
UNIT 17: GENDER AND THE PROCESS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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17.1 INTRODUCTION

Investing in women is central to sustainable development. World-wide experience shows that supporting a stronger role for women contributes to higher economic growth, improves child survival and overall family health, reduces fertility and helps in slowing down the population growth rates. Investing in women with respect to education, health, family planning, access to land, etc. not only directly reduces poverty, but also leads to higher productivity and a more efficient use of resources. Yet, despite these known returns, women face many barriers in contributing to and benefiting from development.

Women represent almost fifty percent of the world population but constitute the most neglected and the poor segments. Women are poorer than men mostly because they are deprived of equal rights and opportunities, lack the access to the financial and economic resources and are denied a respectable social status. In addition to their income-generating activities, women's household duties include caring for the children, the sick and elderly, house maintenance, preparing food, and fetching firewood and water. The need to balance home and market responsibilities is a major constraint on women's earnings, productivity, and human capital accumulation. Because of women's more limited access to education and other opportunities, their productivity relative to their potential and to men's productivity remains low. Women also often lack access to family planning services, which in

combination with low education, results in high maternal mortality rates. Lack of access to credit for female entrepreneurs limits the profitability and growth of their enterprises. Also collateral requirements play an important role, as female rights to property are often more restricted than those enjoyed by men. So, the gender-related issues remain central to the development debate and the poverty reduction strategies.

Improving women's productivity can contribute to economic growth, efficiency, and poverty reduction. In spite of these payoffs, the gender gap remains substantial in many countries. Girls' school enrolment rates lag behind those of boys. Women's life expectancies are often lower than men's due to discrimination in food intake, despite natural advantages at birth. As a result, women are at a disadvantage in the labour market, giving rise to a vicious cycle of low earnings and low investment in schooling.

This Unit gives a historical view of the declining status of women in rural communities, in the household, at the workplace, and in the urban modern sector in the process of development. It also discusses the priority areas like education, health, wage employment, financial services etc. in which action is needed and suggests ways in which active involvement, leadership and commitment of the government can help in reducing gender disparities.

17.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to

- analyze the declining status of women in the process of development;
- describe the gender aspects in economic structure;
- discuss the priority areas where action is needed; and

- explain the ways by which active involvement, leadership and commitment of the government can be translated into tangible progress.

17.3DECLINING STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

A historical view presented by E. Boserup will make it clear that women were not always in disadvantageous positions. How they reached the position which is inferior to that of men has been a long process. During different stages of economic development their status deteriorated laying the genesis of women's subordination – those stages are discussed in the following sub-sections:

17.3.1 In rural communities: In the initial stages of development two broad groups relating to position of women in farming systems may be identified: The first type is found in regions like Africa where shifting cultivation predominates and the major part of agricultural work is done by women. In such communities, a high incidence of polygamy is found, and bride wealth is paid by the future husband or his family. The women are hard working and have only a limited right of support from their husbands, but they often enjoy considerable freedom of movement and some economic independence through the sale of their own crops. This system changed when under the colonial rule, European administration transferred the land from women to men in South Africa. They denied the right to each wife of a polygamist to have her own plot and introduced the rule of 'one man one plot'. As a result, the wives not only had to cultivate in common the land belonging to their husbands but lost it to male heirs after his death.

African women always protested the deterioration in their position. The transfer of rights from women to men was often felt to be an injustice committed by the Europeans. People wanted to restore to women the rights they had to land in the old society. But all attempts to bring about the change failed to persuade an inflexible bureaucracy which was not responsive to the people.

The second group is found at places like India where plough cultivation predominates and where women do less agricultural work than men. In such communities we may expect to find that only a tiny minority of marriages are polygamous; that a dowry is usually paid by the girls' family; that a wife is entirely dependent upon her husband for economic support; and that the husband has an obligation to support his wife and children, at least as long as the marriage is in force. In the second group, the casual workers, both male and female are hired by the land owners to help them in cultivation. The social gap between cultivators and agricultural labourers is always wide. This is particularly so where female agricultural workers of a low caste or tribal group work for male farmers belonging to communities with non-working women living in seclusion. Here the three statuses of differences – social class, ethnic group and sex culminate in the creation of a wide gulf between employer and the employee. This intricate social and sex pattern is found the world over. In South India many communities have female farming traditions. Hence, female participation rate as casual workers in farming are much higher in central and south India than in north India and Pakistan. The prejudice against women's work in the field in the northern regions seems to be an important cause of the region's poverty.

17.3.2 Cheap labour for export sector: In Asia and in many parts of Africa, a large proportion of the cash crops were produced in plantations established in colonial times making use of cheap labour for the export sector. Recruitment policy for these plantations differed widely from region to region. In some cases only men were employed, in other cases

the whole family. In Sri Lanka, Vietnam and India, women account for over 50% of the labour force in plantations. But, in many parts of Africa, employment in plantations was reserved for men. Women remained back home for doing the family farming for the food crops alone. Thus, the African women contributed little to production of cash crops which was produced mainly for exports. These striking contrasts in the use of female labour in Asia and in Africa depend on what factors make labour costs for the export sector the lowest feasible in the given local circumstances. Thus in Asian as well as in African cases the plantation could avoid paying the male wages sufficient to support a whole family. Both these ways of holding down the labour costs in the export sector are at the expense of the women. The women at the Asian plantation had a double job, as housewife and as full-time labourer. The African women also did double the amount of work at family farms when most of the younger men were away working in plantation or mines.

17.3.3 Low payment to contract workers: Many of the women who take on casual agricultural labour were also prepared to accept other kinds of manual, unskilled employment as the female coolie, that happen to be available in the rural areas where they live. Everywhere we find such female general labourers, who work alone or in a group recruited and supervised by contractors. They often move from district to district in response to the shifting demand for labour for transplanting, harvesting, road work and other construction, and work in mines and transport. Women are preferred to men in these jobs because they are willing to accept lower wages and more often accept unauthorised deductions, false accounts and delayed payments.

17.3.4 Women in household production: In the town in very primitive communities, women usually devote a fairly large part of their time to the production of a variety of goods for household use. At a later stage, some of those goods used in daily life begin to be

exchanged between people within a village or with people in neighbouring villages. If such a centre of home industries appears to have specialized in products which are traditionally produced by women, we may find a very high female participation in them. In many developing countries women form a large part of the home industries' labour force. Since they have no choice they tend to accept very low rates of pay from these industries which can therefore compete successfully with larger industries based upon relatively expensive male labourers. The social restrictions on women's work result in a large supply of women for the few types of work they can do without opposition. As a result, earnings in such activities are small. For example, Indian artisans belong to low castes where it is normal for women to work. Some tribal areas of India such as in Manipur have home industries completely dominated by women.

17.3.5 Women and factory production: But when large industries were being established, women drop-out from industry for various reasons. Most employers prefer male labour because in many developing countries the principle of paying equal wage to men and women doing identical jobs is adopted. If in addition, women get special benefits such as maternity leave, crèches for their children, the right for exemption from night work and underground work in mines, etc. the result might be to make it more profitable to employ men workers. Application of these principles leads to preferential recruitment of male labour in industry and only those jobs for which no men care to apply are given to women.

Demand side alone is not responsible for the low rates of women employment in industry. Often the women themselves tend to prefer work in home industries or in service trades rather than in wage employment in large-scale industry. More flexible working hours are a great advantage for married women with small children. Besides, it is possible to obtain part-time employment in home industries but impossible in larger industries with a more rigorous rhythm of work.

In many developing countries, employment in home industry is preferred because it does not entail contact with men outside the women's own families. These advantages are frequently mentioned not only in Arab countries and in India but also in Latin American and African countries. This type of polarised division of labour creates a wide gap in productivity and income between men and women within the same sector, lowering the position of women in relation to that of men. The gap between the productivity and earnings of men and women is further widened because those few women who are employed in modern industry are mostly doing unskilled jobs.

17.3.6 Women in the urban modern sector: The inferior position of women in the urban hierarchy is exacerbated by the strong preference for recruiting men to the clerical and administrative jobs. If women are hired at all in the modern sector, it is usually for the unskilled, low-wage jobs. Thus the roles assigned to men and women, even in the modern sector, indicates a widening difference between the productivity and earnings of each. One characteristic feature of labour markets in developing countries is the wide gap between the wages of highly trained and skilled workers and that of unskilled workers. The presence of this gap is to the disadvantage of women in industry since they belong overwhelmingly to the group of unskilled workers. When a country is moving from a primitive to a more advanced stage of economic evolution, bazaar and service occupations play the peculiar role of an intermediate step between agriculture and the modern occupations. Thus, two successive steps in economic development can be seen; in the first step, subsistence activities for family use are replaced by commercial production for sale and small-scale market trade and services. In the

second step, this type of activity is replaced by employment in modern factories, offices, modern shops and modern service industries.

With economic development comes a proportional increase in the total labour force employed in the modern sector, while the employment in agriculture and in some of the market and service occupations declines. This structural shift in the economy may have the effect of reducing women's share in the total labour force, because they may fail to find employment in the modern sector sufficiently rapidly to compensate for the relative or absolute decline of those sectors which employ a high proportion of women. When economic development induces a large number of men to change from agriculture, bazaar and service employment to modern sector employment, the accompanying movement of families from rural to urban areas may cut their wives off from employment in agriculture or bazaar or service occupations without giving them enough opportunity for employment in the still small modern sector, mostly staffed by men. In such cases, the overall percentage of economically active women will decline as a result of the structural change in the economy.

