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## **Trends in Female Employment at the Federal Government Level: A Critical Appraisal of 1983–1989**

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper focuses on two aspects. First, it looks at the trends in female employment at the federal level over a period of six years, from 1983 to 1989, based on data from the Federal Government's Civil Servants Census Reports, using three years, 1983, 1986, 1989. The second aspect of the paper is to highlight the fact that not all the information that is collected is published gender-wise. This is very important from the point of view of working women as it can also have strong policy implications with regard to the advancement of women for which the Government has set up a separate ministry. The ignorance of the Ministry of Women's Development about this aspect, that is, of available unpublished information, is surprising.

The paper is structured as follows. After a brief discussion of data and methodology, the results are presented in Section 2. Section 3 discusses the data which are collected but not published at the disaggregate level which has adverse implications for women employees at the policy level. The conclusions and policy recommendations are presented in the final and fourth section of this paper.

The data used in this paper are taken from the Government of Pakistan (1983, 1986, 1989). The statistics reported in these reports are classified by service groups into Secretariat, Attached Departments, Subordinate Offices, Other Offices, and in the Autonomous/Semi-Autonomous bodies by Basic Pay Scale (BPS) and gender. The Censuses show that for these years no female employee of the regular civil service is reported in BPS-22 for all the categories, and also none is reported in BPS 21 in 1989. Therefore, for this analysis, we group the female employees as between BPS 16–20 instead of BPS 16–22.

According to the Census reports, Education, Health, Population Welfare, Special Education and Social Welfare, and Women's Development can be said to be female-

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intensive departments because of their comparatively higher percentage share in total employment. During 1989, there were 39 percent females in Education, 24 percent in Health, 21 percent in Population Welfare, 20 percent in Special Education and Social Welfare, and 15 percent in Women's Development. The report of the Pakistan Public Administration Research Centre declares the Ministries of Communication, Railways, and Finance as the most labour-intensive ministries according to their employment strength. The relative position and standing of women in the female-intensive departments and in the most labour-intensive departments is also presented in this paper.

In addition, compound growth rates will be computed to show the trends of female employment at the federal level over this six-year period.

## 2. RESULTS

The gender-wise data on the distribution of Federal Government Civil Servants in various offices by BPS are reported in Table 1. This table shows a significant (almost twofold) increase in the number of female employees over the period of study. However, as a proportion of male employees, this increase is insignificant. The majority of females is concentrated in BPS-7 and this number increase considerably over this period. The number of females working in BPS-16 and above is found to be extremely low. This classification of females by various departments shows that, between 1983 and 1989, the proportion of female employees in almost all the departments doubled; except for the other offices. Table 2 presents the compound growth rates of female employment in each grade during this period. This table indicates that female employment was growing at 17 percent during 1983–1989. The highest growth rate is found in attached departments, and is negative in other offices. Concentrating on Column 1 and Column 2, one can see a decline in the female employment in BPS-13, BPS-8, BPS-6, and BPS-5, while it is increasing in BPS-9, BPS-12, BPS-15 and BPS-10.<sup>1</sup> At the lowest levels, the maximum growth has occurred in the BPS-4 and BPS-2 category, where mostly packers and laboratory attendants work. This implies the relative concentration of working women in the lower grades.

In Table 3, three groups of BPS for female employees indicate that the majority of women working in BPS-15 and below are concentrated mainly in the attached departments and in the subordinate offices. The higher growth rate of employment in the subordinate offices is due to the higher female employment rate in the Departments of Education, Health, Population Welfare, and Women's Development. During the period 1983–1989, the number of female workers in BPS-16–20 increased from 447 to 1421. In this group, the majority of females belonged to BPS-17 (see Table 1).

<sup>1</sup>Usually field assistants, clerks, teachers, typists, stenotypists, stenographers, and assistants fall in these grades. A fall in the former and rise in the latter categories indicates promotion to the next scale.

