

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES EFFECTS ON THE PARTICIPATION OF FEMALES AND MALES IN TRANSPORT AND LOGISTIC SECTOR- A CASE OF INDIA

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Abstract

The industrialization has always been a dynamic contributor to rapid economic growth, urbanization, and community development. Employment opportunities present in companies have a huge impact on the participation of employees in all the sectors including the logistics and transport sector. The logistics and transport sector is a fast-growing sector in India and it connects the diverse set of manufacturers in India with their customers. However, even after large-scale consumption of this sector, there are various employment challenges such as a lack of effective framework, HR policies, skill-based training, and infrastructure bottlenecks. The study aims to understand the role of employment opportunities on the participation of males and females in the logistics and transport sector. To understand the importance and relationship of employment opportunities with workforce composition, an analysis of 119 employees working in travel and logistics companies has been done. The findings of the analysis revealed that the factors of flexible and compatible terms in the workplace, keeping in place provisions of maternity and paternity leaves, measures to increase re-entering opportunities of the employees, zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, frequent health checks, and medical facilities, addressing the challenges of confining the feminine workforce to a certain role impacts the participation of females and males in the transport and logistics sector. The study recommends recognition of the importance of gender inclusiveness in the sector and closing gender gaps.

Keywords: Female participation, employment opportunities, logistics, transport, India

1. INTRODUCTION

The logistics and transport sector in India comprises of complete inbound and outbound system of manufacturing and service supply chains. Logistics comprises more than 13% of GDP which is huge but still unorganized and inefficient (Yezdi Nagporewalla, 2007). However, the logistics sector has also been evolving with time but due to the Indian market's geographical diversification and massive regional manufacturing, the challenges borne by the sector are also deep-rooted(Verduzco, 2011). The logistics and transport segment is a male-oriented industry in India and many other nations due to its extensive unglamorous nature of work and other stereotypes prevailing(Chandra, 2014). In many respect, the transport, logistics, storage, and communication sector lacks women's participation and the workforce composition is massively unequal. (Turnbull, 2013) explains the percentage of women in the transport segment and logistics is only 6.8% which reveals women are under-represented in the transport sector. The primary issues of non-female participation are evident such as working conditions including infrastructure, lack of conducive resources, time, working conditions, and cultural stereotypes(Deloitte, 2018). One of the biggest hurdles that have cramped this sector is its unorganized and non-regulated framework that makes the overall system irrational and imbalanced. In addition, the deficient physical infrastructure makes the system less welcoming toward gender equality and there is a huge lack of proper solutions to female presence in employment. The percentage of female workforce has increased in logistics and transport with the advancements in technology and integration of working models but there is shortage of wide opportunities in businesses for the female workforce globally(Cornwall, 2013). In context with safety and security issues, employers' preferences are polarized towards males because, for regional and small firms, it is challenging to safeguard the women employees on the job as well as during their commutation(Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020). Further, female workforce presence on top management level in logistics is very rare and there is a need for the myriad involvement of female in this industry to make it more efficient(Mahindra, 2014).

2. Aim of the study

The study aims to analyze the impact of employment opportunities on the participation of males and females in logistics and transport in India.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The research encompasses a detailed review of employment opportunities and their role in workforce composition in the Logistics and transport sector in India.

Equal employment opportunities

Equality of all individuals is very important when exercising rights regardless of race, culture, gender, and status. Equal employment opportunities mean to assure and encourage an equal chance for every potential employee to safeguard their interest in employment(Casuneanu, 2020). There are many instances of discriminatory treatment of women in employment all across industrial sectors. However, organizations develop a strategic approach to combat these discriminations by developing a new trend of equal employment opportunities(Srivastava & Verma, 2008). Equal employment opportunities are very important as they facilitate the community to attain growth and empowerment. It also opens an array of opportunities for organizations by having both genders that enable effective decision-making, sustainability for the firm, and a more focused employee base(Jayachandran, 2021). Further, employers gain a competitive advantage due to the presence of potential employees with gender diversity. There are major advantages of having competent employees in the workplace irrespective of gender stereotypes and it also builds a sustainable brand image in the market of the organization. Therefore, long-run value toward the society can only be maintained with equal employment opportunities in organizations. Thus, Equal employment opportunities boost organizational dedication among employees and build stronger businesses.

