

Labor Force Participation and Gender Inequalities: Comparative Analysis of Pakistan and Malaysia

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Abstract: In this study we analyzed gender inequalities in labour force participation of the two Asian Countries namely Pakistan and Malaysia. Gender inequalities in labour market are analyzed and updated using recent time series data of 2005 to 2009. The data are drawn from different sources including various Integrated Household Surveys, Labour Force Surveys, Economic Surveys and Labour Force Survey Reports of the two countries. The results indicate significant gender differences in the labour force participation rate and status of employment of the two countries. Labour force participation rate of female is 20% and the male is 71% in Pakistan whereas in Malaysia the participation rate of female is 46% and the male is 80%. Furthermore women of age group 25 to 29 and women of age group 35 to 39 years are the most productive age intervals in Malaysia and Pakistan, respectively. The general increase in the participation of youth in Malaysia are due to rapid expansion of educational facilities, equal access of female to every level of education, delayed marriages and reduced fertility rate while increased participation of the interval group of 35 to 39 is due to the induction of married women in the labour market in Pakistan.

Key words: Gender inequalities, labour force participation, Malaysia and Pakistan, time series plot

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades or so the issue of gender inequality has received special attention of international agencies and others. In 2000, the United Nation based on the Beijing platform for Action (1995) set the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for member countries to achieve by the year 2015. One of the eight Millennium Development Goals is the “promotion of gender equitability and empowering women (Million Development Goal Strategy, 2008)”. A being signatory most of the member states have become more active in initiating steps to reduce prevailing gender inequalities.

Despite all these commitments and efforts (both national and international) gender inequalities continue to exist in every walk of life and everywhere in the world. The gender gaps can be observed in different aspects of social life such as education, health, politics, employment and labor market (Ali *et al.*, 2009). The prevailing gender disparities, however, are more pronounced in labour market particularly in labour force participation rates (Jamali, 2009).

Economic analyses of female labour force participation have gained increasing attention of leading economists, social scientists and feminists since the

pioneering work of Mincer (1962) and Cain (1966). Scholars of both developed and developing countries asserts that despite constituting one half of the world population women’s role as an active worker/producer of goods and services has not been duly recognized in the past. In recent years however, female labour force participation rate has been substantially increased in developed countries. In contrast, female labour force participation rate in developing countries is still limited and the situation is worst in Asian countries (Ali *et al.*, 2009).

Previous studies report limited access of women than men to labour market in both the public and private sectors of Asian countries. In addition to this, wide variation in women labour force participation rates has been found across Asian countries (Jamali, 2009). It is well documented that female labour force participation rate is much higher in South East Asia compared to South Asian countries. With in South Asia gender inequalities in Pakistan are more pronounced and cut across all classes, sectors, and regions of the country. For example, Ali *et al.* (2009) measured labour force participation rate of married women in Punjab of Pakistan and find that “Labour force participation of women in Pakistan is very low as women’s access to the labor market is determined

by rigid gender-role ideologies, social and cultural restrictions on women’s mobility and integration in the work place, segmented labor markets, lack of skills, and employers’ gender biases that attach a lower value to female labor due to their family responsibilities”. In contrast the participation rate of women in labour market of Malaysia has been increased substantially but the gap between sexes in terms of labour force participation still exists (Cong, 2008).

While considerable work has been done on gender inequalities in labor force participation in Asian and other countries of the world as an individual country case study or cross countries analysis (Paxton, 1997; Lovenduski and Norris, 2003; Halder, 2004; Paxton *et al.*, 2010; Jabeen and Jadoon, 2009) less work has been done to compare overtime growth trends of labour force participation in countries having different socio economic and cultural background to identify the role of contemporary context in shaping and reshaping the role of women in the labour market.

This article will fill this gap by investigating overtime growth trends of female labour force participation rate in two Asian countries namely Pakistan and Malaysia. The focus of this article is on the study of changes overtime in gender inequalities in labour force participation rate and status of employment in Pakistan and Malaysia. Inequalities are analyzed overtime of two countries using different indicators of labour market including population growth, labour force, labour force participation rate and the employment status of male and female to unearth ground realities of gender inequalities.

The comparison between Pakistan and Malaysia is interesting in the sense that despite similar historical background in terms of British Legacy and declared Islamic States, both have different socio-economic and cultural background. Due to predominantly patriarchal culture in Pakistan particularly in rural and tribal led areas women are not allowed to work outside particularly as a labour force whereas due to liberal policies women in Malaysia are allowed to join any profession they like. This comparison is useful as it will identify prevailing gender inequalities in labour force participation, disclose secret of rapid economic growth of Malaysia and reasons for poor economic progress of Pakistan. It will also assist to learn lesson from the experiences of each other to

mobilize one half of the population (Female) in the production process to accelerate economic growth to meet the challenges of competing world.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Labour force participation and gender inequalities (Reflection from Pakistan): Several studies have been conducted on the issue of women representation in the labour market all over the world including Pakistan. Review of some of the selected studies is as under: -

Wasim *et al.* (2009) argues that although the percentage of women labor force in different activities, industry groups, occupation groups and employment status has mostly increased in 1998 as compared to 1981, but being nearly half of the population this increase is still very low. Similarly Ali *et al.* (2009) that female labour force participation in Pakistan is low due to rigid gender role ideologies, social and cultural restrictions on women mobility and integration in the work place, segmented labour market and gender biases that attach a lower value to female labour due to their family responsibilities.