17.3.7 Vicious cycle of low qualification and low employment of women in modern

sector: Low rates of work participation for women tend to depress urban family incomes in many developing families. Some economists from developing countries have pointed to the need for higher urban work participation rates for women, from the point of view of both economic and social development. But the opposite view is far more widespread: it is argued that the advantage some families gain from more employment of women would be offset by a corresponding loss for other families whose bread winner would lose his job if more women were given employment. Once this premise is accepted that in the first instance only men can contribute to economic

development, it seems illogical not to give them priority for higher education during that period.

In most of the developing countries, including India, women's way to employment in the modern sector is barred by their lack of proper qualifications. Apart from the major exception of commercial schools for girls in Latin America, very few opportunities for training girls exist in developing countries. It reflects that in most of the developing countries qualification gap between male and female labour is becoming wider.

As a result of the deteriorating status of women in the process of economic development over the past few decades, gender issues have increasingly gained prominence on the development agenda. More attention is being given to the plight of poor and disadvantaged women in developing countries, and to the unfinished gender agenda in more developed countries. Recognizing the importance of ensuring equal opportunities for females and males on grounds of both fairness and efficiency and as an instrument for achieving poverty reduction and economic growth, the international development community has included gender equality among the Millennium Development Goals.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. What are the different stages of economic development through which the status of women deteriorated?

17.4 GENDER ASPECTS IN ECONOMIC STRUCTURE:

Keeping the above historical view in mind, there are four ways to capture gender aspects in an economic structure:

17.4.1 Making visible the unpaid care economy

In this framework the economy can be subdivided into a 'commodity economy' where output is sold in markets and a 'care economy' where output is not sold in markets, but remains in families or communities. The commodity economy is included in the System of National Accounts, whereas the care economy is not. As most of the work of women takes place in the care economy, this makes a large part of female work invisible. This does not mean that output from the care economy cannot be measured either in time or in money, only that it will take large efforts to do so.

17.4.2 Gender in economic decision making

The main characteristic of economic development is the progress towards an increasingly intricate pattern of labour specialization. On various decision-making levels, gender imbalances can be distinguished in communities even at the earliest stage of development. At the most primitive stage of family self-sufficiency, there is some division of labour within the family. In a household shared by male and female partners, men bring the food and women prepare it. This is the basic common picture all over the world. At the macro-level, economic policy-making is usually a male domain. At the meso level, men may monopolize leadership roles, leaving

support activities to women. At the micro-level, there may be conflicts between men and women within households. This must be taken care off.

17.4.3 Gender-based distortions

Discrimination of women may take various forms. In labour markets lower wages are paid to women as a result of underestimating women's productivity. In credit markets higher interest rates are charged as a result of overestimating the risks (underestimating the returns) of lending to women. As much of women's work is unpaid, its price (or opportunity cost) appears to be zero. Hence, there is discrimination due to lack of markets, both those for output in the care economy and the commodity economy. Gender-based price distortions lead to false economics. Economic policy-makers aiming to improve overall economic efficiency should be aware that the real costs of women's work (paid and unpaid) are often not visible.

17.4.4 Gender based institutional biases

Institutional biases occur when institutions-such as schools, hospitals, government offices malfunction by operating in ways which maximize the benefits of certain interest groups, often groups which control these institutions. For instance, male-biased norms in allocation of jobs may maximize the gains to male employees, but do not maximize the contribution of the organization to society as a whole, because they result in a waste of women's skills. In general, male-biased norms in the allocation of public expenditure result in reproducing rather than diminishing gender inequality. Patterns of public expenditure like these do not have to be deliberately planned to be male-biased, but they typically result from male-biased norms about priorities and procedures. In many markets the norms about how to do business, about with whom it is appropriate to negotiate, to exchange

information, and to conclude contracts, result in the exclusion or marginalization of women.

The above-mentioned distortions and biases result in a relative overutilization of women's time. Women's working days are much longer than men's. In all the developing countries and in most of the industrialized countries, often men apply modern scientific methods in cultivation of cash crops while women continue to cultivate food crops by traditional methods. Even in the course of agricultural development, men's labour productivity tends to increase while women's remains more or less static. As a result, relative status of women within agriculture declines which forces them either to abandon agriculture or to retire to domestic life. The reason is that usually it is with men who learn to operate the new types of equipment while women continue to work with the old hand tools. Thus, men monopolize the use of new equipment and modern methods. By their discriminatory policies in education and training the Europeans created a productivity gap between male and female farmers. Such a development has the unavoidable effect of enhancing the prestige of men and of lowering the status of women. It is the men who do the modern things and women represent the old drudgery. Thus, the change from traditional to modern methods of production in any sector tends to enhance men's prestige at the expense of women's by widening the gap in their levels of knowledge and training.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the different ways to capture gender aspects in an economic structure?

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17.5 PRIORITY AREAS

According to a World Bank (1994) study, comparison of country-specific evidence suggests that there are five priority areas where action is needed: education, health care, wage labour, agriculture, and financial services. While many other policy options are available, these five have been chosen because they provide the foundation on which other policies can build. Public policies in these fields should work in order to compensate for market failures. Investing proportionately more in women than in men, in the above mentioned areas, should be an important part of development strategy, as well as an act of social justice. It directly reduces poverty through substantial economic and social pay offs; it leads to higher productivity and more efficient use of resources. It contributes to environmentally sustainable development. It produces significant social gains – lower fertility, better household nutrition, and reduced infant, child and maternal mortality. The inter-generational gains of mother's education are particularly striking. Gender inequalities in access to education and health services and in access to productive assets, markets and employment affect power relations between women and men, starting with their relative ability to influence decisions within their households. These inequalities imply unequal capacity to take advantage of economic and other opportunities and to participate fully in public policy debates and formulation. In particular, access to these facilities increase women's ability or power to make choices about their lives and to exercise those choices. They also address the need for leveling the field of

opportunities for men and women as defined by the rights given to them in a country's legal and regulatory framework, and removing the basic barriers to participation of women in the domains defined by the household, markets and civil society.

In spite of the payoffs, the gender gap in most of the above mentioned key areas is substantial in many countries. This inequality is not only an issue of gender inequity that demands rectification, but also an issue of efficiency in terms of lowering the development opportunities of the countries involved. Some effective strategies to reduce these gaps and barriers are given in the following discussion.

17.5.1 Education:

While there has been considerable progress in reducing the gender gap in schooling enrollments and achievements across the developing world, significant gender gaps remain in particular regions and at particular levels of education. Specifically, in parts of South Asia (most notably Northern India and Pakistan) and many poorer countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (especially in West Africa), there remain large gender gaps in attainment of education. In India literacy percentage for female is much lower than that of men (table-17.1).

Table-17.1: Literacy rate in India

Year	Female	Male	Total
1981	29.5	56.5	43.7
1991	39.3	64.1	52.2
2001	52.1	75.8	65.4

Source: Census of India, 2001

In a larger group of countries across the developing world, there are sizeable gender gaps in educational attainment. The main reasons behind this can be the expenditure required for educating the children even when the government pays for much of it. In case of girls parents not only bear the direct costs for school fees, books and clothing but they also bear the opportunity cost because girls are not available for looking after their younger siblings, for household chores and for wage earning as child labour when they go to school. A poor family cannot afford to forego such help.

Private returns for investment in education and health are more or less the same for men and women. Social returns, however, are much higher for women than for men.

This is because of the strong correlation between women's education, health, nutritional status, and fertility levels on the one hand and productivity of future generations on the other hand. Table 17.2 reveals that fertility has a strong correlation with the educational level of the mothers in India.

Table 17.2: Educational Level and Total Fertility Rate

Sr. No.	Educational Level	Total number of children born per woman (Age group 15-49 years) (2001)
1	Illiterate	4.2
2	Literate below middle	3.7
3	Middle but below matriculation	3.3
4	Matriculate but below graduate	2.7
5	Graduate and above	2.1

	All educational levels	3.8
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Source: Census of India-2001; Fertility Tables

The table 17.2 indicates that as the educational levels of women increase, their fertility rate decreases. Still, in many countries, girls' school enrollment rates lag much behind those of boys. Dropout rates are higher for girls than for boys. Parents in developing countries are less interested in sending their daughters to schools than their sons because returns from daughter's education are uncertain and remote. According to the World Bank (1994) Study, strategies for expanding girls' enrollment include reserving places for girls, establishing single-sex schools and classrooms, recruiting more female teachers and designing school facilities to conform to the cultural standards of the community. In Kerala, which has the highest literacy percentage and enrollment rates in India, more than 60% of teachers are women compared with less than 20% in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, which have the lowest female enrollment rates. The push to achieve universal primary education with gender-informed education policies has yielded higher girls' enrollments at all levels of schooling, and several countries have achieved gender parity in primary enrollments. This progress is quite remarkable and shows the responsiveness of households to policy interventions such as more community schools, lifting of user fees, stipends, conditional cash transfers, and vouchers targeted at girls. More schooling for girls today will confer long-term benefits in terms of their health and employment, as well as to their children's well-being in the future. At the same time, perhaps for this and other reasons, there is a positive association between female education and measures of aggregate economic growth.

17.5.2 Health

Girls are often less cared for and more undernourished than boys, as reflected in low ratio of females to males in the population. A disturbing revelation of the Indian Census statistics is decline in ratio of females per thousand males as shown in Table 17.3. Preference for sons has been widespread in India which is probably the most important cause of existing sex composition. “Many studies have shown that

Table 17.3: Number of Females per Thousand Males (Sex ratio)

Year	Females Per Thousand Males
1901	972
1911	964
1921	955
1931	950
1941	945
1951	946
1961	941
1971	930
1981	934
1991	927
2001	933

Source: Census of India, 2001

behavioural factors, including care seeking practices operate against young female children.” Besides, there is strong evidence of sex-selective abortions in some parts of the country.