Table 1  
Federal Government Civil Servants by BPS and Sex Working in Federal Government and Autonomous/  
Semi-autonomous Corporations/Bodies under the Federal Government (1983, 1986, 1989)

BPS	Sex	Total			Secretariat			Attached Departments			Subordinate Offices			Other Offices			Autonomous/Semi-autonomous Bodies/Corporations		
		1983	1986	1989	1983	1986	1989	1983	1986	1989	1983	1986	1989	1983	1986	1989	1983	1986	1989
22	MF	152424	242116	222726	13784	15855	18392	41142	51607	73393	96049	104001	129665	1159	2069	1036	290	284	240
	F	4142	9052	10961	263	605	631	1079	3372	3852	2751	5050	6436	41	17	29	8	8	13
	MF	5	57	61	31	31	35	15	14	20	2	0	1	0	0	0	6	10	5
	F	102	118	164	43	50	82	32	31	41	1	13	12	2	5	0	0	0	0
	MF	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	F	493	621	659	206	269	271	177	210	247	66	82	87	5	6	0	0	0	0
	MF	10	17	22	6	9	7	3	5	7	1	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
	F	968	1164	1529	384	446	539	339	426	616	207	258	336	3	3	0	35	31	38
	MF	23	53	79	9	22	26	10	16	15	4	15	37	26	14	0	0	0	1
	F	2198	2490	3019	673	776	882	849	1020	1146	613	647	962	2	0	0	37	33	29
	MF	98	175	199	17	44	56	38	74	38	40	54	103	2	0	0	1	3	2
	F	4042	61119	7258	746	861	1059	1560	2691	3254	1658	2509	2909	40	20	7	38	38	29
	MF	146	743	869	14	53	76	75	359	286	57	329	504	0	1	3	0	1	0
	F	5185	6472	6867	510	719	692	1869	2398	2908	2724	3291	3247	48	40	5	34	24	15
	MF	170	191	252	4	14	10	77	93	102	89	83	139	0	1	1	0	0	0
	F	552	4227	7990	119	926	1740	105	1325	2575	316	1946	3660	10	25	9	2	5	6
	MF	63	842	997	0	14	44	0	143	353	62	483	596	0	2	3	1	0	1
	F	2644	2728	3510	622	420	358	880	979	1386	1111	1308	1789	24	19	1	7	2	6
	MF	252	243	392	2	20	32	59	138	208	188	85	152	3	3	0	0	0	0
	F	1284	1708	935	13	16	9	270	340	404	993	133	517	5	15	4	3	4	1
	MF	170	36	32	0	0	0	4	17	8	166	19	24	0	0	0	0	0	0
	F	1054	5263	5847	31	1455	1347	496	1611	2111	484	2106	2381	41	87	8	2	4	0
	MF	6	505	595	2	84	73	2	153	227	2	268	295	0	0	0	0	0	0
	F	14643	18994	21918	2331	1751	1794	4874	5343	8793	7266	11822	11301	152	64	24	20	14	6
	MF	355	466	578	54	123	63	114	137	184	184	205	331	2	1	0	1	0	0
	F	3163	2136	2971	9	10	19	297	764	1101	2834	1357	1847	23	5	4	0	0	0
	MF	38	244	311	0	2	1	9	68	75	19	174	233	10	31	77	0	1	2
	F	1460	4726	10055	16	33	259	544	1519	3172	891	2642	6545	9	31	0	0	1	0
	MF	10	1184	1381	0	5	12	5	440	458	5	684	909	0	5	1	6	1	1
	F	7103	4861	5248	1182	91	79	1831	1309	1623	4036	3427	3523	48	33	23	6	0	0
	MF	474	137	135	60	29	28	163	6	37	247	102	70	1	0	0	0	0	5
	F	31462	35297	38557	760	904	1355	7989	9741	12506	23245	24484	24390	156	162	301	12	6	0
	MF	950	2353	2951	23	29	61	151	1006	1127	774	1318	1751	31	12	27	0	4	0
	F	2546	2116	3252	85	144	194	1068	478	656	1362	1478	2375	11	12	0	0	0	0
	MF	392	71	65	1	1	4	111	9	6	269	61	55	11	0	0	9	4	1
	F	17961	19999	23026	1421	1582	1485	5489	4916	6361	10869	1386	15113	173	11	66	9	0	0
	MF	454	529	409	53	72	50	122	162	129	278	292	229	0	3	1	1	0	0
	F	10101	11932	12800	496	561	758	2320	3420	3965	7265	7924	7917	17	25	156	3	2	4
	MF	17	136	178	0	1	10	3	113	112	14	21	53	0	1	0	0	0	3
	F	4504	8348	8348	95	92	160	792	1658	2561	3570	4733	5606	47	155	21	0	0	0
	MF	34	27	74	0	1	3	5	12	29	29	14	41	16	1134	251	0	0	0
	F	17891	22267	22267	72	133	992	2105	2487	5367	10340	14135	15656	16	1134	251	1	1	1
	MF	63	216	352	0	12	9	46	36	74	17	166	266	0	3	0	0	0	0
	F	28370	32059	36445	3934	4585	4283	7941	8927	12580	16196	18320	19521	282	201	52	17	26	9
	MF	416	933	1090	17	70	66	82	384	377	306	474	643	11	2	2	0	0	2