Likewise, Faridi *et al.* (2009a) using logistic regression technique on cross section data collected through field survey estimated the determinants of female labour force participation and concludes that educational attainment levels turn out to be very significant determinant. He further argues that female’s labour force participation rises with increasing level of education. Presence of children in early age groups reduces the female labour force participation. Additionally Sanjukta (2010) using multivariate regression analysis explored the time and birth cohort trends of women’s empowerment in eight countries of South Asia and South East Asia and concludes that Pakistan have lowest education, lowest economic participation rate and high fertility rate as compared to other South Asian and South East Asian Countries.

Current statistics indicate substantial growth in the population, labour force and the labour force participation rate in Pakistan. Population increased from 126.90 million in 1996-97 to 148.72 million in 2002-03. There is also substantial increase in the working age population of the country as well. Working age rose from 84.65 in 1996-97

Table 1: Population, labour force and labour force participation rate (1996-2003)

	Population (Millions)		Labour force (Millions)		Labour force participation rate (%)	
	Total	Working age	Total	Increase	Crude	Refined
1996-97	126.90	84.65	36.30	-	28.6	43.0
1997-98	130.58	88.52	38.20	1.90	29.3	43.3
1999-00	136.01	95.02	39.40	1.20	29.4	42.8
2001-02	145.80	99.60	42.39	2.99	29.6	43.3
2002-03	148.72	130.40	45.23	2.84	30.4	43.7

Economic survey (2008-09)

Table 2: Labour force participation rate of male and female in Pakistan (1995-2004)

Years	Both sexes (%)	Male(%)	Female (%)
1995-96	41.25	69.10	11.39
1996-97	43.01	70.01	13.63
1997-98	43.34	70.48	13.92
1998-99	43.34	70.48	13.92
1999-00	42.80	70.39	13.72
2000-01	43.34	70.32	14.44
2001-02	43.34	70.32	14.44
2002-03	43.74	70.61	15.93
2003-04	43.74	70.61	15.93

Economic Survey (2008-09)

to 130.40 in 2002-037 which resulted growth in both the labour force and the labour force participation rate in the country. The labour force increased from 36.30 million in 1996-97 to 45.23 million in 2002-03 with substantial overtime increase. Consequently, both the crude and refined labour force participation rate rose from 28.6 to 30.4% in 1996-97 and 43.0 to 43.7% in 2002-03, respectively (Table 1). Despite substantially increase in the overall labour force and labour force participation rate (both the crude and refined) strong gender disparities continue to exist in the country (Table 2).

Labour force participation and gender inequalities (Reflection from Malaysia): The Malaysian government through a variety of policies and strategies avowed its commitment to equal participation of women in various sphere of economic activity. As a results women have made significant inroads into various fields that was in the past the purview of men. The representation of women has substantially increased in all spheres of economic life including their representation in labour force. Several studies have evaluated female labour force participation in Malaysia with mixed results. Review of some of these studies is as follows:

In the most comprehensive study based on the 1957 Census data, Gavin Jones examined variations in women’s participation rates between the three ethnic communities, using states as a surrogate measure for urban-rural differences. Jones noted significant variations in the labour force participation rates among the three major ethnic communities that could not simply be explained by differential rural-urban residence. The highest activity rates were among Indian women (Jones, 1965). Similarly Monica Fong analyzed census data from 1921 to 1957 and measured differential trends in the overall female activity rate by ethnic community & state, and correlated aggregate activity rates with other demographic characteristics at the state level. Fong concluded that there has been a general decline in the women’s labour force activity rates for each ethnic community from 1921 to 1957 in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, although the Chinese activity rates turned upward slightly from 1947 to 1957. However, lack of age-specific labour force data prior to 1957, and the problems of comparability of measurement between

Table 3: Labour force participation rate of male and female in Malaysia (1997-2004)

Years	Male	Female
1997	84.3	46.0
1998	83.1	44.4
1999	82.8	44.6
2000	83.0	47.2
2001	82.3	46.8
2002	81.5	46.7
2003	82.1	47.7
2004	80.9	47.3

Ministry of women, family and community development, Malaysia

Malaysian censuses made any interpretation of trends somewhat tentative.

Hirschman and Akbar (1980) using census data of 1957 and 1970 analyzed changes in labour force participation of women, in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in Malaysia. The cross-sectional analysis of social background characteristics and type of employment in 1970 strengthens the interpretation of the trend analysis. Rural residence, low education, and married status are the characteristics associated with employment in agriculture, in both the traditional and modern sectors. The opposite characteristics, those linked to economic development, such as higher education, urban residence, and delayed marriage, are associated with employment in the modern non-agricultural sector.

These findings clearly suggest that the winds of social change are evident and women are responding to the emerging employment opportunities. Fatima and Sumitha (1994) argued that female labour force participation rate rose from 36.3% in 1970 to 46.8% in 1990 due to the process of industrialization and urbanization practiced by Malaysian during late 1970s. They further commented that the growth of 28.5% in the two decades is not something to boast about. Likewise in recent study Nasir and Ching (2009) argued that female labour force participation increased from 44.7% in 2000 to 45.7% in 2005 while the share of female participation in the various sectors of economy improved from 34.7% to 34.8%.