In many countries of South Asia and Africa, discrimination in food intake and health care means that women’s natural health advantage at birth is quickly eroded resulting in lower life expectancies for women than men. But as a result of greater care of women due to change in our attitude towards them along with their natural advantage at birth of better survival has resulted in higher life expectancy of the female population in developing countries (Table 17. 4).

Table 17.4: Life Expectancy at Birth (in years) 2005-06

Countries	Female	Male
India	66.9	63.9
China	74.2	70.6
Bangladesh	64.3	63.3
Pakistan	64.3	64.0
Sri Lanka	77.5	72.2

Source: State of world Population-2006

Besides, a significant decline in infant mortality has also contributed to increased life expectancy. For improving these conditions, integrated services, which combine nutrition, family planning, maternal and child health services, and primary health care, tend to be most effective in reaching women.

17.5.3 Wage labour:

Low investment in women's education and health, places women at a considerable disadvantage relative to men in the formal labour market. This is reflected in low work participation rate of women in India as given in Table 17.5. The table reveals gender bias in employment. As per the World Bank (1994) study, the principal strategies for increasing women's participation in the formal labour force include removing legal and regulatory barriers, raising women's productivity, easing the constraints on their time and improving the efficiency of the labour market providing information on job opportunities. Legal reforms, education and training, improved access to information and affordable childcare is the key for enhancing women's participation in formal labour markets.

Table 17.5: Workforce Participation Rate in India

Year	Female	Male	Total
1981	19.7	52.6	36.7
1991	22.7	51.6	37.7
2001	25.7	51.9	39.2

Source: Census of India 2001

17.5.4 Agricultural and natural resource management:

As most of the poor rural women work in agriculture, the main strategy to help should be to allow them rights to the land they cultivate and open the doors to the extension services and government assistance. Environmental degradation increases women's burden. The direct and indirect costs of environmental damage for women need

to be assessed and included in natural resource management projects and policies. Promoting women's ownership and control of land, trees and other forest resources, and developing appropriate technologies to reduce time women spend in collecting water and fuel can contribute to environmental sustainability.

17.5.5 Financial services:

Innovative programmes have demonstrated that financial services, mainly credit and savings, can be provided to poor women at competitive costs. This improves women's ability to earn income as needed or desired and thus reduce their financial vulnerability. Group lending has broken down the barriers of high transaction costs, high perceived risks of default and lack of collateral. A significant number of women are employed in the informal sector, but most lack access to formal credit markets. Formal sector commercial banks focus on lending to larger business, while microfinance institutions (MFIs) cater to the informal sector and to women in particular. Group-based lending allows members to choose a group of peers with whom to join the programme, so that each borrower is responsible not only for her own loan, but also for the loans of the other group members. If any one group member defaults, all members become ineligible for further loans. Thus, collateral is replaced by group pressure in ensuring repayment. Microfinance is increasingly viewed as an important tool for alleviating poverty.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the key areas where action is needed to reduce the gender gaps?

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17.6 SUMMING UP

Public policy can significantly enhance women's participation in economic development. In some instances, the contribution may consist largely of training and supporting the activities of non-governmental agencies, communities and parents. In others, it may take the form of changing the legal and institutional frameworks. The tangible progress depends on the active involvement, leadership and commitment of governments in following ways:

1. By strengthening the database for gender analysis:

In all the countries, public agencies are responsible for collecting and publishing the data used to monitor progress towards economic and social objectives. In the absence of such information the ability of the government to identify areas of concern and to design appropriate remedial measures and to monitor progress becomes weak. Therefore, it is essential for the government to ensure that socio-economic data are recorded separately for men and women. Similarly, information on the outcome of development programmes should be gender-specific so that the effectiveness of intervention can be assessed.

2. By developing gender-sensitive policies and programmes:

The governments should identify gender issues through public expenditure reviews to poverty assessments, analytical reports on gender issues and sector reports like education, health and agriculture etc. The objective of all this should be

to develop a clear understanding of the current status of women's access to services and productive assets, the current policies affecting access.

3. By modifying the legal and regulatory framework:

Governments have the capacity to remove barriers to women's control over productive assets and resources by modifying legal and regulatory frameworks.

Allowing women to own land can improve their access to inputs and credit that raise their productivity. Removing legal barriers can open segments of formal labour markets once closed to women. In many countries, the constitutional provisions for the equality of the sexes already exist. However, the translation of

these provisions into reality through changes in legislation and regulations is yet to be made.

4. By ensuring effective programme delivery:

Well-designed policies and programmes are not enough -- they need to be effectively implemented. Governments need to pursue complementary strategies to make sure that the programmes reach the women. Involving women directly in project design can make programme delivery more effective. Working with NGOs can improve programme effectiveness because NGOs can adapt more readily to change in local needs and requirements.

5. By mobilizing resources:

The resource implication of a programme for enhancing women's contribution to economic development in a given country depends on the past investments in human resource development. The countries where these investments have been limited, access and quality of services will be low for men and women. In most such cases programmes and policy changes do not involve additional cost. Resource

implication may actually be greater in countries where investments in human resource development have been substantial but where gender disparities are also large. These countries will face difficult decisions on whether to reallocate resources from one group to another or find additional resources to expand services to the under-served group.

17.6 GLOSSARY

Polygamy: Polygamy is a form of marriage in which a person has more than one spouse at the same time.

Plantation: Plantation is a large farm or estate in a tropical or sub-tropical country where plants are grown for distant markets rather than local consumption.

LEB (Life Expectancy at Birth): LEB indicates the number of years a new-born infant lives if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life. (Source: United Nations Population Division, 2009).

Enrollment Rate: Enrollment rates are expressed as Net Enrollment Rates, which are calculated by dividing a number of students by a particular age group enrolled in all levels of education by the number of people in the population in that age group (Source: OECD)

17.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

1. Different stages of declining status of women in the process of economic development are: in rural communities, in export sector, as contract workers, in household production, in factory production, in the urban modern sector and in modern sector.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

1. Different ways to capture gender aspects in economic structure are: making visible the unpaid care economy, promoting women in economic decision making, removing gender-based distortions at work place and reducing gender-based institutional biases.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

1. Five priority areas where action is needed to improve the status of women are: education, health, wage labour, agricultural and natural resource management and financial services.

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17.9 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1. Discuss the declining status of women in the process of economic development.
2. Give a historical review of the status of women in the process of economic development.
3. Explain various ways to capture gender aspects in economic structure.
4. What are the priority areas where action is needed to enhance women's participation in the process of development?
5. Give your suggestions about what policies should be adopted by the government to bring tangible improvement in status of women.

UNIT 18: ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Structure

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18.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit entrepreneurship is defined in the Indian context with reference to women entrepreneurs. All over the world women face various problems when they venture into any entrepreneurial activity but emergence of women entrepreneurs is viewed in terms of their socio-economic emancipation. In this endeavour they get a lot of support from the microfinance institutions and self-help groups which also perform mentoring roles. Suggestions are also provided for effective development of women entrepreneurs.

18.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- define entrepreneurship in the Indian context;
- analyze the situation of women as entrepreneurs in India;

- discuss various problems of women entrepreneurs in India;
- describe the process women's empowerment through institutions of microfinance and self-help groups with the help of Indian and global case studies; and
- explain measures that could be undertaken for the development of women entrepreneurs.

18.3 CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is the backbone of national progress. Any country cannot achieve higher levels of development without entrepreneurship. It is one of the catalytic forces that propel economic growth by fostering initiative, innovation, accumulation and distribution of wealth. Entrepreneurial development plays an important role in industrial production, employment generation and exports. This Unit aims at defining entrepreneurship, condition of women in India as entrepreneurs, women in micro-finance institutions, and Self Help Groups, and problems faced by women as entrepreneurs in India as well as broad monitoring strategies.

The word 'entrepreneur' is derived originally from the French word "entreprendre" which means an organizer of musical or other entertainment. Oxford English Dictionary also defined the same as director or a manager of a public musical institution. In the opinion of A.H. Cole, "Entrepreneurship is the purposeful activity of an individual or a group of associated individuals, undertaken to initiate, maintain or aggrandize profit by production or distribution of economic goods and services".

According to Schumpeter, “Entrepreneurship is based on purposeful and systematic innovation. It includes not only the independent businessman but also company directors and managers who actually carry out innovative functions”. David H. Hold observes, “An Entrepreneur seeks to reform or revolutionize the pattern of production by exploiting an invention or more generally an untried technological possibility for providing a new commodity or providing an old one in a new way, by opening up a new source of supply of material or a new outlet for problem. It essentially consists in doing things that are not generally done in the ordinary course of business.”

In a conference on Entrepreneurship held in United States, the term ‘entrepreneurship’ was defined as, “Entrepreneurship is the attempt to create value through recognition of business opportunity, the management of risk-taking appropriate to the opportunity and through the communicative and management skills to mobilize human financial, and material resources necessary to bring a project to fruition” .

ILO (1982) describes that “entrepreneurs are people who have the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities; to gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them; and to initiate appropriate action to ensure successes”.

18.4 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The Government of India has defined Women Entrepreneurs based on women’s participation in equity and employment of business entrepreneurs. Accordingly, a woman’s enterprise is defined as “an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of employment

generated in the enterprise to women”. The clause of giving at least 51 per cent of employment generated in the enterprise to women was dropped in 1891.

