAL WOMEN		URBAN WOMEN	
	Employment Type I ^a	Employment Type II ^b	Employment Type I ^a	Employment Type II ^b
<i>Demographic Factors</i>				
Number of living children	0.068*	0.081**	0.074*	0.068*
Duration of marriage	0.068*	0.076*	0.089**	0.078**
Age of wife	0.049*	0.056*	0.101*	0.090**
Number of living sons	0.036	0.046	0.058*	0.61*
Age of youngest child	0.009	0.011	0.002	0.002
Age at marriage	-0.057*	-0.057*	0.036	0.039
<i>Socio-Economic Factors</i>				
Wife does not observe <i>purdah</i>	0.274**	0.257**	0.254**	0.242**
Do not own agricultural land	0.222**	0.245**	0.082**	0.068*
Number of items owned	-0.189**	-0.176**	-0.114**	-0.106**
Grades completed by husband	-0.151**	-0.150**	-0.075*	-0.061*
Whether living last year was adequate	-0.111**	-0.116**	-0.95**	-0.075*
Family type is joint	-0.106**	-0.104**	-0.0441	-0.027
Grades completed by wife	-0.058*	-0.054*	0.040	0.047
Size of locality of residence	—	—	-0.009	-0.008

^aEmployment Type I is defined by the following scale:

Never worked ... 0
 Self-employed ... 1,2
 Other-employed ... 3

^bEmployment Type II is defined by the following scale:

Never wrked ... 0
 Other-employed ... 1

*Significant at .05 level.

**Significant at .01 level.

Purdah observance was found to have the strongest correlation with female work, those women who did not observe *purdah* having much higher participation rates. This was true for both rural and urban areas, and the results did not change substantially when the analysis was restricted only to women who were other-employed. Ownership of land had a high negative relationship with work participation, particularly in the rural areas. Both ownership of durable items and perceived adequacy of living had significant negative correlations with work. Level of husband's education which also had a negative correlation with work was particularly significant in rural areas. The effect of husband's education might have been dampened in urban areas because of higher work participation of educated urban wives.

Variables related to demographic pressure had a stronger relationship with work participation in urban as compared with rural areas. Children perhaps pose a greater constraint in the urban environment in terms of rearing and educating, and the wife with more children has to supplement the income by working. Age of wife was found to be the most important factor in work involvement in urban areas, while number of living children was the most important in rural areas. Furthermore in rural areas, demographic variables were more important among women who were other-employed considering that the correlations were stronger when we restricted the analysis to other-employed women.

Although the general pattern of relationships in rural and urban areas is similar, there are some interesting variations in some variables. We intend to explore in a subsequent study the factors related to provincial variations in female labour force participation in Pakistan.

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