Impact of employment opportunities on workforce participation

Employment opportunities influence an organization's tendency to have equal opportunity for all. When employment opportunities for males are higher as compared to females, it makes the system of workforce composition polarized (Aster, 2007). Lower employment opportunities sometimes result in regional underdevelopment, cultural frontiers, and various other setbacks for females in India or the Asian market overall. When employment opportunities in certain sectors or industries are lesser it makes the workforce composition as well as the independence of the community imbalanced(Netto, 2018). If the female workforce gets lower opportunities in the labor market that makes the cross-industry participation of women reduced(Srivastava & Verma, 2008). Due to gender-specific disparities in employment, female income opportunities, household models, and the economy on a larger scale get impacted(Ellemers, 2014). The polarization of jobs towards males is also due to individual preferences of employers that are embedded in their mindset making lesser scope for women employees(Sarkar et al., 2017). Thus, the nonavailability of employment opportunities not only worsens the well-being of citizens but also hampers the sustainable development status of economies.

Factors that impact opportunities for employment in the transport and logistics sector

The logistics and transport is a labor extensive industry than other industries in terms of work-life balance and harmony. There is a lack of flexible work culture resulting in the industry being less compatible with its workforce(Fletcher et al., 2017). Transport and logistics firms majorly do not possess sustainable leaves and benefits for employees. Similarly, transparency and ethical norms towards contractual employees, their entitlements, and opportunities for re-entering the organization are some of the major factors impacting employment opportunities (Kapsos et al., 2014). Further, there is a vagueness in HR policies and a lack of effective escalation frameworks toward sexual harassment, bullying, violence, or molestation. Further, the working environment is difficult for female employees concerning childcare responsibilities and facilities for medical check-ups, cashless treatments, and assistance to employees(Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020). The huge demand for extended working timings and workloads due to the unpredictable nature of the industry makes employment opportunities in this sector difficult. An unorganized working environment and inefficient infrastructure in transport and logistics companies impact employment offers by employers in this industry(Josep, 2020). Thus, it can be said that employments generated in any industry gets influenced by several factors such as leaves, ethical code of conducts, infrastructure development, harassment policies to handle, facilitate and provisions for female workforce challenges.

Empirical review

(Ali & Anwar, 2011) studied the issue of occupational discrimination by surveying 526 male and female employees in private organizations and observed that discrimination on-the-job, crime, and gendered preferences in employment decreases the overall opportunities as small and regional firms are not able to break the patriarchal mindset and their is lack of proper implementation to safeguard female employees and their growth. (Dr. Saloni Pahuja, 2017)studied the declining trend of female participation in Indian employment with the help of a quantitative analysis of 100 female employees and the findings revealed occupational segregation and limited opportunities for females as the reasons leading to the declining number of female employees. (Sila & Širok, 2018) studied the challenges to employment opportunities with the help of quantitative analysis wherein 15 employees were researched. The findings of the research directed a huge lack of job satisfaction among logistic sector employees, there is a need for greater facilities and effective infrastructure both inside the work premises and loading-unloading premises. (Vettriselvan et al., 2019) analyzed employment challenges for females with the help of a survey of 50 women employees and revealed that leave entitlements, escalations to handle workplace harassment and similar policies and frameworks are lacking in the

logistics and transport industry leading to declining employment opportunities for potential candidates. (Sadikhov, 2021) researched factors affecting employment inequality and labor force participation with the help of qualitative analysis where 12 experts such as HRM professionals, Managers, and employees' perceptions were examined. A review based on the gender gap index was also observed and the findings revealed that the patriarchal setup of societies, male-centric decision-making approach, family structure, and organizational workload are major contributors leading to unequal employment. Thus, it can be said that composition of workforce and percentage of male and female in any industry is impacted by the presence of employment opportunities in the country. These employment opportunities are low due to the massive gap in the work system developed and the efficiency needed for equal employment opportunities.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is a diagrammatic representation of the relationship between employment opportunities and workforce composition. The main attributes of employment opportunities and the challenges towards equal employment have been depicted below.