For becoming a successful entrepreneur, women should explore the prospects of starting new enterprise, undertaking risks, introducing new innovations, coordinating administration, controlling business and providing effective leadership in all aspects of business. “Today, women entrepreneurs represent a group of women who have broken away from the beaten track and are exploring new avenues of economic participation. Women’s entrepreneurship is the process where women take the lead and organize a business or industry and provide employment to others. Women endowed with high drive, creativity, innovations and desires for achievements take up the challenging role of entrepreneurship.”

Across the world, the number of women starting their own business is on the increase. In the West, women are increasingly turning to entrepreneurship as a way of coping with the ‘glass ceiling’ that seems to prevent them from reaching top managerial positions in organizations. They find that entrepreneurship provides them with greater satisfaction and flexibility. “Women with higher education view entrepreneurship as a challenge, while women with no education background find entrepreneurship merely a means for earning money.”

Entrepreneurship among women is as old as women themselves. In villages it is a well known fact that women supplement the family income by maintaining dairy, kitchen garden, poultry, tailoring etc. Women often possess adaptability, patience and dependability - the three essentials for attaining success. Since the turn of the century the status of women in India has been changing due to growing industrialization and urbanization, spatial mobility and social compulsions. “With the spread of education and awareness, women have shifted from kitchen, handicrafts and traditional cottage industries to non-traditional activities

accorded a higher status and capable of generating more income. Even the government has laid special emphasis on need for conducting special entrepreneurial training programmes for women to enable them to start their own ventures. Financial institutions and banks have also set up special cells to assist women entrepreneurs.”

The emergence of women entrepreneurs is to be viewed in terms of socio-economic emancipation of women. This entry of women into the world of business and entrepreneurship is an auspicious sign, which should be encouraged at all levels. The flexibility of the entrepreneurs’ work schedule and the possibility of working from home improve the viability of women-run enterprises.

18.5 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

In India industrialization undertaken during the post-independence period has reduced the share of household industries like weaving, jute making, papad making etc. Mechanization of these industries has displaced women in all parts of India. It has increased the extent of unemployment and poverty among women. Migration of people from rural to urban areas has increased the extent of unemployment among women in urban areas. Therefore, it was felt necessary to promote employment opportunities for women, so that these women seeking jobs can be gainfully employed. In recent decades the country has undergone tremendous changes and has experienced higher rates of growth, increased facilities for education and training, new economic policy, positive approach of government, entrepreneurship development training facilities, changing socio-economic and political environment that has encouraged women to enter into entrepreneurial activity.

In the early 70's women who entered into entrepreneurial activities mainly got involved in producing traditional items like handicrafts, food processing and food products.

Participation of women as industrial entrepreneurs is comparatively a recent phenomenon. In 1975 after the declaration of International Women's Year the approach towards women entrepreneurs began to change. Today we can see that women are taking risks and entering into every industry and competing with their male counterparts. They are constantly looking out for new and innovative ways which lead to strong economic participation. Their adeptness, skill and knowledge, their acumen in business and desire to do something positive are among the reasons for women to establish and manage organized industries and take up challenging ventures.

In India the second half of the eighties witnessed an unprecedented spurt in Policy Perspectives on women. The National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000) which is a comprehensive all round projection for women and development in India and the report of the National Commission on self employed women and women in the informal sector came into existence. The "Shram Shakti" report also emphasized that women possessing skills, education, literacy and a sense of enterprise should be encouraged to take up self-employment programmes.

The 1991 Industrial Policy has envisaged special training programmes to support women entrepreneurs. Accordingly women entrepreneurs are receiving training through Entrepreneurship Development Programmes conducted by various institutions and organizations both at central and state levels. IDBI is one of the major promoters of women entrepreneurship development in India. In 1986 it launched a special scheme for women "SIDO" (Small Industries Development Organizations). During 1978-88 it conducted over 258 training programmes exclusively for women, thus benefiting over 9000 potential women entrepreneurs. National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board

(NSTEB) established in 1982 sponsors entrepreneurship development programmes many of which are exclusively for potential women entrepreneurs who are science and technology graduates. The Small Scale Industries (SSI) board in 1991 omitted the conditions of employing 50% women workers in enterprises run by women entrepreneurs. This provided a boost to women entrepreneurs to take up business and avail of facilities which are applicable to all SSIs.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. Describe the need for developing entrepreneurship for women in India.

18.6 ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND MICROFINANCE

Microfinance is not a new concept. Savings and credit groups that have operated for centuries include the "susus" of Ghana, "chit funds" in India, "tandas" in Mexico, "arisan" in Indonesia, "cheetu" in Sri Lanka, "tontines" in West Africa, and "pasanaku" in Bolivia, as well as numerous savings clubs and burial societies found all over the world. In the 1900s, various types of larger and more formal savings and credit institutions began to emerge in Europe, organized primarily among the rural and urban poor. These institutions were known as People's Banks, Credit Unions, and Savings and Credit Co-operatives. The Raiffeisen banks and other savings and credit cooperatives that emerged in Europe in the nineteenth century catered to farmers and artisans. They were microfinance institutions in all but name. In Indonesia, another flagship of the microfinance movement is the village banking unit system of the Indonesian People's Credit Banks or The Bank Perkreditan Rakyat (BPR) opened in 1995. This is the largest microfinance institution in developing countries. This state-owned bank serves about 22 million microsavers with autonomously managed microbanks. The microbanks of BPR are the product of a successful transformation by the state of a state-owned agricultural bank during the mid-1980s. Between the 1950s and 1970s, governments and donors focused on providing agricultural credit to small and marginal farmers, in the hope of raising productivity, incomes and loan at subsidized rates. In the 1970s, experimental programme in Bangladesh, Brazil, and a few other countries extended tiny loans to groups of poor women to invest in micro-businesses. This type of microenterprise credit was based on solidarity group lending in which every member of a group guaranteed the repayment of all members. These "microenterprise lending" programmes had an almost exclusive focus on credit for income-generating activities targeting very poor (often women) borrowers.

In 1972 the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was registered as a trade union in Gujarat (India), with the main objective of "strengthening its members' bargaining power to improve income, employment and access to social security." In 1973, to address their lack of access to financial services, the members of SEWA decided to found "a bank of their own". Four thousand women contributed share capital to establish the Mahila SEWA Co-operative Bank. Since then it has been providing banking services to poor, illiterate, self-employed women. In Bangladesh, Professor Muhammad Yunus addressed the banking problem faced by the poor through a programme of action-research. With his graduate students in Chittagong University in 1976, he designed an experimental credit programme to serve them. It spread rapidly to hundreds of villages. Through a special relationship with rural banks, he disbursed and recovered thousands of loans, but the bankers refused to take over the project at the end of the pilot phase. They feared it was too expensive and risky in spite of his success. Eventually, through the support of donors, the Grameen Bank was founded in 1983 and now serves more than 4 million borrowers.

Through the 1980s, the policy of targeted, subsidized rural credit came under a cloud when evidence mounted of the disappointing performance of directed credit programmes, especially poor loan recovery, high administrative costs, agricultural development bank insolvency, and accrual of a disproportionate share of the benefits of subsidized credit to larger farmers. But in the 1990s two features - high repayment and cost-recovery interest rates - permitted some MFIs (Micro Finance Institutions) to achieve long-term sustainability and reach large numbers of clients. The 1990s saw growing enthusiasm for promoting microfinance as a strategy for poverty alleviation. The microfinance sector blossomed in many countries, leading to multiple financial services firms serving the needs of micro entrepreneurs and poor households. These gains, however, tended to concentrate in urban and densely populated rural areas.

What distinguishes microfinance from conventional finance is the claim to serve poor people who are generally people outside the reach of the formal financial market, while remaining sustainable. Microfinance promises to reduce poverty without perpetual subsidies. Microfinance is primarily associated with poverty reduction in developing countries, and over the past 15 years has become global, with schemes, programmes and government policies in every part of the world. Close to 90 countries have microfinance institutions (MFIs) with relative concentrations in Latin America and Asia.” (International Labour Office, Geneva, March 2002). It promises to use the market to attain a social good. The socio-economic benefits of microfinance are threefold -- job creation, poverty reduction and empowerment. Women entrepreneurs consider microenterprises attractive on account of low barriers to entry and flexible nature of work that makes it easy to combine gainful employment with domestic responsibility. Though women are taking up both traditional activities (handloom, knitting and embroidery, jam, jelly and pickle making) and also non-traditional activities like computer training, catering services, tour and travel, beauty parlour, etc, but yet the society at large continues to suffer from a variety of misconceptions, apprehensions and suspicions about women entrepreneurs in business and industry. And it is due to this image that financial institutions remain suspicious of women’s capability to set up an industrial enterprise. Microfinance institutions come to their rescue at this stage.

Today, the microfinance industry and the greater development community share the view that permanent poverty reduction requires addressing the multiple dimensions of poverty. For the international community, this means reaching specific Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in education, women's empowerment, and health, among others. For microfinance, this means viewing microfinance as an essential element in any country's financial system.

18.7 MICROFINANCE, SELF-HELP GROUPS AND WOMEN

Microfinance through self-help groups has proved to be a strategic measure for organizing women in groups and promoting savings and thrift habits to gain access to institutional credit for their socio-economic development and empowerment. The entire process of forming a group, of functioning in a sustained manner, of regulating finances, and being mutually accountable, is in itself projected as empowering. Microfinance institutions (MFIs) reach a high percentage of women. Out of total microfinance clients, 73 per cent in Latin America, 70 per cent in Africa and 88 per cent in Asia are women clients. Micro-loans not only empower women through group formation, they also have beneficial effects on the satisfaction of basic household needs. Research has shown that for every dollar earned with a micro-loan, a male borrower would spend 47 cents on food, health and child education, while a woman would spend 84 cents.