It is well document that despite all these developments, significant differences in the patterns of male and female employment in Malaysia still exists (Rohani, 2009). Curren statistics indicate increasing trends of female labour force participation while decreasing trends of the male participation in the labour market in Malaysia. Despite such positive increasing trends of the participation of female in labour market, gender disparities still exists in Malaysian economy (Table 3).

DATA AND MEASURES

Data: Despite national and international commitments and efforts, gender inequalities continue to exist in every walk of life and everywhere in the world, however more pronounced in developing countries. Several studies have

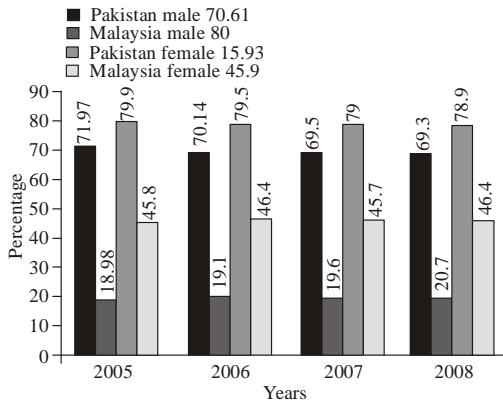


Fig. 1: Comparative statistics of Labor force participation rate by sex (2005 to 2008)

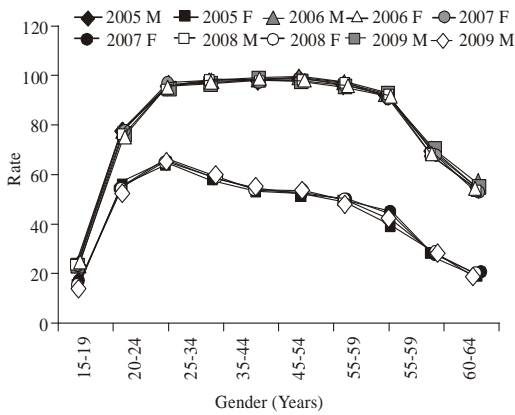


Fig. 2: Labour force participation rates by sex and age group, Malaysia

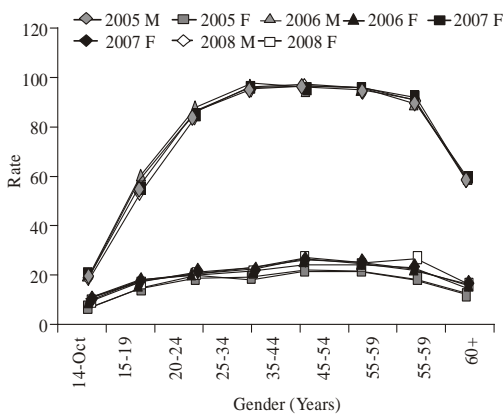


Fig. 3: Labour force participation rates by sex and age group, Pakistan

been conducted on the issue of gender inequalities in labour force participation as an individual country case study or cross countries analyses in both developed and developing countries, little work is available in the context of comparative analyses of Asian countries in

general and in the context of Malaysia and Pakistan in particular. Furthermore most of the studies conducted in Asian based on the outdated data covering time series data up , to 2000 or 2005 (Wasim *et al.*, 2009a; Faridi *et al.* 2009; Ali *et al.*, 2009; Sanjukta, 2010). The availability of recent data stretching to 2009-10 demands new studies to explore and update the issue of gender difference in labour force participation to unearth recent trends of male and female participation in labour market to identify whether gender gaps are shrinking or otherwise?

In this study the analyses are done for gender inequalities in labour force participation of the two Asian Countries namely Malaysia and Pakistan. Gender inequalities are measured on the basis of gender disparities in labour force; labour force participation rate and employment status of the two selected Countries. Five years (2005 to 2009) time series data has been used in this study for updating results on the issue of gender inequalities in the labour force participation. We evaluated overtime trends of the population growth, labour force, labour force participation rate and the employment status of men and women of Pakistan and Malaysia.

The data for Pakistan are drawn from various Integrated Household Surveys, Labour Force Surveys conducted and published by the Federal Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan and Various Economic Surveys available on the website of the Ministry of Finance, Pakistan. The data about Malaysia are collected from Labour Force Survey Report (2009) published by the Department of Statistics, Malaysia and annual Statistical Data available on the website of the Ministry of women, family and community development, Malaysia.