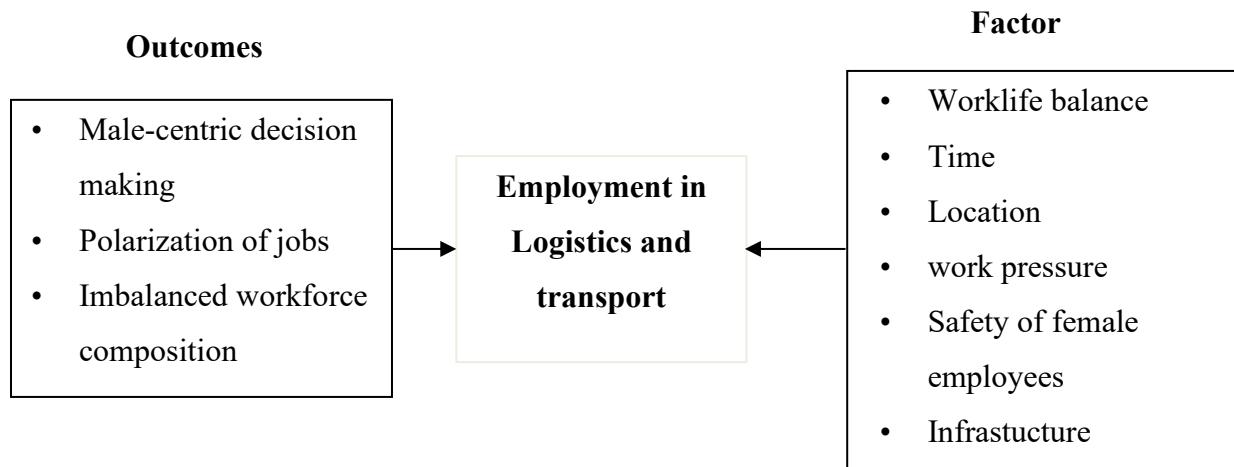


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of study

Employment in logistics and transport is heavily imbalanced due to various factors as identified through the study such as work-life balance, time, location, work pressure, safety concerns, and infrastructure bottlenecks. This leads to immense opportunities for male employees leading to polarization of jobs towards one segment of the population only. Thus, the presence of unequal employment in the logistic and transport sector hampers the employment opportunities and for better understanding evaluation of the employee's perception is required.

Hypothesis

A hypothesis is laid down to test the relationship between employment opportunities and workforce participation of females and males in logistics and transport.

H_0 : Contributors of equal employment opportunities in the transport and logistics sector opportunities does not affect the participation of females and males in the sector.

H_1 : Contributors of equal employment opportunities in the transport and logistics sector opportunities affect the participation of females and males in the sector

This hypothesis is formulated to test the impact of employment opportunities on workforce participation in logistics and transport. Workforce participation would be the dependent variable whereas employment opportunities will be the independent variable.

4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of research presents the systematic approach through which the study attains its results. It identifies the type of research, data, collection process, and analysis tools used. The methodology for the study begins with the identification of the data type. In the current study, the descriptive research design is used. The design allows the usage of quantitative data to understand the broad phenomenon under study and its characteristics. The research and data type is selected based on the benefit of allowing the analysis of data using statistical methods (Nassaji, 2015). In addition, quantitative data is selected for the present study as it will allow objectivity of the research by concentrating on the fewer variables relevant for the study (Neuman, 2013). The quantitative data type will allow accurate findings from the data collected and the sampling plan is devised for the same.