In India efforts are made to combine economic and social upliftment of women by many organizations. For example Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA), Parisar Vikas of Stree Mukti Sangathana (Mumbai), MASUM (Pune), Sakti (Bangalore), Mann Deshi Mahila Sahkari Bank (Maharashtra) in the voluntary sector and Mahila Samakhya programme in Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Karnataka and Gujarat, MAVIM in Maharashtra and Kudumbashree in Kerala in the government sector have been responsible for women's leadership in microfinance."

18.8 CASE STUDIES

The two case studies conducted by Prof. vibhuti Patel on Non Government Organizations providing micro finance to women through self-help groups are given below:

18.8.1 Case Study of Sakti, Bangalore

When life of women in the communities where Sakti was working became miserable due to neo-liberal Macro economic policy and drought in Karnataka, Sakti, a Women's Rights Group decided to provide safety-nets through formation of Women's Self-help Groups (WSHGs) among the poorest of the poor women in Bangalore district. During 1998-2000, Sakti formed 317 WSHGs in 128 villages among the poor, disadvantaged (widows, single and deserted) and marginalized women.

In Bangalore, many local artisans had lost their livelihood base due to intrusion of readymade foreign goods into the rural markets. Influx of plastic ware rendered local potters unemployed. For instance, local mat makers and carpenters were finding difficulties and their livelihood was under threat as their products were being substituted by plastic and other machine-made goods. Sakti-supported WSHGs started giving loans to women to start new enterprise such as mulberry cultivation, seri-culture, dairy development. Initially, most of the WSHGs were charging 5% rate of interest per month. Eventually, the rate of interest was reduced between 3% to 2% after collection of a good amount of money. In the meetings, many women expressed their view that burden of interest was too high. The women have been borrowing money for availing education of children, petty business and meeting the expense of health services and marriages. The members feel that the WSHGs which have acquired Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY) loans should reduce the rate of interest to 1.5%.

In 2006, Sakti WSHGs were supported by several microfinance institutions and nationalized banks. State Bank of Mysore, Vijaya Bank, Indian Bank, Bank of India, Co-operative Bank, District Credit Co-operative Bank, Canara Bank, Gramin Kalptaru were

providing loans to WSHGs. Bridge Foundation was charging 13.5% rate of interest which was found to be too high. The nationalized banks were charging 9% and co-operative banks were charging 12% rate of interest.

Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation (KUIDFC) gets loans from World Bank and Asian Development Bank. As there are social/development/gender components in their programmes, matching grants were given for construction of low-cost toilets. Sakti had a supervisory role. Moreover, Sakti was asked to conduct leadership, health and gender training. From the financial assistance provided by KUIDFC, Sakti formed 77 SHGs in the urban slums, out of them 44 WSHGs are constituted by the poor Muslim women. A revolving fund of Rs. five thousand each was given to 50 WSHGs and 20 SHGs were given the revolving fund of Rs. 20000 each.

18.8.2 Case Study of MASUM, Pune

MASUM started Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) groups in Parner block of Pune district in 1997 to initiate a saving and credit programme for rural women with an aim to strengthen the economic self reliance of rural women, empower women through creating access to credit and motivate them to gradually build their own resource base. Programmes of MASUM such as Women's Resource Development Programme (WRDC) and Bachat Gat were analyzed in detail. MASUM forms SHGs to facilitate monetary transaction, elects and gives training to office bearers of SHGs on matters related to maintaining saving accounts and its operating details.

Women's Resource Development Programme (WRDC) by MASUM

Started in 1991 in Mal Shiras and Mavdi villages WRDC was modeled in line with Bangladesh, Grameen Bank. Currently, it has 5000 members and covers 18 villages. In this programme, meant for women, 6 to 10 women from the same neighbourhoods form a group and become members of “Streedhan”. Each group selects a name and also elects a chairperson and secretary. Women have to save at least Rs. 10 a month. These savings earn an interest of 5% per annum and the member is free to withdraw her saving at any given point in time. For eligibility for a loan of Rs. 1000, women need to save for three months. This amount increased in the subsequent years. The loan is available at a low interest rate of 12% per annum and without any collateral. Only 2 members need to sign as guarantors. Larger loans of Rs. 10000 and above are made available for production purposes only to members who have saved money for three years and have had a good loan record. The initial loan amount has been deliberately kept small to allow women to manage funds and more importantly to dissuade men from taking an undue interest in the scheme.

Group meetings are held in the neighbourhood on a fixed date every month. Two local women in each village facilitate the group meetings. The group members decide who should receive the loan in the monthly meeting. All the monetary transactions such as disbursement of loans, issuing of receipts and all entries in the pass book are made during the meeting. The group meetings are also used to disseminate information on various social and health issues.

Bachat gat (Women’s Self-help Saving Groups)

In 1997 MASUM started SHGs in Parner block, with the aim to ensure the members a space to interact freely with one another in the process of saving money from their earnings. At present, it has 800 members and covers 8 villages.

A SHG is formed when 15-20 women come together to form a group, elect office bearers (President, secretary and treasurer) from among themselves and open an account in the name of the group. MASUM trains office bearers of SHGs to maintain individual forms and pass-books of all the members of the SHGs. These groups are entitled to loan facility from the bank after the group completes two years. In the interim period, the group resource to internal lending with its own accumulated savings and at times MASUM lends money to the group at the terms and conditions that are in accordance with those of the bank. The group, in turn, lends this money to its members at the interest rate of 2% per month. Generally loans upto the amount of Rs. 10000/- are given to individual members. Savings lodged with the banks earn interest at the current rate of interest offered by the bank.

The groups meet once a month to complete the various transactions of savings, repayment and fresh loans disbursement. They are able to independently maintain the pass-book and ledger entries and manage the accounts of their groups. The monthly meetings also provide an opportunity to disseminate information and have discussions on various health and social issues affecting the community.

18.8.3 Global Empirical Evidences in Support of Micro-Credit

The empowering impact of microfinance has been documented globally by many researchers. Making a strong case for microfinance activities, Hashmi (2004) cites the following empirical evidences in support of micro-credit:

1. In Zimbabwe clients were able to maintain consumption levels in the face of rising food costs. Experience shows that this impact of poverty alleviation intensifies the longer clients stay with a given programme, thus reinforcing the benefits of counting in the programme.

2. CRECER (Credito Con Education Rural) in Bolivia found that incomes of two-thirds of its clients had increased after joining the programme.
3. Clients of BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) who stayed in the programme for more than four years increased household expenses by 28 percent and assets by 112 percent.
4. SHARE (Society for Helping Awakening Rural Poor through Education) in India documented that 75 percent of its clients who participated for longer periods saw significant improvements in their economic well-being.
5. One of the first things poor people do with their new income from microenterprise is invest in their children's education. BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) and Save the Children (Honduras) saw that their clients' children were more likely to go to school, stay in schools longer and have lower drop-out rates.
6. Families with access to microfinance services have better health than those who do not.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. Give names of a few institutions which are empowering women through micro-credit and self-help groups.

18.9 MENTORING ROLE OF MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS AND SHG

This section is adopted from the work of Prof. Vibhuti Patel on Microfinance. Micro-finance Institutions have used several methods of mentoring to evolve women's leadership for development of organization, efficient governance and human resource development. Some of these innovative methods are as follows:

18.9.1 Exposure Trip: Most WSHG members gain a lot of knowledge by their exposure from other successful models of SHGs. For example, Kasturi from Sakti got inspiration from vocational training of women in unconventional areas such as masonry and construction work. She also got opportunity to attend workshops on AIDS awareness, gender training, legal rights and health issues.

18.9.2 Vocational Training: Microfinance model of Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM), Government of Maharashtra gives the highest premium to capacity building through vocational training. It promotes carpentry, printing business, motor winding, cycle shop, buying and selling of paddy, making leather goods, bamboo craft, running hair cutting saloons and fishing among WSHGs (Balsaraf, 2007).

The WSHG members of Sakti in Yerhalli, rural Bangalore demanded that they should be supported to start STD booth as there was none in their village. The WSHG members in

Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh., Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra are trained in dealership of petrol and diesel oil, management of fair price shops (Ration shops), readymade garment shops and stationery shops, running of flour mills, production of soap and detergent and extraction and sale of *neem* oil.

18.9.3 Creation of Awareness about Women's Causes: Generally SHGs do not extend loans for organizing dowry or for sex selective abortion etc. and women do not approach SHGs for such anti-women purposes because microfinance institutions like Sakti organize several awareness generation programmes on these subjects. In principle, the Sakti WSHGs do not support any causes that are detrimental to women's interest. For example, Stree Mukti Sanghatana which has dedicated itself to the women's cause, has developed lots of material in audio-visual forms such as theatre (its famous play *Mulgi Zali Ho* or *Beti Aayi Hai*), songs, CDs, poster exhibition etc. on various issues pertaining to women and children. All this was extensively used while conducting various awareness programmes in aspects of life like Equality, Solid Waste Management, Health, Importance of Education, Work Culture, Public Distribution System (PDS), Atrocities, and Effective Parenting at community level.