Measures: We used line graphs to show the trends in labour force, labour force participation rate and employment status of men and women of Pakistan and Malaysia. Line graphs analyze change over time by focusing on intra-country change - estimating both starting positions (intercepts) and trends (slopes) for each country. As an example, Fig. 2 and 3, which presents male and female labour force participation rate of Malaysia and Pakistan respectively for 2005 to 2009.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comparative picture of labour force participation of Malaysia and Pakistan: We make comparison of the two Asian Countries on the basis of population growth, labour force, labour force participation rate and employment status of male and female. The comparative results of selected indicators are as follows:

Population growth and labour force participation for Malaysia and Pakistan: The comparative statistics of overtime population and labour force growth of Pakistan and Malaysia for current five years (2005 to 2009) has

Table 4: Comparative statistics of population growth and labour force (2005-2009)

Pakistan				Malaysia			
Year	Population (Million)	Labour force (Million)		Year	Population (Million)	Labour force ('000)	
		Total	Change			Total	Change
2005	153.96	46.82	-	2005	26.13	10,413.4	
2006	156.26	50.05	3.23	2006	26.64	10,628.9	215.5
2007	162.69	50.33	0.28	2007	27.17	10,889.5	260.6
2008	166.41	51.78	1.45	2008	27.73	11,028.1	138.6
2009	169.94	53.72	1.94	2009	28.31	11,315.3	287.2

Economic Survey (2009-10) and Labour Force Survey Report (2009)

been given in Table 4. Data reveals significant difference between the two countries both in terms of numbers and growth of population and labour force. In it evident from the results that Pakistan is far ahead of Malaysia both in terms of numbers and growth of population and labour force. Total population of Pakistan is 169.94 million in 2009 while the total population of Malaysia is 28.31 million. Data reveals significant positive overtime growth in population and labour force of both the countries. Pakistan experience 15.98 million growths in its population in 5 years from 2005 to 2009 while Malaysia gained 2.8 million growths in its population in the same period. Sharp decline in mortality without corresponding reduction in fertility is one of the main reasons for rapid population growth in Pakistan (Economic Survey, 2009-10). Whereas significant decline in the death rate in Malaysia is one of the important factors of population growth in the country (Rohani, 2009).

Furthermore, Pakistan achieved 6.9 million increases in its labour force in five years from 2005 to 2009 while in the same reference period Malaysia gained 901.9 thousand more labour forces in its labour market. Limited growth in labour force compared to the population growth of Pakistan is due to low literacy and poor level of skills. About 46% of the population of Pakistan has one year of education and less. Furthermore women and youth are the disadvantaged segment of the society as for as employment is concerned (Economic Survey, 2009-10). Whereas substantial increase in the labour force in Malaysia is due to the increase in the large proportion of total population in the working age category and high life expectancy rate, accompanied by the decline in the death rate (Rohani, 2009).

Labour force participation rate by sex for Malaysia and Pakistan: Labour force participation rate of a country refers to the percentage of the total working age population in the labour force. The rate provides clues regarding labour market operation and the utilization of available human source to the development process of a country. Furthermore labour force participation rate of men and women reflects gender sensitivity in a country. In view of all these apprehension the study at hand collected data about the labour force participation rate of

both male and female of Pakistan and Malaysia to unearth ground realities.

Comparative statistics regarding labour force participation rate and overtime growth of the male and female of the two countries is given in Fig. 1. Data reveals significant gender differences in the labour force participation rate and the over time growth rate of the two countries. The results indicate inconsistent over time growth in overall labour force participation rate of the two countries. The labour force participation rate of Pakistan increased from 43% in 2005 to 46% in 2006 and declined to 45.1% in 2007 and then rose to 45.7% in 2009. Similarly in Malaysia labour force participation rate was 63.3% in 2005 declined to 63.1% in 2006 rose to 63.2% in 2007 and then ultimately reached to 62.9% in 2009.

Contrary to this both the countries have consistent overtime growth in female labour force participation rate in the reference period. Pakistan achieved 4.77% increase in female labour force participation rate in five years from 2005 to 2009 while Malaysia obtained only 0.5% increase in female labour force participation rate in the whole reference period. Despite the fact that female labour force participation rate has increased in both the countries irrespective of differences, it is pertinent to note that female participation rate is much below than that of male in both the countries. Female participation rate in Pakistan is about 16 to 20% compared to male participation rate which is ranging from 71 to 69% in the reference period. On the other hand female participation rate in Malaysia is about 45.9 to 46.4% compared to male participation rate which is 80 to 78.9% in the given period of time. It is also important to highlight that Pakistan is lagging behind of Malaysia in terms of female participation rate in the labour force.

The reasons to which are multifarious and playing different roles however, illiteracy and socio cultural restrictions are the main reasons of lesser female labour force participation rate especially in rural and tribal led areas of Pakistan. These finding are inconsistent with the results of Faridi *et al.* (2009b) and Ali *et al.* (2009) that female participation rate is limited due to social and cultural restrictions imposed on women by the male dominated society in Pakistan. Whereas structural changes in economic activities, equal education and

training chances and increased women’s independence and status are the main factors of rising trends of female labour force participation rate in Malaysia (Rohani, 2009).

Labour force participation rate by sex and age for Pakistan and Malaysia: Comparative picture about of age specific participation rate of male and female of the two Asian countries namely Malaysia and Pakistan is presented in Fig. 2 and 3, respectively. Data reveals significant different trends of age specific participation rate of male and female of both the countries. The comparative size of gender disparity though considerable in all intervals of age groups, however seems to shrinking. The Age intervals of male 25 to 49 and 25 to 54 are the more productive period of life in Malaysia and Pakistan respectively as these groups have maximum participation in the labour force. In contrast the age interval of female between 25 to 29 and 25 to 54 are the more productive period of life in both Malaysia and Pakistan respectively. Although participation rate of female in the labour force is increasing overtime, strong gender inequalities continue to exist at all age intervals.