To arrive at a sample size that is representative of the population under study, Cronbach's formula is used to derive the results of the sample size. The formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2 * p * (1 - p)}{e^2}$$
$$n = \frac{1.96^2 * 0.91 * (1 - 0.96)}{0.05^2}$$

Wherein,

n = size of sample

Z = Z score value (i.e. 1.96 at 95% confidence level)

p = study attribute depicting population proportion (96% or 0.96)

e = error margin (i.e. 0.05)

The size of sample population selected herein is 126. Further, seven close-ended questionnaires were incomplete and were deducted making the sample size 119.

The organizations are selected using the purposive method to ensure that data is collected from the industry focus approach in the study. These organizations were contacted using emails to inform the purpose of the study. The respondents are then approached using a simple random sampling method by Google survey forms. The survey method prevents bias from entering the survey (Uprichard, 2013). The questionnaire designed for the collection of data is divided into three parts of the demographic, background, and inferential analysis. Multiple-choice questions are used in the first two sections and 5 points Likert scale is used to gather inferential data. The data gathered for this study is analyzed using the SPSS software. The data collected in the demographic and background sections are analyzed using descriptive frequency analysis. For the section of inferential analysis, hypothesis testing was done to detect the pattern of relationship between independent and dependent variables in the study. The method is selected for the study as it allows examining and reporting on the patterns of data gathered (IBM, 2018).

The study is undertaken adhering to the guidelines of ethical research laid down by the university. The participants were informed about the purpose of study and based on their approval, survey was conducted. Throughout the survey, the personal details and frontiers of information to be shared was followed strictly. To ensure research validity, questionnaire was prepared after reviewing scholarly articles and journals and selected respondents were enquired about the practicability of the statements in representing their views. For test of reliability, the Cronbach's alpha test is used to measure the reliability of the scale in the questionnaire.

5. Data Analysis

For analysing the data, information was gathered from 119 participants using the survey method and frequency analysis method was applied followed by inferential analysis based on hypothesis testing. The findings are mentioned in the below subsections.

Demographic Analysis

The demographic survey data is obtained in the first part of the questionnaire to examine whether or not the participants are representative of the desired universe to be surveyed to arrive at the findings of the study. The figure showing the result is presented below