Table 2  
*Compound Growth Rates of Female Employment at Federal Government  
 and Autonomous/Semi-autonomous Corporations/Bodies  
 under the Federal Government (1983 through 1989)*

BPS	Total	Secretariat	Attached Departments	Subordinate Offices	Other Offices	Auto/Semi Bodies
All Grades	17.61	15.70	23.63	15.22	-5.61	8.43
22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	14.04	2.60	15.17	30.77	0.00	0.00
19	22.83	19.34	6.99	44.89	0.00	0.00
18	12.53	21.98	0.00	17.07	0.00	12.25
17	34.62	32.57	24.99	43.80	0.00	0.00
16	6.78	16.50	4.80	7.71	0.00	0.00
15	58.45	0.00	0.00	45.82	0.00	0.00
14	7.64	58.74	23.37	-3.48	0.00	0.00
13	-24.30	0.00	12.25	-27.55	0.00	0.00
12	115.14	82.13	120.04	129.86	0.00	0.00
11	8.46	2.60	8.31	10.28	0.00	0.00
10	41.96	0.00	42.39	51.86	-23.53	0.00
9	127.35	0.00	112.32	138.01	0.00	0.00
8	-18.89	-11.93	-12.90	-18.95	0.00	0.00
7	20.79	17.65	39.79	14.58	51.31	0.00
6	-25.88	25.99	-38.51	-23.25	0.00	0.00
5	-1.72	-0.97	0.93	-3.18	0.00	0.00
4	47.91	0.00	82.82	24.84	0.00	0.00
3	13.84	0.00	34.04	5.94	0.00	0.00
2	33.21	0.00	8.25	58.15	0.00	0.00
1	17.41	25.37	28.95	13.17	-24.73	0.00

According to Table 4, the growth rate is 22 percent and 17 percent in the groups 16–20 and 1–15, respectively.

Table 5 displays the number of females in the female-intensive departments and Table 6 present the compound growth rates through 1983–1989 by BPS. The data on Special Education and Social Welfare for 1983 is not available; therefore, we have calculated the growth rate for this category for the period 1986–1989 instead of 1983–1989. Consequently, the growth rates reported in this column are higher. Looking at the other columns, the growth rates for BPS-16 and above are observed to be higher in each department.

In the Education Department, there was no female in BPS-20, BPS-12, and BPS-9 in 1983, but in 1989 this number increased to 4 in BPS-20, 380 in BPS-12, and 1111 in BPS-9. The growth rates indicate an increase in the number of females working in BPS-16 and above; while in BPS-15 and below, female employment in various grades is decreasing. These trends may be caused by the upgradation of employees to higher

Table 3  
*Total Number of Females in Federal Government and Autonomous/  
 Semi-autonomous Corporations/Bodies under the Federal Government  
 in Three Groups of BPS during 1983, 1986, 1989*

Year/BPS	Sex	Total	Secretariat	Attached Departments	Subordinate Offices	Other Offices	Auto/Semi- auto Corpo/ Bodies
1983							
1-20	MF	37843	5739	12307	19166	389	242
	F	4141	262	1079	2751	41	8
1-15	MF	24800	3141	7466	13895	264	34
	F	3694	212	876	2560	39	7
16-20	MF	12886	2519	4794	5268	122	183
	F	447	50	203	191	2	1
1986							
1-20	MF	111323	7763	18671	28114	336	239
	F	9051	3371	631	5050	17	8
1-15	MF	39282	4611	11881	21314	246	30
	F	7872	463	2824	4566	15	4
16-20	MF	71866	3071	6745	6787	83	180
	F	1179	142	547	484	2	4
1989							
1-20	MF	72783	9086	27774	35564	139	220
	F	10961	631	6436	2751	29	13
1-15	MF	53226	5526	19542	28010	127	21
	F	9540	456	3404	5648	25	7
16-20	MF	19332	3443	8171	5268	12	165
	F	1421	175	448	788	4	6