18.9.4 Intervention in Cases of Wife-beating, Bigamy and Other Restriction:

There are instances where SHG members contacted a lawyer and issued a legal notice to the husband who used to beat his wife. The wife was one SHG member's daughter. Similarly, one WSHG member asked village elders to intervene whenever there was conflict between two wives of a man. They were also asked to see that both the wives get share in his property. WSHG members also felt that they could become more mobile without being dependent on men and could handle crisis situation with more courage and confidence after attending residential programmes organized by the microfinance institutions. One WSHG member

added that earlier they were blindly obeying their husbands but now they assert themselves. Besides, they are respected in the family as they are making financial contribution for the households.

18.9.5 Monitoring schools: WSHG members in Sakti are also active in School Development Management Committee (SDMC). Kamma from Netravati Mahila Sangh, one of the members of SDMC told, “We wake up dozing teachers, monitor the quality and distribution of mid-day meals and conditions of toilets.”

18.9.6 Help in Getting Mortgaged Land Released: Vikalpa in Tilakwada, Narmada district, Gujarat has done commendable work in the direction of economic empowerment of rural women through SHGs by using the tool of participatory action research projects. After having a detailed baseline done at the project village, the project identified around 31 acres of land which was mortgaged by small and marginal farmers. The families which were legal owners of the land became *de facto* landless because they were involved in concealed tenancy. The project through SHG federation provided them a revolving corpus to get back their mortgaged land with certain conditions.

18.9.7 Environmental Sustainability and Social Empowerment: Stree Mukti Sanghatana established two training centres in Chembur, Mumbai for training *Parisar Bhaginis* (Environment sisters) in bio-composting, vermiculture and gardening. As a trainer and facilitator, Stree Mukti Sanghatana secured work opportunities for solid waste collection and treatment in major public and private sector housing colonies and office premises. 250 trained *Parisar Bhaginis* successfully brought near zero-waste status in these colonies, campuses and also in the small housing complexes. The approach adopted by Stree Mukti Sanghatana in *Parisar Vikas* is found to be most sustainable as it imparts the beneficiaries with the knowledge and skills, advocates for their rights and helps them to be organized. It

combines economy, empowerment and environment. This helps *Parisar Bhaginis* to have increased bargaining power, better social organization, increased income and self-sufficiency.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the ways in which micro-credit institutions and self-help groups mentor women?

18.10 CRITIQUE OF MICROFINANCE AND SELF-HELP GROUPS

Main disadvantages of micro loans and microfinance institutions (MFIs) is that they have yet to prove that micro lending is more successful than welfare-style programmes in lifting people permanently out of poverty. According to studies by anthropologist Aminur Rahman and reporter Helen Todd (both of whom studied the **Grameen Bank** in Bangladesh) and a world-wide study of micro lenders sponsored by Oxfam, micro lenders regularly fail to help people attain permanent self-employment, often because they fail to ensure that the loans are actually used by their borrowers to start small businesses. The most disappointing fact is that such programmes have been unsuccessful in reaching the poorest individuals and even the most successful microfinance programs are unable to sustain themselves without additional aid. Besides, like any other development strategy, micro lending for the purpose of

developing small businesses is a complicated endeavour that requires a localized understanding of the particular economic, cultural, and social factors affecting entrepreneurial success.

In the article “**Microfinance Misses the Mark**” Aneel Karnani an Associate Professor at the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business points out that microloans are more beneficial to borrowers living above the poverty line than to borrowers living below the poverty line. This is because clients with more income are willing to take the risks, such as investing in new technologies that will most likely increase income flows. Poor borrowers, on the other hand, tend to take out conservative loans that protect their subsistence, and rarely invest in new technology, fixed capital, or the hiring of labour.

Microloans sometimes even reduce cash flow to the poorest of the poor, observes Vijay Mahajan, the chief executive of Basix, an Indian rural finance institution. One reason could be the high interest rates charged by microcredit organizations. Microcredit proponents argue that these rates, although high, are still well below those charged by informal moneylenders. But if poor clients cannot earn a greater return on their investment than the interest they must pay, they will become poorer as a result of microcredit, not wealthier.

Another problem with microcredit is the businesses it is intended to fund. A microcredit client is an entrepreneur in the literal sense. Although some microcredit clients have created visionary businesses, the vast majority are caught in subsistence activities. They usually have no specialized skills, and so must compete with all the other self-employed poor people in entry-level trades. Most have no paid staff, no assets, and operate at too small a scale to achieve efficiencies, and so make very meagre earnings. In other words, most microenterprises are small and many fail. The fact is, most microcredit clients are not micro entrepreneurs by choice. They would gladly take a factory job at reasonable wages if it were

available. We should not call these poor as entrepreneurs. The International Labour Organization (ILO) uses a more appropriate term for these people: “own-account workers.”

Michael Miller of **The Acton Institute** highlights that while microfinance can play a role in development it is not a panacea for poverty, and the way it is practiced now can have serious unintended consequences that actually undermine development. Microfinance can be the first step on the ladder but macrofinance is needed too. For widespread and sustainable eradication of poverty, an attractive investment climate with secure property rights and rule of law are much more important in the long run. Microfinance is a stop-gap measure: development will have taken place when it is no longer needed.

18.11 PROBLEMS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

Women in India encounter many problems to get ahead as an entrepreneur. Though a large number of schemes and programmes have already been in vogue in several states in our country, women entrepreneurs are still experiencing a plethora of problems which have resulted in restricting and inhibiting the expansion of women entrepreneurs. The problems that women face towards enterprise development at a community level are given below:

1. The greatest obstacle to women entrepreneurs is their lack of self-confidence. They accept a subordinate status, as a result they lack confidence in their own capabilities. Male domination constricts their opportunities.
2. The financial institutions are sceptical about the entrepreneurial abilities of women. The bankers put unrealistic and unreasonable securities to provide loans to women entrepreneurs. According to a report by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), "despite evidence that women's loan repayment rates are

higher than men's, women still face more difficulties in obtaining credit, often due to discriminatory attitudes of banks and informal lending groups " .

3. The women entrepreneurs suffer from inadequate financial resources and working capital because they lack access to external funds due to their inability to provide tangible security. Very few women have tangible property in hand.
4. Women's family responsibilities bar them from becoming successful entrepreneurs. Having primary commitments for children, home and older dependent family members, few women can devote all their time and energies to their business.
5. The success of women entrepreneurs in business depends on the support the family members extended to women in the business process and management which is rarely realized.
6. Lack of knowledge of availability of the raw materials and low-level negotiation and bargaining skills are the factors, which affect women entrepreneurs' business adventures.
7. Many women in developing nations lack the education needed to spur successful entrepreneurship. They are ignorant of new technologies or unskilled in their use, and often unable to do research and gain the necessary training (UNIDO, 1995). The studies indicate that uneducated women do not have the knowledge of measurement and basic accounting.
8. The low level of education and confidence leads to low level achievement and advancement motivation among women. Low-level risk taking attitude is another factor affecting women's decision to engage in business operations and run a business concern.

18.12 SUGGESTIONS

Following efforts can be made to promote effective development of women entrepreneurs.

1. For all developmental programmes of the government, women should be considered as a specific target group.
2. Adequate vocational training programme on management skills and decision making should be organized for women that enable them to understand the production process and business management.
3. Skill development organized in women's polytechnics and industrial training institutes should be put to work in training-cum-production workshops.
4. Training on professional competence and leadership skill should be extended to women entrepreneurs to remove psychological barriers like lack of self-confidence and fear of success through the aid of committed NGOs, psychologists, managerial experts and technical personnel.
5. Government should give preference to goods and services produced by women entrepreneurs in procurements for its departments to provide them marketing and sales assistance.
6. State finance corporations and other financing institutions should by statute extend purely trade-related finance to women entrepreneurs.
7. The financial institutions should provide more working capital assistance both for small-scale ventures and large-scale ventures initiated by women entrepreneurs.
8. Repeated gender sensitization programmes should be held to train financiers to treat women with dignity and respect as persons in their own right.
9. Infrastructure, in the form of industrial plots and sheds, to set up industries and marketing outlets for the display and sale of products should be provided by state-run agencies to women entrepreneurs on preferential basis.

10. District Industries Centres and Single Window Agencies should have Women Entrepreneur's Guidance Cell to assist women to handle the various problems of their trade and business.

11. Non-Government Organizations can be involved in entrepreneurial training programmes and counselling of women.

18.13 SUMMING UP

The Unit discusses the importance of entrepreneurship in the industrial development of the nation. Broadly, this Unit focuses on the recognition of women as entrepreneurs in India. Women entrepreneurs has encouraged by different civil society bodies working through agencies like microfinance institutions and SHGs. The problems like male dominance, inaccessible loans, inadequate financial resources and lack of family support are some of the limitations that women encounter in the course of enterprise development.

18.14 GLOSSARY

ILO (International Labour Organization): ILO is the world's only tripartite multi lateral agency dedicated to bring decent work and livelihood, job related security and better living standards to the people of both poor and rich countries. There are four strategic objectives of ILO : To promote and realize standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, create greater opportunity for women and men, to secure decent employment and income, enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all, strengthen tripartism and social dialogue.

UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization): UNIDO is a specialized agency of the United Nations. Its mandate is to promote and accelerate sustainable industrial development in developing countries and economies in transition

and work towards improving living conditions in the world's poorest countries by drawing on its combined global expertise and resources.

IDBI (Industrial Development bank of India Limited): IDBI is a public sector Bank established in the year 1964 as a Development Financial Institution. In the year 2004 DFI (Development Financial Institution) was converted into a banking company as well as project financing for industries, development of identified backward areas, emergence of new spirit of enterprise and evolution of a deep and vibrant capital market. At present IDBI concentrates on corporate, retail, SME and agri products and services.

