

GenderSpeak

This issue focuses on women and work

Caregiving may be holding Women back from the Workforce

Estimates by the Labour Department of the United States shows that 15% of women in the US double up as caregivers forcing them to reconsider participation in the workforce. As the demography of countries like the US begin to lean towards elderly population, women have little choice but to give up their jobs. The social environment, that designates women as caregivers comes at a cost. Not only does it force women to make an undue choice between their careers and their family, it also brings economic considerations. It is estimated that if women were provided with formal support mechanisms to manage caregiving, the American economy would have increased GDP by 3.5% in 2014. This calls for policies that reduce the cost of caregiving for the elderly while at the same time challenge the gendered structures burdening women.



Source: Flickr



Source: Public Affairs Centre

Informal Norms are a greater Challenge for Women in India

In India, the barriers for women's participation in the labour force largely includes social and cultural norms that define women's roles. According to Public Affairs Centre's India country case study on the barriers to and enablers of India's declining female labour force participation, marriage, motherhood and burden of unpaid care work form the major reasons why women's workforce participation is dismal. This is reinforced by gender stereotypes prevalent across the country where women's employment is seen as a stop-gap approach to meet family needs and not as a result of women's desire to work. Reversing this trend is not possible if these social norms are not addressed. Merely implementing policies will not be effective in bringing women into work if it does not drill down to the root of the problem. Rather, as being observed currently, it will force more women into informal jobs riddled with exploitation and poor wages.

Connect to

The Gender at Work podcast by Aruna Rao and David Kelleher bring in diverse perspectives on the challenges of female employment across the world. The series explores the intersectionality of the experiences women face and the lessons learnt in the process.



Source: Gender at Work