Table 4  
*Compound Growth Rates of Female Employment in the Federal Government  
 and Autonomous/Semi-autonomous Corporations/Bodies in Three  
 Groups of BPS (1983 through 1989)*

BPS	Total	Secretariat	Attached Departments	Subordinate Offices	Other Offices	Auto/Semi Bodies
1-20	17.61	15.78	23.63	15.21	-5.61	8.43
1-15	17.13	13.61	25.38	14.10	-7.14	2.25
16-20	21.26	23.22	14.10	26.64	12.25	34.80

Table 5  
Federal Government Civil Servants by BPS and Sex Working in the most Female-intensive Departments during 1983, 1986, and 1989

BPS	Sex	Education			Health			Population Welfare			Special Education & Social Welfare			Women's Development			
		1983	1986	1989	1983	1986	1989	1983	1986	1989	1983	1986	1989	1983	1986	1989	
ALL																	
Grades	MF	3391	12107	12410	3415	3628	3628	550	937	754	754	243	1250	107	116	143	
	F	1184	4585	4810	820	888	888	61	216	158	158	55	260	18	24	21	
22	MF	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	
	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
21	MF	3	2	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
20	MF	7	12	23	23	39	39	4	11	6	6	1	3	3	3	3	
	F	0	1	4	2	3	2	0	3	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	
19	MF	21	57	70	43	69	69	10	19	21	21	6	18	4	4	5	
	F	1	15	23	10	12	12	2	8	8	8	2	4	1	2	4	
18	MF	60	204	190	89	138	138	33	69	61	61	6	44	7	9	4	
	F	5	71	61	30	35	35	8	28	28	28	2	8	2	1	1	
17	MF	96	1253	1169	196	346	328	34	63	68	68	12	237	4	3	13	
	F	20	527	506	57	94	94	7	20	31	31	2	59	3	7	7	
16	MF	104	99	92	113	103	121	28	46	36	36	7	47	3	7	7	
	F	43	18	12	47	52	47	4	10	5	5	1	24	0	0	0	
15	MF	116	1871	1839	6	32	70	1	19	26	26	7	27	1	6	15	
	F	62	769	814	0	0	3	0	2	1	1	0	2	0	1	4	
14	MF	563	38	38	21	162	262	4	21	31	31	8	16	5	4	3	
	F	213	3	11	145	224	0	0	12	14	14	2	5	0	2	0	
13	MF	311	46	30	8	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	
	F	160	22	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
12	MF	3	653	710	38	50	50	4	59	48	48	17	36	0	11	11	
	F	0	302	380	1	1	1	0	6	6	6	1	3	0	2	2	
11	MF	139	252	252	424	115	115	87	98	64	64	61	118	18	12	11	
	F	18	54	46	73	8	7	13	41	15	15	23	48	5	5	4	
10	MF	10	462	627	14	17	12	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	1	
	F	8	209	213	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
9	MF	1	1697	1860	18	90	154	6	11	17	17	3	12	0	1	1	
	F	0	1001	1111	4	24	23	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	
8	MF	422	186	68	63	20	34	52	42	27	27	11	24	10	0	0	
	F	233	107	39	7	0	3	10	23	15	15	5	12	2	0	0	
7	MF	98	1877	2155	472	173	164	33	40	41	41	19	79	2	2	6	
	F	42	993	1104	8	11	11	2	5	1	1	2	11	0	0	0	
6	MF	604	54	49	167	209	190	4	6	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	
	F	299	28	21	17	40	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
5	MF	115	471	333	740	230	212	66	63	50	50	17	59	9	13	10	
	F	8	39	20	12	10	10	7	11	6	6	1	3	2	3	0	
4	MF	31	97	104	552	536	536	28	69	28	28	15	77	7	5	5	
	F	1	2	3	14	126	109	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	
3	MF	0	14	1	15	24	17	3	5	6	6	0	1	0	0	0	
	F	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2	MF	33	180	188	808	157	229	12	11	27	27	13	143	1	1	8	
	F	2	41	36	49	45	51	0	0	1	1	11	54	0	0	0	
1	MF	654	2581	1378	1140	885	885	140	284	181	181	60	310	32	35	39	
	F	69	383	416	283	206	206	7	46	22	22	4	25	2	5	5	

Note: .. implies not available.