The ratio indicates that female labour participation rate is less than male participation in all age groups however more pronounced in earlier and latter stages of life. The results suggest that youngest age group 25-29 of women in Malaysia and age group of 35-44 in Pakistan are the leading interval age groups in terms of labour force participation. The highest participation of age group of 25-29 in Malaysia can be explained by a huge migration of young women especially the single women from agriculture to manufacturing sector in urban areas (Rohani, 2009). The findings of the study are not supporting M-shaped (bi-model) idea of Rohani (2009) when she find two peaks of female labour force participation throughout the age groups in Malaysia because the study at hand find consistent decrease in female labour force participation in all the remaining age groups (Fig. 3). Whereas highest participation of the age group of 35 to 44 of women in Pakistan can be explained by a view point of different scholars that after marriage women in Pakistan may feel easy to go out and to work in a suitable place with the consent of their husbands (Faridi *et al.*, 2009b). Findings of the study are inconsistent with the results of previous studies that that social and cultural restrictions in rural and tribal led areas of Pakistan do not allow women to work outside at their early age, however allowed to work after marriage (Chaudhry and Nosheen, 2009).

Labour force participation rate by sex and education attainment for Pakistan and Malaysia: Previous studies found significant positive impacts of education on economic growth (Romer, 1986; Lucas, 1988; Azid *et al.*, 2001). Most of the cross-country empirical literature on the effect of human capital on growth is “gender-neutral”.

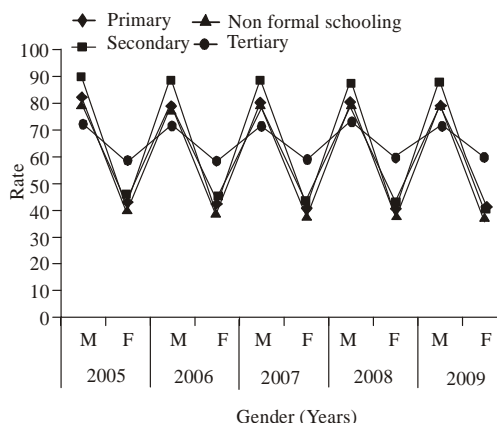


Fig. 4: Labour force participation rates by sex and educational attainment, Malaysia

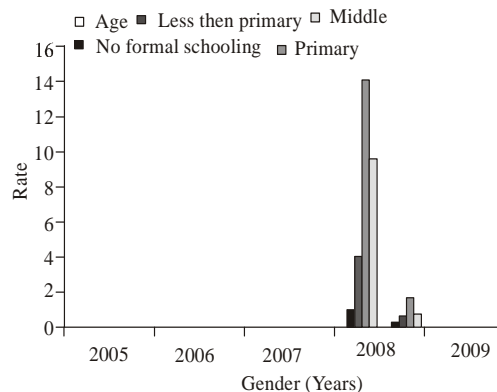


Fig. 5: Labour force participation rates by sex and educational attainment, Pakistan

It usually focuses on levels of education averaged over the whole (working-age) population. However, female and male education affects growth in quite different ways. Female education along with male education can improve productivity directly when better-educated females participate in the paid workforce and contribute to conventionally measured output. However, female participation rates are generally lower than for males and vary widely across countries. This study also measured labour force participation by sex and their educational attainment of Malaysia and Pakistan to see the impact of education on female labour force participation. Figure 4 and 5 shows comparative picture of male and female educational level and their participation in labour force of the two countries respectively. The results indicate gender disparity in labour force participation rate. Although male than female have more labour force participation at all education level, however this gender gap is more severe at initial stages of education (Naqvi and Lubna, 2002). Comparative analysis based on the data for 2008 reveals that gender disparities are more severe in Pakistan

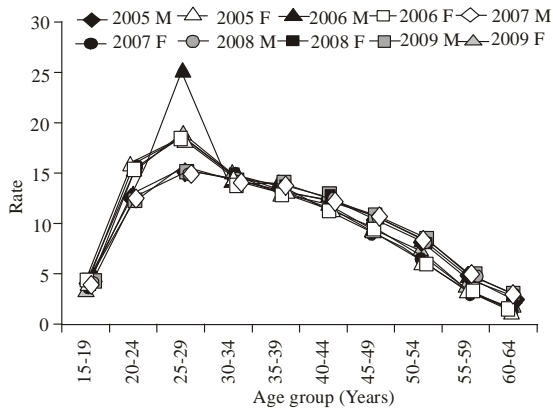


Fig. 6: Percentage distribution of employed person by sex and age group, Malaysia

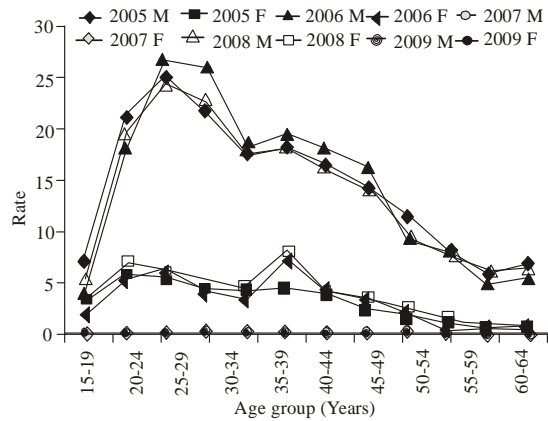


Fig. 7: Percentage distribution of employed person by sex and age group, Pakistan