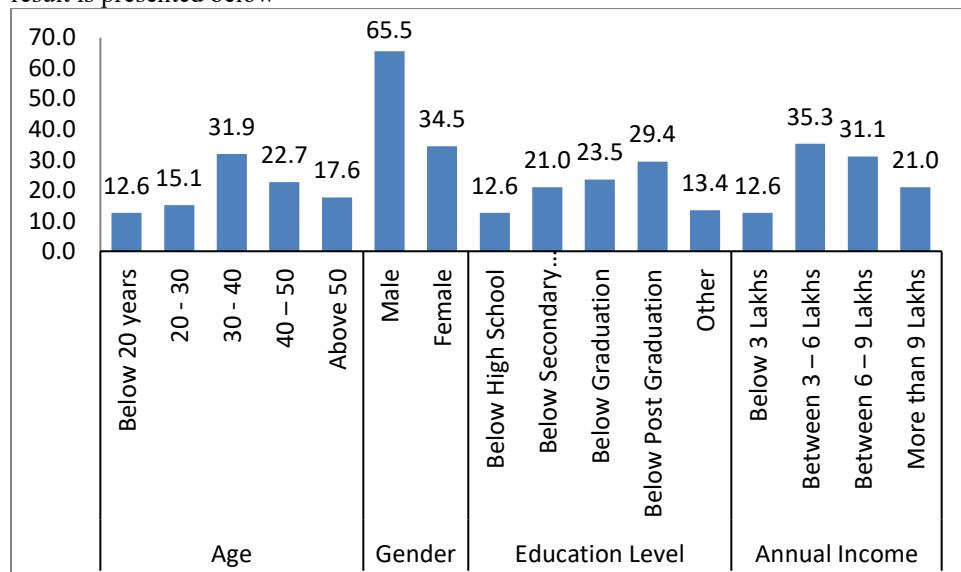


Figure 2: Demographic Analysis

The figure above shows that in terms of age, the maximum of the respondents is 30 – 40 years old, followed by those in the year 40- 50, then by those 20-30 years, those belonging to the above 50 age group, and least are below 20 years of age. The respondents have more representation of males (65.5%) than females (34.5%). The level of education for maximum respondents have a degree below post-graduation (29.4%), followed by those below graduation (23.5%), below secondary school (21%) are next, other degrees(13.4%), and least below high school (12.6%). The annual income for maximum respondents belongs to the income group between 3 – 6 lakhs (35.3%), then those with the income between 6 – 9 lakhs (31.1%), those earning more than 9 lakhs (21%), and the least below 3 lakhs (12.6%). Thus the majority of observations in the survey are of 30-40 years, male, below post-graduate educated, and have an income between 3 – 6 lakhs.

Background Analysis

This section analyses the knowledge level of the participant on the subject under study and it is enquired and presented in the questionnaire and the results are laid down in the frequency chart below.

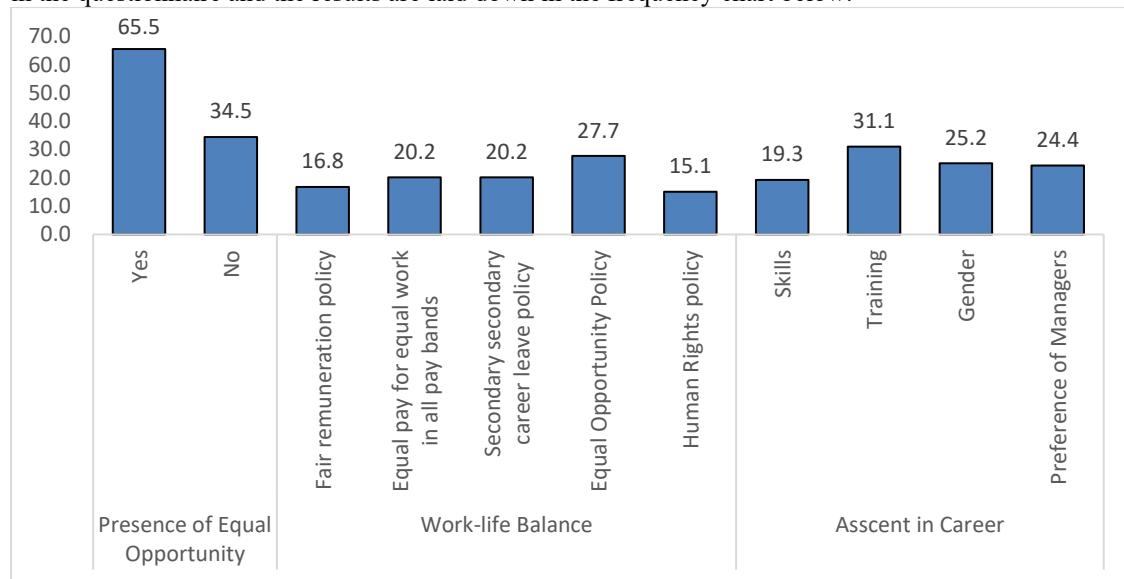


Figure 3 Background Information

The figure above shows that maximum employees (65.5%) believe that the company has equality in terms of employment opportunities and (34.5%) do not believe. In terms of adherence to parameters of work-life balance, maximum respondents believe in equal opportunity policy (27.7%), equal pay for equal work in all pay bands (20.2%), secondary career leave policy (20.2%), fair remuneration policy (16.8%), and least in human rights policy (15.1%). Concerning the parameters that are required in the industry to grow in career, maximum respondents view training (31.1%) as the most important, followed by gender (25.2%), skills (19.3%), and preference for managers (24.4%).