Table 6  
*Compound Growth Rates of Female Employment in the Most  
 Female-Intensive Departments (1983 through 1989)*

BPS	Education	Health	Population Welfare	Social Welfare	Women Development
All Grades	26.41	9.36	17.19	67.83	2.60
22	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
21	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
20	NC	0.00	NC	NC	-10.9
19	68.64	12.25	25.99	25.99	NC
18	51.73	-4.10	23.22	NC	-10.91
17	71.34	6.90	28.15	2.08	20.09
16	-19.16	-2.63	3.79	188.45	NC
15	53.59	NC	NC	NC	NC
14	-38.98	146.44	NC	35.72	NC
13	-37.00	NC	NC	NC	NC
12	NC	NC	NC	44.22	NC
11	16.93	-32.35	2.41	27.79	-3.65
10	72.80	NC	NC	NC	NC
9	NC	33.85	0.00	25.99	NC
8	-25.76	-13.17	6.99	33.89	NC
7	72.43	3.40	-10.91	76.52	NC
6	-35.77	20.60	NC	NC	NC
5	16.50	-15.26	-2.54	44.22	NC
4	20.09	40.78	NC	NC	NC
3	NC	-23.53	NC	NC	NC
2	61.89	0.67	NC	69.95	NC
1	34.91	6.65	21.03	84.20	16.50

*Note:* NC implies not computable.

grades. The growth rates for BPS-17 in the departments of Population Welfare, Special Education and Social Welfare, and Women's Development are the highest.

The number of employed persons (total and female) by BPS and their growth rates over the period 1983–1989 in the most labour-intensive departments are reported in Tables 7 and 8 respectively. Table 7 shows that there were very few females in these departments in 1983, especially in BPS-15 and below. This number has considerably increased in 1989. For example, in BPS-15 there was no female in any of these departments, while in 1989 there were 16 women in Communication, 36 in Finance, and 45 in Railways.

Table 7

*Federal Government Civil Servants by BPS and Sex Working in the Most Labour-intensive Departments during 1983, 1986, and 1989*

BPS	Sex	Communication			Finance			Railways		
		1983	1986	1989	1983	1986	1989	1983	1986	1989
22	MF	1	1	1	7	7	5	1	1	1
	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	MF	2	2	2	14	20	25	5	6	7
	F	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
20	MF	30	38	46	87	101	110	29	26	45
	F	0	0	1	1	4	2	0	0	2
19	MF	67	138	141	170	177	244	78	79	89
	F	1	3	1	2	3	5	0	2	5
18	MF	167	259	378	285	331	537	235	187	202
	F	2	4	2	10	11	16	7	4	3
17	MF	413	684	763	917	1085	996	316	638	512
	F	3	5	13	15	43	38	4	16	38
16	MF	1009	1353	1494	1332	1683	1757	442	79	839
	F	3	6	12	28	63	70	4	7	12
15	MF	33	161	730	156	413	1732	86	433	727
	F	0	14	16	0	3	36	0	39	45
14	MF	28	20	82	374	824	891	406	412	768
	F	0	1	3	14	24	27	18	13	53
13	MF	24	160	133	553	1084	288	88	100	176
	F	0	0	2	6	4	10	0	1	3
12	MF	134	479	543	116	823	869	494	985	1234
	F	1	14	19	0	40	40	2	17	30
11	MF	3223	5115	5791	2642	4912	5275	2952	3446	4665
	F	54	34	79	51	131	177	58	14	35
10	MF	28	47	130	2679	627	808	70	240	367
	F	0	1	2	7	8	36	18	6	16
9	MF	771	1509	4189	22	28	621	84	352	1143
	F	1	58	67	0	12	70	1	26	64
8	MF	3090	3806	3948	664	4	3	732	545	725
	F	46	1	26	17	0	0	52	1	27
7	MF	16603	19846	18974	5962	4751	4775	3433	3518	5192
	F	513	936	1104	237	199	187	46	42	128
6	MF	319	1022	1375	22	21	34	61	253	767
	F	1	23	9	3	0	0	21	0	10
5	MF	2927	4055	4162	2917	2770	2796	2497	2426	3993
	F	37	56	47	113	93	71	52	43	58
4	MF	8438	9257	9376	180	208	365	32	196	289
	F	2	5	40	0	1	4	0	1	2
3	MF	2238	2682	2713	322	284	265	525	1146	1536
	F	9	7	16	0	0	0	0	1	6
2	MF	3892	5257	5359	2744	1773	2210	217	5223	7397
	F	1	5	35	7	14	14	1	13	28
1	MF	6357	5642	5556	5240	6468	6405	2732	3684	6036
	F	77	88	87	33	33	74	37	27	119