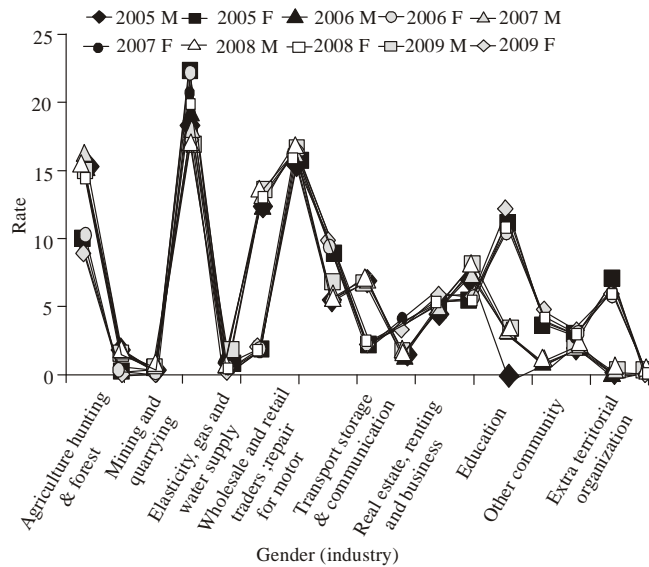


Fig. 8: Percentage distribution of employed person by sex and industry, Malaysia

compared to Malaysia. Non-availability of annual data about labour force participation in Pakistan for the remaining years is the main reason for restriction of comparison between the two countries only to 1 year.

Comparative picture of employment status by sex for Malaysia and Pakistan:

Comparative statistics of employed person by sex and age group for Malaysia and Pakistan: Figure 5, 6 and 7 shows comparative statistics of percentage distribution of employed person by sex and age group of Malaysia and Pakistan respectively. Data reveals significant difference of different age intervals of male and female in employment of the two countries. The age group of both male and female 25 to 29 and 35 to 39 are the more productive age intervals in Malaysia and Pakistan respectively. The general increase in the employment of youth in Malaysia can be attributed to several factors, however, rapid expansion of educational facilities, equal access of female to every level of education, delayed marriages and reduced fertility rate are the most significant. On the other hand increased employment of the interval group with an age of 35 to 39 are the results of the induction of married women in the labour market as predominant Islamic society in Pakistan does not allow women particularly in rural and tribal led areas to work outside at their early age.

Comparative statistics of employed person by sex and industry of Malaysia and Pakistan:

Figure 8 and 9 are showing percentage distribution of employed person by sex and industry of Malaysia and Pakistan respectively. The results show that majority of the female workforce

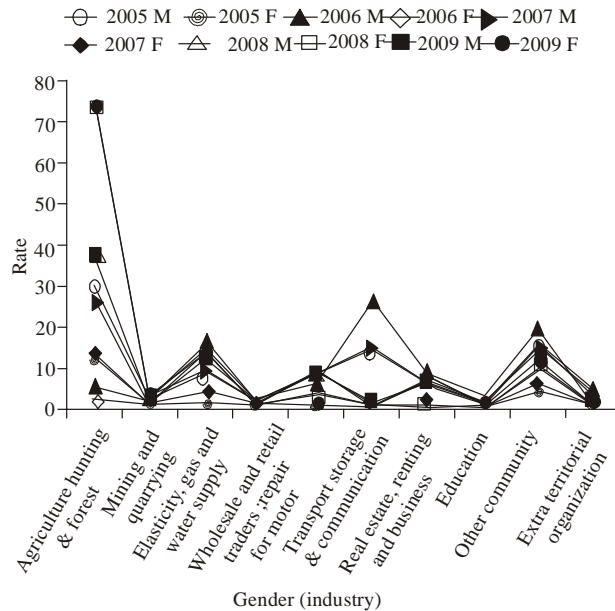


Fig. 9: Percentage distribution of employed person by sex and industry, Pakistan

in Malaysia belongs to manufacturing; construction; wholesale and retail traders, repair of motor vehicles, motor cycle and personal and household hold goods and education. In contrary majority of female workforce in Pakistan belongs to the industry of agriculture, hunting and forestry; whole sale and related trade and social and personal services.

These differences indicate clear socio economic diversities of the two countries. Malaysia has shifted from agrarian to manufacturing country and its manufacturing sector became the leading sector that formed the highest share of total employment. Furthermore better financial position of the country with higher GDP growth rate enabled high ranking authorities to initial development works in the country thereby strengthening the construction sector which is playing significant role in providing more employment opportunities to the people of the land. The service sector is another leading sector of Malaysian economy and contributing well to total employment which is the results of liberal policies of Malaysia. Findings of the study are inconsistent with the findings of many previous studies that women in Malaysia mostly occupy low paid occupations (Rohani, 2009).