18.15 ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS IN CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

1. In India industrialization undertaken during post-independence period has reduced the share of household industries like weaving, jute making, papad making etc. Mechanization of agriculture and industries has displaced women in all parts of India. It has increased the extent of unemployment and poverty among women. Therefore it was felt necessary to promote employment opportunities for women through enterprise development, so that women seeking jobs can be gainfully employed.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

1. A. Sakti, Bangalore, B. MASUM, Pune, C. SEWA, Ahemdabad, D. Vikalpa in Tilakwada, Narmada district, Gujarat D. Stree Mukti Sanghatana, Mumbai.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

1. Microcredit institutions and self-help groups mentor the women through exposure trips, vocational training, creation of awareness about women's causes, intervention in cases

of wife-beating, bigamy and other restriction, monitoring schools, help in getting mortgaged land released, environmental sustainability and social empowerment.

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18.17 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1. Define the concept of entrepreneurship and discuss women's empowerment in relation to enterprise development.
2. Discuss the mentoring role of microfinance institutions and SHGs in the context of development of women entrepreneurs.
3. Analyze women's empowerment by citing case studies.
4. Explain with examples how microcredit institutions and self-help groups mentor women.
5. Write a note on emergence of microcredit institutions and self-help groups. What are their shortcomings?

UNIT 19: GENDERED IMPACT ON AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Structure

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19.1 INTRODUCTION

Historically, women have been the managers of natural resources and also dependant on them for their livelihood. They use the natural resources in a sustainable manner as that determines not only the survival of their families but their own as well. There is thus an imperative for understanding how issues such as division of labour, access to credit or information as well as rights of ownership require a gendered understanding for policy prescriptions and development initiatives in the agriculture sector as well as those impacting the environment.

19.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss gender issues and needs in the agriculture sector;
- Analyze the rationale for mainstreaming gender in the agriculture sector; and
- Describe the linkage between environment and gender and the differences in gender impact of environmental risks.

19.3 WOMEN AND AGRICULTURE

Agriculture contributes a significant share to the Gross Domestic Product in the national economies of most developing countries. This underlines the linkages between agricultural performance and the output and incomes of other sectors and those between governments' overall objectives (such as employment generation, poverty alleviation, food security and human resources development) and their goals and policies for agricultural development. Women have always played a central role in agriculture, undertaking a wide range of activities relating to food production, processing and marketing. In addition, women play a key role in land and water management in all developing countries.

Women are most often the collectors of water, firewood and fodder. They have access to local knowledge on the medicinal use of plants; they have been engaged in soil conservation programmes; and, besides, it is women who perform most of the work pertaining to animals. With migration to the cities of the developing world gathering speed, women carry with them these rural skills and are responsible for the growth of urban and peri-urban agriculture, which is now recognized as being vital to food security in cities.

The important role played by women in agriculture was in the past largely ignored in government statistics and decision-making. There has been some change in the situation over the last two or three decades and women are now receiving recognition in the agricultural sector in many parts of the developing world. However, these recent developments may be endangered by such factors as the drive to commercialize agriculture and rural development being entrusted to private players in many countries. These factors have reduced gains and threaten a return to the situation where women's role is not fully recognized, and where gender-blind policies and programmes fail to address the needs of women farmers.

There also **remain a number of areas where progress in advancing gender equality has not been significant and which represent challenges for the future.** These include women's lack of access to land, resource entitlements and inputs such as credit and technology and the limited role played by women in planning and the formulation of policy in the sector. Women have also had less contact with extension services than men and generally use lower levels of technology because of problems of access, cultural restrictions on use or lesser interest in doing research on women's crops and livestock .

The role of women in community development and the creation of self-help groups is particularly important, especially given current trends in agricultural extension activities.

Agricultural extension is tending to rely more and more on working with farmer groups, and farmer-to-farmer extension, farmer field schools and farmers' organizations while replacing the more traditional methods of agricultural extension carried out on individual farm visits. A key focus of this approach is to enable rural people to secure sustainable livelihoods, with an emphasis on income-generating activities.

Women have traditionally earned valuable income through the processing of foods at the household level for sale, but there are severe constraints on the expansion of this due to a lack of information about markets, the absence of cold storage facilities and packaging technology and an inability to obtain credit. These limitations are now understood and one challenge is to foster this business acumen and to encourage small-scale agro-processing.

Box 1: The African Farmer

The phrase 'the African farmer and her husband' expresses the importance of women farmers in Africa, where:

- Some 80% of all those engaged in food production are women;
- On average women work more hours than men in producing food;
- Men tend to hire out their labour and women produce the bulk of the food for local or family consumption.

In other regions too, cultural traditions and economic necessity have always meant a significant role for women in agriculture. The importance of women as caretakers of the food supply is now beginning to gain global recognition.

19.4 GENDER ISSUES AND NEEDS IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Women are known to produce more than 60 percent of the world's food. In general, women provide 50–60 per cent of the labour requirement, increasing to 80 per cent in paddy and rice production. On account of large scale migration of the male population to cities, more women are becoming functional heads of both households and farming activities. This is the scenario in most developing countries.

Five main gender issues have emerged as being of particular significance in the agriculture and rural development sector:

1. Access to land and water resources, and to credit and other support services;
2. Gender differences in roles and activities;
3. Gender and agricultural extension and research;
4. Women's empowerment and equal access to decision-making.
5. Gender, agricultural biodiversity and commercialization

These issues are inter-linked and are explained in detail below :

19.4.1 Access to Land (Including Forests) and Water Resources and Services

Issues of access to land, forests and water and their interface with women are critical for understanding the impact of any development policy.

Access to land, forests and water resources

Increasing privatization of community resources in the hands of a few are undermining the ability of many women to use and conserve increasingly scarce resources in a sustainable way. There are pressures to export and meet strict quality control standards. In addition, agricultural services are being commercialized and land tenure arrangements are under threat, reducing the amount of good land available to small farmers. This is because fertile land is being diverted to cash crops. As a result, the small farmers, most often women, are increasingly pushed to cultivating plots that are dispersed, remote and usually less fertile. This land is often not fit for continuous cultivation and is vulnerable to land and water degradation, particularly through soil erosion and deforestation. Insecure land tenure reduces the incentive to make improvements on land or undertake activities such as tree planting or terracing. It also offers little incentive for investing in permanent crops. Further, this implies a lack of ability to seek credit.

Women's access to land and ownership rights remain a critical problem even in such cases where there is no legal restriction on their owning and holding land. The need for women to secure full and independent land rights, without mediation by men, is required on the grounds of welfare, efficiency and gender equality. In the long term, political will is needed to answer the demand for land reform, and to ensure that it is carried out in such a way that women are treated equitably.

Women are linked with forests for their supplies of fuel, fodder and minor forest produce. Deforestation and depletion of forest resources and loss of access to and control of forest resources have increased poverty, unemployment and drudgery of women.

The **water and sanitation sector** is another area where women need to be actively involved in policies, programmes and projects. In the rural areas, while men are usually more

concerned with water for irrigation or for cattle, women are usually the ones who collect, use and manage water in the household besides being responsible for disposing of household waste and maintaining sanitation facilities. Despite the recognition of the important role of women in the water and sanitation sector, the design of programmes in several countries excludes women from the decision making process.

Access to Credit and Other Support Services

The disadvantage of lack of ownership of land and resources results in limited access to agricultural support services, such as credit with which they can purchase inputs, and to advice and training in agricultural technology. There are several reasons for this including legal restrictions (such as the need for a male signatory); lack of collateral (e.g. land title); lack of information about credit sources and availability; as well as lack of other services such as micro-credit schemes. Although some initiatives for launching microcredit schemes have come up in developing countries, there are several gender-related issues that need attention. These are:

- Women must be provided loans for all types of profitable agricultural activities, and not just those required for domestic purposes.
- For enabling women to utilize and fully benefit from loans, credit facilities should be accompanied by provision of agricultural technical skills and human development training. Collective enterprises undertaken by women's groups for farming can succeed when the groups are provided with management training and support.
- The staffing of microcredit programmes needs special attention as such people who have field experience and local knowledge should be employed.

- Equal access to credit means more than just micro-credit and should include the full range of economic policies to ensure that there are no barriers to gender equality and equity.

19.4.2 Gender Differences in Work and Activities

It is important to recognize the differing roles of men and women in the rural sector. An analysis of the gender division of labour has shown that women as paid and unpaid labour take on three types of roles. As stated by Razavi and Miller, 1997, these three roles are:

- *The productive role:* this refers to market production and home/subsistence production undertaken by women which generates an income (whether financial or 'in kind');
- *The reproductive role:* this refers to the child-bearing and child-rearing responsibilities borne by women and
- *The community management role:* this refers to activities undertaken by women to ensure the provision of resources at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role

An understanding of these three roles can inform gender-aware planning that takes into account the differential impact of programmes and projects on women and men because of women's multiple roles. When these roles are not factored into policy making, they lose effectiveness for the intended beneficiaries. Another factor that needs to be taken into account is that certain tasks, activities or enterprises may be regarded as 'male' or 'female'. For example, women typically gather forest products for fuel, food for the family, fodder for livestock and medicinal uses. Men more often cut wood to sell or use as building materials. In order to secure sustainable and equitable management of forest resources, therefore, both women and men need to be consulted in the design and implementation of forestry projects.

Similarly, where livestock is concerned, women and men often own different animal species and use different animal products, and any policies would need to address the needs of both .