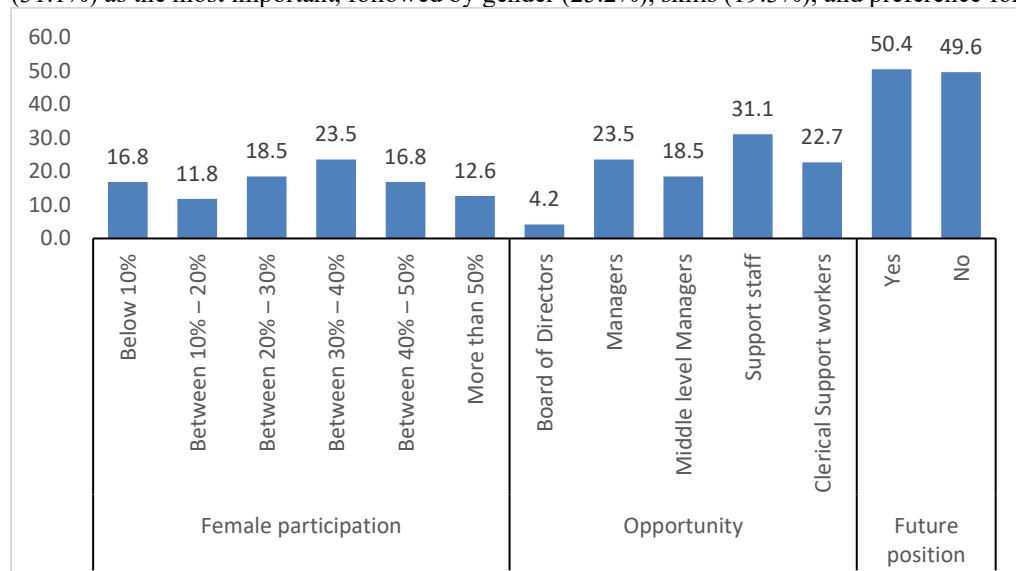


Figure 4: Background information

In terms of female participation as a percent of total workforce, maximum respondents denoted the level of between 30% – 40% (23.5 %), followed by those between 40% – 50% (16.8%), between 20% – 30% (18.5%), below 10% (16.8%), more than 50% (12.6%), and least between 10% – 20% (11.8%). In terms of position in which women are employed in the organization, maximum respondents feel that they are employed in the position of support staff (31.1%), followed by managers (23.5%), clerical support workers (22.7%), middle-level managers (18.5%), and least at the board of directors (4.2%). Further, when asked whether or not women's position can be bettered maximum of respondents were of a positive view (50.4%), and only (49.6%) were negative.

Thus the background analysis represents that majority of respondents are aware of the presence of equal opportunity, and consider it an important element for work-life balance, there is enhancement in career due to training, have between 30- 40% of female workforce participation, work as support staff, and trust in the betterment of their position in future.

Reliability analysis

The statements in the questionnaire are coded for ease in the analysis, visualization, and presentation of data for testing the hypothesis. The mentioned attributes are presented in the table below.

Code	Statements
A	The positive contribution of equal employment opportunities in the sector
A1	Flexible and compatible terms in the workplace
A2	Keep in place provisions of maternity and paternity leaves
A3	Measures to increase re-entering opportunities of the employees
A4	Zero-Tolerance policy for sexual harassment
A5	Frequent Health checks and Medical Facilities
A6	Extended parental leaves and enable special leave
A7	Challenges of confining to the feminine role
A8	Addressing challenges of contractual arrangements are not compatible
A9	Addressing issues of involuntary exits and voluntary quits.
A10	Prevention of bullying, harassment, and violence
A11	Investing in training and personal development opportunities for women

Table 1 Coded Statement representing contributors of equal opportunity and participation

These statements are analyzed for reliability to represent the perceptions of the respondents. To understand the efficacy of the statements, a reliability test is done on the data. The statistical outputs and observations are detailed below.

Statement	Total Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
A1	0.95	0.94
A2		0.94
A3		0.94
A4		0.95
A5		0.95
A6		0.96
A7		0.96
A8		0.95
A9		0.95
A10		0.95
A11		0.95

Table 2 Reliability Test Results

The total Chronbach Alpha to indicate higher reliability of the statements should be more than 0.7 (Taber, 2018). The total alpha value for the statements is 0.95 denoting data points are closely related. For individual statements, the value of the alpha is either less than or equal to total alpha to denote their closeness to the data points are hence are included

in the study. For A6 and A7 though the value is 0.96 but as the value is close thus, they can be considered for impact examination.