Contrary to this the large proportion of labour force employment in agriculture is a known fact because of the agrarian nature of Pakistan’s economy which is increasing overtime. Manufacturing sector showed a mixed picture about the employed labour force. Labour force participation rate in manufacturing sector declined from 16% in 2006 to 9 percent in 2007 which was an indication of lower activity in the industrial sector resulting in work layoff (Economic Survey, 2008-09). The participation rate

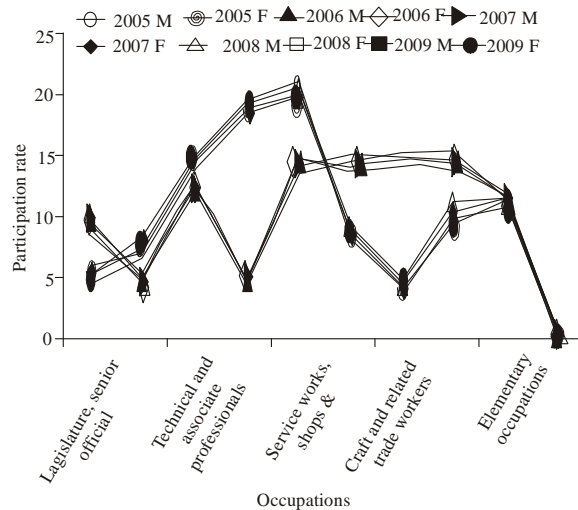


Fig. 10: Percentage distribution of employed person by sex and occupation, Malaysia

of labour force in manufacturing sector then rose to 13% in 2008 and remained almost same in the year 2009, which may be due to slow progress of industrial sector due to weak economic condition of the country. Labour force participation in all other sectors also declined overtime which could be the results of poor economic conditions and slow economic activity in the country due to deteriorating law and order situation.

Comparative statistics of employed person by sex and occupation of Malaysia and Pakistan: Figure 10 and 11

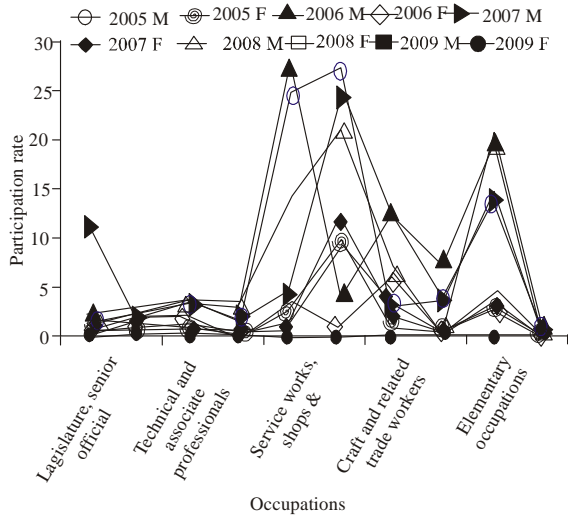


Fig. 11: Percentage distribution of employed person by sex and occupation, Pakistan

indicate comparative picture of the percentage distribution of employed person by sex and occupation of Malaysia and Pakistan respectively. The results reveal that majority of the Malaysian women belongs to service workers shops and market sale workers and clerical workers while majority Malaysian male belongs to plants and machine operators and assemblers; craft and related trade workers and skilled agricultural and fishery workers. In contrast majority of the Pakistani women belongs to the skilled agricultural and fishery workers and elementary occupations while majority of the male belongs to skilled agricultural and fishery workers and service workers, shop and market sale workers.

The higher representation of women in service workers, shops and market sale workers is the results of highest literacy rate of women and free market economy of Malaysia. Findings of the study support the plea of past studies that women in Asia are mainly distributed in clerical and service occupations and relatively highly concentrate in professional occupations such as teaching and nursing. But there are very few proportions for women at managerial occupations (Cong, 2008).

Comparative statistics of employed person by sex and employment of Malaysia and Pakistan: Figure 12 and 13 are depicting comparative statistics of employed person by sex and status of employment for Malaysia and Pakistan respectively. The results indicate that majority of workforce in Malaysia (75%) are working as employees in both the public and private sectors and there is substantial increase in it over the years. In contrast in Pakistan majority (65%) of the workforce belongs to unpaid family workers. High literacy rate with growing

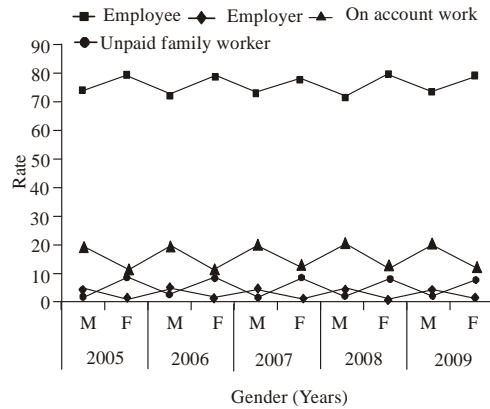


Fig. 12: Percentage distribution of employed person by sex & employment, Malaysia

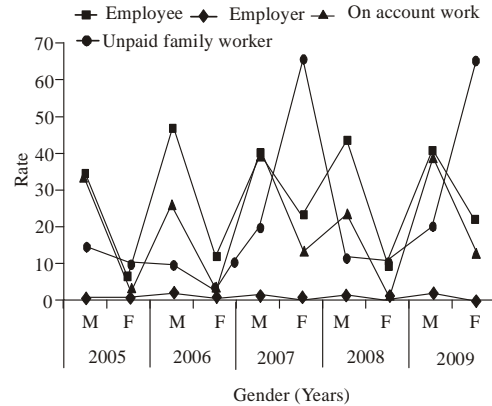


Fig. 13: Percentage distribution of employed person by sex and employment, Pakistan

industrial sectors are the main factors responsible for this trends in Malaysia while cultural and religious restrictions imposed on women are the main cause of high unpaid workforce in Pakistan.

