

Falling female labour participation in Kerala : empirical evidence of discouragement?

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Abstrak

India's female employment and labour force participation have been declining since the mid-2000s. Kerala, traditionally its best-performing state on these indicators, has done worse than the country as a whole. This article examines the shifts that occurred in Kerala's female employment and participation between 2004 and 2012, by household income level, age group, level of education and occupational category. Those dropping out of the labour market are typically young, educated women qualified for professional occupations, suggesting a discouragement effect exacerbated by widening gender pay differentials in top occupations. These shifts have obliterated some of the hitherto defining features of Kerala's labour market.