

Journal of Development Perspectives

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Call for Papers

Special Issue: The Geography of Women's Labour Force Participation
Accepted papers will be considered for a special issue in the *Journal of Development Perspectives*.

This special issue edited by Uma Kambhampati and Niaz Asadullah explores the varied patterns of women's labor force participation in the Global South. It seeks insights into regional disparities, positive deviance, and emerging trends, with a focus on South Asia, MENA, and Southeast Asia.

Girls' enrollment in schools and women's literacy rates have increased in most countries of the world during the MDG era. Increase in women's engagement in labor markets has been much slower to relative growth in female schooling, causing international variation within developing Asia. The average rate of women's labor force participation in South Asia and MENA is 28% and 18%, respectively, compared to a much higher 58% in East Asia and the Pacific. Moreover, there are instances of positive deviance. In Southeast Asia, female labor force participation rates range from a high of 68% in Vietnam to a low of 47% in the Philippines. In the MENA region, women's labor force participation varies significantly, from 64% in Qatar to just 14% in Jordan.

The special issue editors invite papers to explore why women's labor force participation in the Global South has been so varied. What explains Southeast Asia's relatively high female labor force participation rates? Conversely, why has women's employment stagnated in South Asia and MENA despite the rise in female education? Are there emerging cases of positive deviance at the country level? Why is women's employment so low in India? Have Saudi Arabia's recent policy changes positively impacted women's employment? To what extent are these patterns shaped by persistent gender norms? Alternatively, is the structure and growth of certain economies reinforcing low participation rates for women?

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