Comparative statistics of employed person by sex and education attainment of Malaysia and Pakistan: Comparative picture of employed person by sex and educational attainment of Malaysia and Pakistan is given in Fig. 14 and 15. The results indicate that labour force with secondary education have the highest participation rate while labour force with tertiary education have the next highest participation in Malaysia while labour force with primary and tertiary education have the highest participation rate in Pakistan. Furthermore male with secondary education and female with tertiary education have the highest participation rate in Malaysia while male with primary and matric education have the highest participation in Pakistan while the female participation have large scale inconsistency with their educational

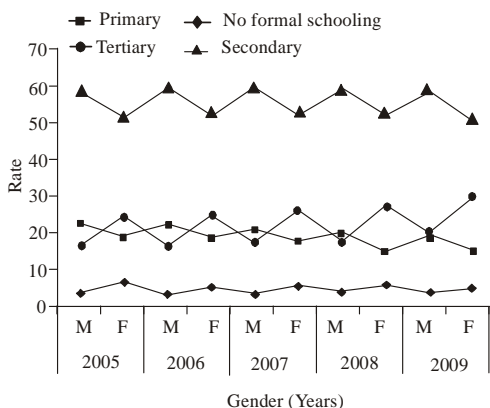


Fig. 14: Percentage distribution of employed person by sex and educational attainment Malaysia

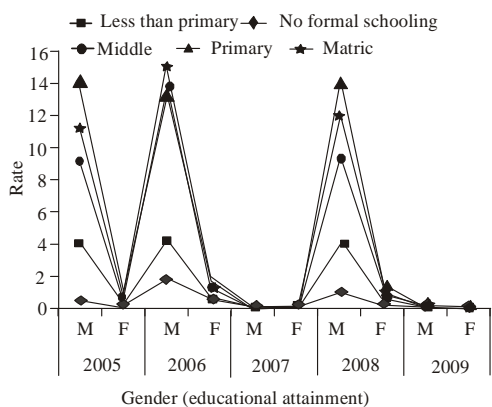


Fig. 15: Percentage distribution of employed person by sex and educational attainment Pakistan

background in Pakistan. Despite all these difference it is pertinent to note that female participation in Malaysia have increasing trends while there is a decline in the female participation in Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

This study measured gender inequalities in labour force participation rate and employment status of Malaysia and Pakistan using annual time series data for five years from 2005 to 2009. We measured gender inequalities in labour market on the basis of four indicators such as overtime growth in population, labour force, labour force participation rate and employment status of the two Asian countries. Based on the facts and facts with the support of relevant literature it can be concluded that despite national commitments and efforts of respective governments' gender inequalities continue to exist in all study areas of the labour market in both the country however the situation is worst in Pakistan.

Both the countries experienced overtime growth in total population; however Pakistan is leading in this front with 15.98 million population increase compared to 2.8 million population increase of Malaysia in five years period, which is alarming for Pakistan as it will be an additional burden on poor economy of a country. On the other hand reasonable increase in the population of Malaysia is an indication of the availability of more labour supply to different sectors of economy to grow more steadily. Similarly both countries achieved remarkable increase in overall labour force with 6.9 million compared to 109.9 thousand for Pakistan and Malaysia respectively, which shows lesser increase in Pakistan as compared to its population growth in the given time frame, which may be due to social and cultural restrictions on the mobility of women especially in remote rural areas and tribal led societies of Pakistan.

Furthermore both countries have inconsistent results in terms of labour force participation rate. Labour force participation rate has increased from 43% to 45% in the given time for Pakistan while there is a small decrease in labour force participation rate in Malaysia. It decreased from 63.3% in 2005 to 62.9% in 2009. Despite such inconsistency strong gender inequalities persists in both the countries. In Pakistan male have 71% shares while female occupy only 20% share of the labour market whereas in Malaysia male have 80% participation while female have 46% participation rate in Labour force, which indicate that female labour force participation rate in Pakistan is far behind from that of Malaysia and need special attention of the policymakers.

Comparative analyses of gender inequalities in employment of the two countries reveals that female of the young age group (25-29) have more participation in the labour force in Malaysia while female of the age of 35-39 have maximum participation in Pakistan. Furthermore, most of the labour class of Malaysia belongs to manufacturing, constructing and service sector while majority of the workforce in Pakistan relates to the agriculture and social and personal services. This study find that majority Malaysian's women are holding lower cadre jobs with limited opportunities to the decision making positions whereas majority of female workers in Pakistan belong to unpaid workers assisting their men in agriculture and other social and personal services.

In short we can infer that despite overtime increase in female labour force participation in both the countries, gender disparities continue to exist, which are more severe in Pakistan. It is therefore mandatory for the policy makers to revisit their policies and revise their strategies to get rid of gender disparities as quickly as possible to meet the requirements of the changing world. In line with persistent gender inequalities there is a need of multidimensional analyses to unearth factors responsible for gender gaps to find possible way of getting out of the gender issue.

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