

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-58911

Title: When Education Translates into Work: The Role of Technical Qualifications.

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality			✓	
Clarity		✓		
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: Dr. Lastri Wahyuni

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

The manuscript addresses an important and policy-relevant issue concerning the relationship between women's education, technical qualifications, labour force participation, and employment in India. The use of nationally representative NSS Employment-Unemployment Surveys and PLFS data covering a relatively long period (2004-05 to 2022-23) is a major strength. The paper presents an interesting comparison between general education and technical education and highlights the relatively stronger labour-market engagement of women possessing technical qualifications. The discussion of the U-shaped relationship between education and female labour force participation is also relevant to the existing literature.

However, several aspects should be strengthened before publication. First, the **methodology and estimation procedure require substantially greater detail**. The manuscript states that the estimates are based on NSS-EUS and PLFS rounds, but it does not adequately explain the sample selection, survey weights, population coverage, treatment of missing observations, definitions of LFPR and WPR, or the exact procedure used to calculate the reported percentages. The specific activity-status concept and reference period used should also be clearly stated.

Second, the manuscript should be more careful in interpreting the results as evidence that technical education **causes** higher labour-market participation or employment. The analysis appears primarily descriptive, based on differences in participation and employment rates across educational categories. Therefore, statements suggesting that technical qualifications directly "lift" participation or that particular industries are responsible for the observed changes should either be supported with additional empirical analysis or expressed as associations rather than causal effects.

Third, the paper would benefit from a clearer discussion of **heterogeneity among women**. Factors such as rural/urban residence, age, marital status, caste/social group, household income, region/state, and type of technical qualification may substantially influence both education and labour-market participation. Even if a full multivariate analysis is outside the scope of the paper, the authors should acknowledge these limitations and, where possible, provide appropriate subgroup analysis.

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Fourth, some explanations appear stronger than the evidence presented. For example, the claims that the decline in participation among women without technical education is "distress-driven" or that the post-pandemic recovery reflects a return of low-skilled work require supporting evidence. Similarly, statements regarding employment in information technology, healthcare, telecommunications, engineering services, nursing, and other sectors should ideally be supported by sector-specific data.

Fifth, the authors should carefully verify the **consistency of terminology, figures, percentages, and time-series interpretation** throughout the manuscript. The figures are central to the paper, and the underlying data should be clearly presented or made available in a table so that readers can verify the reported trends. The apparent differences between the LFPR and WPR patterns should also be explicitly interpreted.

Finally, the conclusion is broadly consistent with the findings, but it could be made more precise by distinguishing what is directly demonstrated by the data from the broader policy implications. The limitations of the study should also be explicitly acknowledged.

Overall, the manuscript has a worthwhile research question, a useful national-level dataset, and potentially significant implications for policies concerning women's education, vocational training, and employment. I recommend **acceptance after minor revision**, subject to strengthening the methodological description, moderating causal claims, clarifying the data and definitions, and improving the empirical interpretation.