**Table 8**  
*Compound Growth Rates of Female Employment in the Most  
 Labour-intensive Departments (1983 through 1989)*

BPS	Communications	Finance	Railways
All Grades	13.21	8.28	13.44
22	NC	NC	NC
21	NC	NC	NC
20	NC	12.25	NC
19	0.00	16.50	NC
18	0.00	8.15	-13.17
17	27.68	16.76	45.53
16	25.99	16.50	20.09
15	NC	NC	NC
14	NC	11.57	19.72
13	NC	8.89	NC
12	63.35	NC	57.04
11	6.55	23.05	-8.07
10	NC	31.38	-1.94
9	101.53	NC	100.00
8	-9.07	NC	-10.35
7	13.63	-3.87	18.60
6	44.22	NC	-11.63
5	4.07	-7.45	1.84
4	64.75	NC	NC
3	10.06	NC	NC
2	80.86	12.25	74.26
1	2.06	14.41	21.49

*Note:* NC implies not computable.

### 3. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE AVAILABLE CENSUS REPORTS

In a society like Pakistan where the dominant force, patriarchy, keeps women subservient, only a few women work through their own choice. Usually they enter the workforce either to share the financial burden of their family with the male members of the household or, in the absence of any male member (due to widowhood, divorce or separation), to financially support their family. Due to the existing socio-cultural constraints, women's development has been badly neglected at the policy level. This is

evident from the census reports of the Federal Government Civil Servants, prepared by the Cabinet Secretariat. The questionnaire is designed to collect the information by pay scale, division, occupational group, province/region of posting, age group, length of continuous service, designation, status of appointment, highest educational level, training received within and outside the country, field of specialisation, emoluments drawn, languages known, religion, marital status, number of dependents/children, ownership of vehicle and residential accommodation, domicile, citizenship of spouse, and insurance coverage by each federal employee regardless of sex. It is surprising that, despite collecting information on both male and female employees, gender-wise data is not published in these reports. In this section, we point out the importance of this unpublished information from the working women's point of view. In this context, we refer to the tables of the 1989 Census report, because this is the common pattern followed by the previous Census reports also.

- (a) Section II of the Census Report presents the data on federal government civil servants by their designation and occupational group. Disaggregation by gender, despite the information being present, is not found in any of the tables even in such categories as physician, medical officer, principal, lecturers, teachers, librarians, nurses, and telephone operators. However, Table 18 presents information by gender for a very limited number of occupational groups, i.e., only for the BPS 17–22 category. It should be noted that only 9 percent of the total employees who are women fall in this category. It is surprising that the information on the women working in BPS-16 and below is not reported. While it has been observed (see Table 1) that the majority of women is concentrated in BPS-7 and BPS-9, which are mostly teachers, telephone operators, lady health visitors, librarians and clerks. The information on the occupational group for lower grades is very important from the policy point of view.
- (b) Statistics on the region of posting are reported in Section III. This is not disaggregated by gender. Though the number of female civil servants in the federal government posted in other provinces/regions is not significant; it has profound policy implications not only in terms of accommodation, transport, children's schooling, etc., but also in terms of personal security.
- (c) Section IV displays the information on the nature of employment of total federal employees. It is, therefore, difficult to assess the promotion and transfer criterion for women based on this limited available information.
- (d) The data on age and continuous service, which is presented in Section IX, are also not disaggregated by gender. Information on the length of continuous service is important in evaluating the current position of women. Unfortunately this collected information is not published.

- (e) Section X reports the aggregated data on academic qualification, field of specialisation, and foreign training. Non-reporting of female employees in this important section is surprising. Is it because the majority of females are denied the opportunity of foreign training, which, of course, then hampers their appointment or promotion to higher positions? The reason for not publishing the information on the highest educational attainment and domestic training is not clear.
- (f) Data on marital status and dependent children for the total federal employees are reported in Section XII. The importance of the concealed information on females is evident from many studies which conclude that divorcees, separated and widowed women with dependent parents and children are more likely to work than the married or well-placed women. Similarly, there is strong evidence that the number of female-headed households is quite substantial. Ignoring such an important factor limits the formulation and implementation of policy for the betterment of females.
- (g) Statistics on the ownership of house and transport is also not available gender-wise. Just to say that it is a small number is not enough. Why is this a small number? Why is it that the ownership of house and transport is not in the name of females, even in the officer grades? Does this indicate that the so-called independent women working at relatively better positions are also subservient?