Inferential Analysis

With the statements reliability analysis conducted, inferential analysis on the perception of the employees reveals that is conducted using hypothesis testing. To begin with, correlation analysis inspects the relationship strength between the variables coded. In the table below Person's coefficient value and significance are shown.

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
A	1	
A1	0.90	0.00
A2	0.90	0.00
A3	0.89	0.00
A4	0.81	0.00
A5	0.62	0.00
A6	0.59	0.00
A7	0.53	0.00
A8	0.57	0.00
A9	0.85	0.00
A10	0.85	0.00
A11	0.85	0.00

Table 3 Correlation Analysis

The attributes contributing to equal employment opportunities in the transport and logistics sector and growth of the organization, industry, and nation are denoted in the above table. This is because the significance values are less than the prescribed value of 0.05 and 0.00 for each statement. Also, the Pearson Coefficient is more than 0.5 denoting the presence of relationships between the variables (Schober & Schwarte, 2018). To comprehend the extent of the relationship, regression analysis on the dependent variable of growth of the organization, logistics industry, and nation are relevant and independent variables of contributors to equal employment opportunities in the transport and logistics sector. The results are represented in the table below.

Statements	Coefficients	T	Sig.	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F
(Constant)	0.38	2.88	0.00	0.90	0.89	91.78
A1	0.29	2.47	0.01			
A2	0.34	2.93	0.00			
A3	0.26	2.28	0.02			
A4	0.11	2.15	0.03			
A5	0.25	2.84	0.01			
A6	0.00	-0.06	0.95			
A7	-0.11	-3.41	0.00			
A8	-0.12	-1.40	0.17			
A9	-0.13	-1.37	0.17			
A10	0.03	0.27	0.79			
A11	-0.06	-0.64	0.52			

Table 4 Regression Analysis Table

The adjusted R square for the model is 0.89 denoting about 89% of the variation in the employee's participation is influenced by the availability of equal employment opportunities. The F-test reveals the values more than the required 1 to denote the model's goodness of fit. Also, the significance of most statement that is, A1 (0.01), A2 (0.00), A3 (0.02), A4 (0.03), A5 (0.01), and A7 (0.00) are below 0.05 to denote significance of the relation. This denotes that the

null hypothesis of contributors of equal employment opportunities in the transport and logistics sector opportunities does not affect the participation of females and males in the sector is rejected. The coefficients reveal that with a 1% rise in flexible and compatible terms in the workplace, provisions of maternity and paternity leaves, an increase in re-entering opportunities for the employees, presence of a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, and frequent health checks and medical facilities, the workforce participation increases by 0.29%, 0.34%, 0.26%, 0.11%, and 0.25%. The 1% increase in presence of challenges in confining the feminine workforce resulted in reducing workforce participation by 0.11%. These findings are similar to a study by UNESCAP, (2017) that stress equality and enhancement of the position of women in the industry to impact the participation of female and male in the sector.

6. CONCLUSION

In India, logistics and transport segment is still considered as a sector reserved for male employees and female percentage is very low. Preferences for male employees is dominant thereby creating a psychological barrier towards gender equality as there are challenges such as field visits and night shifts, societal barriers, and challenges balancing professional and family life. The results when interpreted revealed that there are limitations on women occupying prominent positions in the companies and there is scope for further improvement in their inclusion in the workforce. It also found that the factors of flexible and compatible terms in the workplace, keeping in place provisions of maternity and paternity leaves, measures to increase re-entering opportunities of the employees, zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, frequent health checks and medical facilities, and impact the inclusion of both the gender. On the other hand organization's inability to address the challenges of confining the feminine workforce to a certain role adversely impacts their participation as compared to men. Thus, the study affirms the impact of equal employment opportunities on the participation of females and males in the transport and logistics sector. The recommendations based on the findings include recognition of the importance of gender inclusiveness in the sector and closing gender gaps. Future studies can be undertaken to identify diverse career paths in the industry for males and females and their impact on the overall growth of the industry.

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