

Secretary (Labour & Employment) Participates in Round Table Discussion on Improving Female Workforce Participation in India

India has witnessed a positive trend in female workforce participation over the past six years: Smt. Dawra

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The Round Table Discussion on Improving Female Workforce Participation in India, led by the Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment, and the Director, LBSNAA, were held in the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie on 3rd and 4th of March 2025. This event marks a significant step toward realizing the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision of 70% female workforce participation.



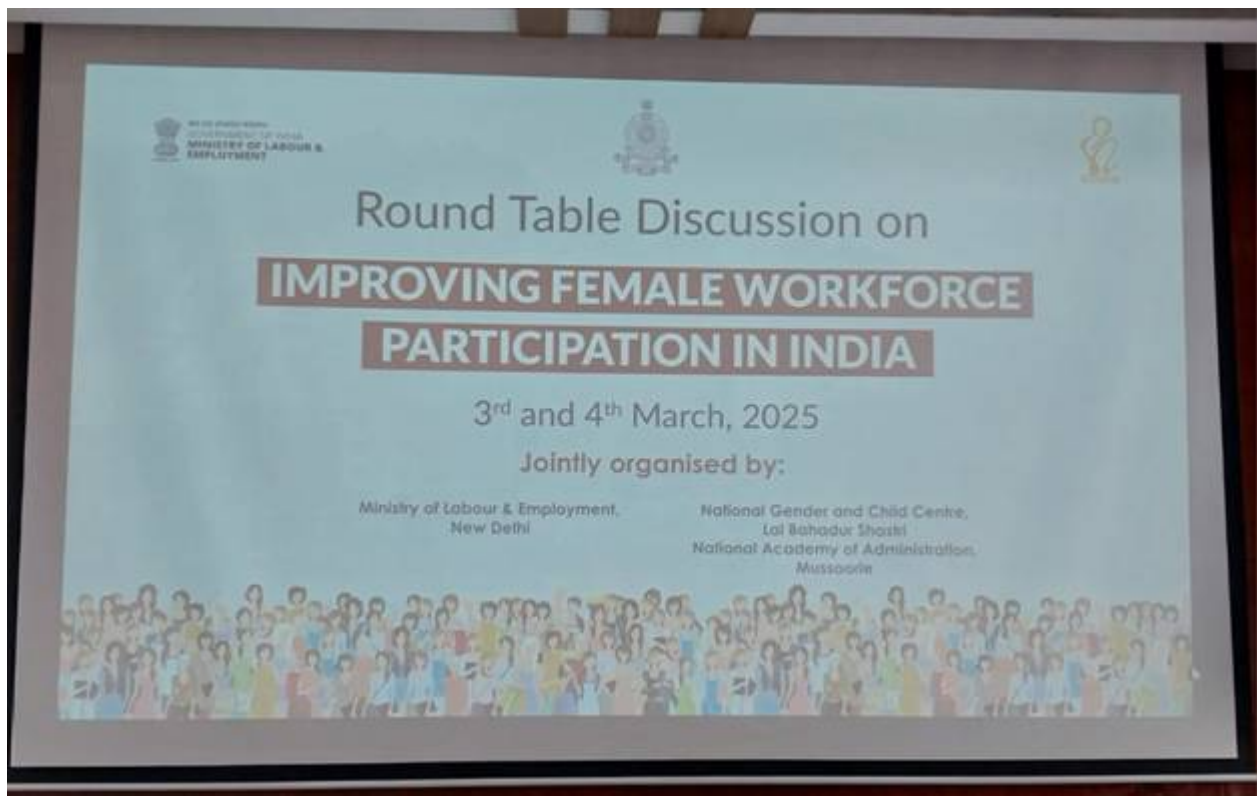
With India's Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) at 41.7% (PLFS 2023-24), this platform brought together government policymakers, industry leaders, global organizations, and skilling institutions to address key challenges and barriers, including employment barriers, workplace safety, pay parity, and digital job opportunities. The two-day deliberations focused on shaping policy reforms and industry-driven solutions that will unlock India's full workforce potential, ensuring safe, inclusive, and equitable workplaces that drive sustained economic growth.

Smt. Sumita Dawra, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, emphasized the

crucial role of this Round Table in shaping effective workforce policies. “Focused discussions on identifying systemic barriers and policy gaps are crucial for formulating innovative solutions that align with India’s broader economic and social development goals, ensuring sustainable and equitable workforce participation for women,” she stated. She highlighted how India has witnessed a positive trend in female workforce participation over the past six years, with higher economic engagement, declining unemployment, and more educated women entering the workforce. The Worker Population Ratio (WPR) for women aged 15 years and above has risen from 22.0% in 2017-18 to 40.3% in 2023-24, while the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for women has increased from 23.3% to 41.7% in the same period, she mentioned. Notably, female unemployment has dropped significantly from 5.6% to just 3.2%, reflecting a shift toward greater inclusion and economic empowerment, she added.



The Round Table focused on four key themes: Care Ecosystem, Future of Jobs & Skilling, Safe & Equitable Workplaces, and AI & Digital Interventions. The Ministry of Labour and Employment identified key action areas critical to enhancing women’s workforce participation under its mandate. Expanding affordable and quality care services was recognized as a labour market enabler, emphasizing the need to integrate care policies into employment frameworks to support working women. The alignment of skilling initiatives with industry demand was highlighted as essential to ensuring women’s access to high-growth sectors, reinforcing the Ministry’s role in facilitating demand-driven skilling and employment linkages. Strengthening workplace safety, equitable policies, and gender-sensitive labour laws emerged as a priority, underscoring the need for compliance mechanisms, gender audits, and enforcement of PoSH regulations. Finally, as India advances in AI and digital transformation, Government is focused on leveraging digital employment platforms, enhancing women’s digital literacy, and integrating AI-driven skilling programs to ensure women’s equitable participation in the future of work.



The Round Table Discussions concluded with clear, actionable recommendations aimed at accelerating women's workforce inclusion. Participants outlined policy reforms, industry-driven initiatives, and institutional mechanisms to break barriers and build a safe, skilled, and inclusive workforce. Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Sumita Dawra, reaffirmed that this is not a one-time discussion but the beginning of a sustained effort, with a task force ensuring continued collaboration and implementation. The Joint Secretary of Ministry of Labour and Employment, Sh. Ajoy Sharma extended his gratitude to all participants and LBSNAA for facilitating this critical dialogue, reiterating the ministry's commitment to translating these deliberations into measurable progress for women's workforce inclusion.

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