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The objective of this paper was to examine the trends in female employment at the federal level and to show how important the information that is collected but not published is for working women from the policy point of view. And the important objective was to raise the pertinent, policy-relevant questions that arise from a preliminary examination of these data. This paper finds that the promotion of women remains very low as compared to men. Their majority is concentrated in the lower grades, and for the period of the study they are kept out of the two highest grades even in jobs that directly affect women's welfare. The lack of information on various components is badly felt; for example, about designation, region of posting, highest educational level, foreign and domestic training received, marital status, number of dependents, house and transport ownership, etc. This information has serious policy implications with regard to the planning for women's development, for which the government has set up a separate ministry.

It is strongly recommended that all the collected statistics on both sexes should be published. It would be helpful in determining the reasons why the majority of female workers is concentrated in the lower grades. Do they have equal opportunity and access to the educational and training institutions? Does the federal government have enough vacancies to absorb a sufficient proportion of the female labour force in various grades?

This would greatly enhance the job of the Ministry of Women's Development and other relevant planning agencies to improve the working conditions for women, especially for single women with dependent parents and children.

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## Comments

This paper seems to be an attempt at negating all the successive government policies on promoting female employment at all levels. It also negates the contribution of women who are working in the government sector in such large numbers. All the tables based on compound growth rates belie the surge in female employment. Therefore, I shall limit my comments only to Table 2.

The authors do not provide the logic for using the compound growth rates rather than the percentage changes, which appear to be more meaningful and appropriate for a short span of six years. Furthermore, it is not clear why the compound growth rate is calculated over the period 1983–89 when absolute figures show very conveniently that the major break through in female employment occurred in 1986. See Table 1. In percentage terms, female employment in the civil service increased by 118 percent between 1983–86 and by 21 percent during 1986–89. Therefore, the compound growth rate of 17 percent between 1983–89 does not make sense.

With reference to the decline in female employment in Table 2, I have some serious reservations. First, in Grade 13, while female employment declined by 11 percent between 1986–89 male employment declined by 46 percent in the same period. Another interesting feature with reference to these declining statistics is that both male and female employment have gone through more significant increases and decreases in 1986 than in 1989. This shows that the authors have not studied their statistics carefully but have rather focused mainly on statistical techniques (which, as already mentioned, is not justified anywhere in the text) to sensationalise the results. It would be more appropriate to calculate just percentage changes between the three points of time for both males and females to give a more balanced and true picture. This appears to be a distortion of facts. Furthermore, there is no analysis of this phenomenon of changes in male and female employment. There could be a number of possible reasons, e.g., females tend to quit jobs on marriage, temporary absence from the labour market, etc.; but the most important fact remains that males in general are the main and primary breadwinners for the family. Secondly, the authors have implied in Table 2 that women are concentrated in the lower grades, and have conveniently overlooked the statistics in Table 1, which shows that there is an equally high concentration of men in the lower grades. Thirdly, women working in the lower grades largely belong to the category of labour force which would take up a job in times of dire necessity. Their low educational levels are their main handicap. This fact is corroborated by the statistics on male and female employment in Grade 20 during 1983–86 and 1986–89. While female employment in Grade 20 increased by 70 percent during 1983–86, the corresponding increase for males in Grade 20

was only 26 percent. Similarly, during 1986–89, females in Grade 20 registered an increase of 20 percent, while the increase for males was only 6 percent.

The discussion with reference to Table 2, of compound growth rates, seems to be misleading as the results reported are not based on an appropriate technique used. The same impression is created by the rest of the tables, based on compound growth rates all through the paper. Therefore, it is strongly advised that the authors should examine their statistics carefully and analyse them with reference to the factors related to these statistics. A comparative analysis of statistics on both male and female employment should be undertaken to avoid misrepresentation of facts. Most important, a simple and more appropriate technique, taking into account all the three periods, should be used to have any meaningful analysis.

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