19.4.3 Gender and Agricultural Extension and Research

It is well known that government extension services have not proved effective in reaching women farmers and the cultural bias has, in many countries, prevented women from active participation in group training as well as in being able to access inputs such as fertilizer and credit. These services have been predominantly staffed by men – according to the FAO only 15% of extension workers are women (FAO, 1999) – and they tended to direct their services to male farmers or heads of households, excluding female-headed households and women members of male-headed households. However, in the present context there has been an increasing influence of NGOs, and any consideration of gender in relation to these points must be considered in this context.

The growing commercialization of agriculture has led to efforts to optimize production and access to markets but at the same time, there is also a danger that small-scale farming will suffer. Diverse food production systems are under threat and, with them, the accompanying local knowledge, culture and skills of the food producers. Over the last few decades, the change in farming methods and the ‘green revolution’, through which just a few varieties of rice, maize and wheat were planted around the world, have resulted in the disappearance of more than 75 percent of agricultural crop varieties. The activities of multinational corporations, promoting patented technologies also pose a threat. The poorest farmers living in remote areas among whom many are women with very little access to cash, are the ones who are left out of this development process. Thus the income gaps among rural families and between areas require greater commitment to advancing gender equality and equity.

19.4.4 Empowerment and Access to Decision-making

This challenge is perhaps the most difficult and long-term. Externally imposed programmes such as Structural Adjustment Programmes, incorporation into the world capitalist system, the globalization of trade and the development of significant monopoly power in certain private sector markets due to the penetration of multinational corporations have frequently had a negative impact on the lives of women in developing countries.

Given that development planning can also represent an intrusion of outside influences and ideologies into rural communities, it is highly likely that the outcomes will also be unfavourable unless those responsible for designing and implementing rural development projects are aware of the potentially differential impacts of these policies on women and men.

Thus, there is a need for women to be empowered and educated so that they can exert influence and participate in decision-making on issues that affect their lives. In fact, gender equity is impossible without women's empowerment. In the agricultural sector, gender-awareness in decision-making is needed at a number of levels: in the field, in technical positions in government and NGO agencies, in government departments such as agriculture, fisheries and forestry and at the level at which macro-economic and other macro-level decisions are made.

19.4.5 Gender, Agricultural Biodiversity and the Commercialization of Agriculture

As predominantly small farmers, women have been largely responsible for activities such as the selection, improvement and adaptation of plant varieties. This has both supported and increased agricultural biodiversity. However, with increasing commercialization of

agriculture and diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural uses, the ability of women to get employment, shelter and fulfill their basic needs is reducing.

In a study conducted in five villages in Afghanistan, it has been seen that some women also have experience of working in some of the most profitable areas of agriculture such as melons, orchards and vineyards. The possibility of using common land for women's orchards or vineyards, and again accessing markets through those women able to leave the village, could be explored. This would provide women and their families with extra income and may enable these women to have more decision-making power. Though, as mentioned earlier, the assumption that an increased economic contribution leads to increased decision making power that translates into increased well-being in this context needs to be tested and further understood. For this type of project to work, family support as well as a community decision to allow land to be used for this purpose would be necessary, as would the availability of markets. It could also only be tried in areas where sufficient land and water is available and in areas where women were interested.

Box 2 Women and Natural Resource Management

Most women in Africa are directly dependent on their local environment and sustainable natural systems for their own and their families' survival. As daily managers of the living environment, they are experienced in the management of agriculture and food production, fisheries, forests, soil, energy and water resources, and have developed skills in conservation that are built into their traditional subsistence activities. At the local level, co-operative action taken by women demonstrates that by sharing their knowledge and experience they can improve the environment and promote sustainable development.

Check Your Progress Exercise: 1

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer this question.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. List the five main gender issues related to agriculture and the rural development sector.

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19.5 WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES AND ECOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS-THE TWO WAY RELATIONSHIPS

Environment and forest development have been crucial concerns for sustainable development. Women are employed in wasteland development, social forestry and desert development programmes on a large scale. In these areas the budget has been cut by 23.5%. Smokeless 'chullas' have been enthusiastically promoted among rural and urban poor women because they are less harmful to women's health. The Government's budget for funding this project has reduced by 18.5%.

The most ironic impact of the SAP is on the environment and forest development. In the last few years, the environment has become one of the most debated political issues. At the Rio Summit, government organizations (GOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) from India made their presence felt by making passionate presentations. In reality, however, there has been an overall budgetary cut of 18% for the environment and forest development.

In the context of a wood-fuel crisis, alternate energy resources like biogas and solar energy equipment gain major importance. The Government, however, has reduced the budget for these alternate energy sources by 26.3% and 25.4% respectively. Further funds allocated for research on alternate energy resources have been reduced by 26.3%. On the one hand, a resource "crunch" is created where environmentally regenerative programmes are concerned; while on the other hand, millions of rupees are made available for controversial mega projects like the Sardar Sarovar, Dabhol Power Plant and Narmada Dam. The Morse Committee, noted environmentalists, most of the NGOs outside Gujarat, within India and internationally, have criticized the projects that are supported by the World Bank. This is because they will harm 240,000 people and create major environmental problems.

19.5.1 Displacement in the Name of Development

The most disturbing aspect is the very space to live and work is withdrawn from the urban poor in favour of parking spaces and flyovers. Throughout the 20th century, the urban poor women have been employed in food, beverage, tobacco, textiles, and wood / bamboo / cane and ceramics industries. Here too, they have been targets for retrenchment and forced to join the unorganized sector. Women are squeezed out of marketing, vending spaces because global traders have made local labour and skill obsolete.

Gender audits of mega developmental schemes and programmes have been extremely useful to seal the leakages that dis-empower women and bring to the fore women's component in terms of employment, educational opportunities, skill development, entitlement and assets ownership.

Capital driven growth has perpetrated tremendous human miseries by resorting to forced eviction of poor people from their dwelling place and work place. While commenting

on the **forced eviction to accommodate mega projects**, the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, Sixteenth Session, 1997 stated:

“Women and other vulnerable individuals and groups suffer disproportionately from the practice of forced eviction. Women in all groups are especially vulnerable given the extent of statutory and other forms of discrimination which often apply in relation to property rights (including home ownership) or rights of access to property or accommodation, and their particular vulnerability to acts of violence and sexual abuse when they are rendered homeless.”

19.5.2 Displaced Population due to Natural as well as Man-made Disasters:

Women, the greatest victims of natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and social disasters such as caste, communal, ethnic conflicts and war and economic disasters in the name of development (building 350 flyovers in Mumbai, mega plants, shopping plazas displacing people) need rehabilitation in terms of proper housing, civic amenities, safe transport and work.

GATT's pressure to amend the Indian Patent Act that is based on process patenting will make essential drugs very expensive. Poor women will find it impossible to avail themselves of medical facilities. Finally, ten case-studies based on the experiences of Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Ghana, Jamaica, Peru, Philippines, Korea, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe suggest that unless the governments ensured compensatory policies in terms of public works, nutritional support, public education alongside the SAP, women suffered the most.

ICE policy i.e. Information, communication and entertainment in favour of economic reforms has nothing to offer the common women except deprivation, degradation and dehumanization. Free-play of market forces unleashed by the economic reforms have made

the majority of Indian women more vulnerable in the factor, labour and product markets. The Government of India appointed 2nd National Labour Commission (NLC) in 2000 to focus on five aspects-- review of law, social security, umbrella legislations for the unorganized sector, impact of globalization on Women workers and child labour and healthcare. Its recommendations serve the interest of economic reforms that benefit world capital, Multi National Companies and Trans National Companies.

19.5.3 Energy and Environment Policy

In the 1980s, governments and development agencies became much more aware of the need to consider gender issues in their environmental and natural resource management programmes. This led to changes in project design and implementation. Eco-feminists have played a crucial role in evolution of new gender-sensitive approaches among the policy makers. But in actual practice, the economic vested interests have reigned supreme.

19.5.4 Gender Audits of Water Policy

Gender economists have critiqued the watershed management and rainwater harvesting programmes that focuses solely on water utilization for agriculture and industry. Majority of rural and urban poor women have to spend many hours for accessing and collecting for drinking water and water for household consumption.

Policy makers first came to appreciate that women 'play an essential role in the management of natural resources, including soil, water, forests and energy...and often have a profound traditional and contemporary knowledge of the natural world around them'. The exclusion of women from environmental projects - through outright neglect or belief in the gender neutrality of projects - would thus be a recipe for project failure.

Subsequently, donor agencies came to see women as especially vulnerable: 'their responsibilities as day-to-day environmental managers ...make women both victims of and contributors to the natural environment's degradation and pollution.

On the other hand, gradually, awareness grew of many grassroots success stories of women fighting to conserve local resources - such as greening of deserts in Rajasthan, *Appiko* in Karnataka, *Chipko* in Tehri Garhwal and Junagarh in Gujarat, *Narmada Bachao Andolan* in Madhya Pradesh., Maharashtra and Gujarat.

19.5.5 Gender Mainstreaming in the Agriculture Sector

Given the extensive participation of women in all aspects of agricultural production, the mainstreaming of gender into the agriculture sector is a key strategy not only for the promotion of equality between men and women, but also for sustainable agricultural and rural development. A key outcome of the mainstreaming approach was that women's concerns which were earlier viewed in isolation, as separate issues, leading to their marginalization in the state system and other social structures was replaced by an approach which not only makes more material resources available to women but also ensures that women farmers are provided with greater facilities at the micro level.

Despite this, there remain a number of areas where progress in advancing gender equality has not been significant and which represent challenges for the future. These include women's lack of access to land, resource entitlements and inputs such as credit and technology and the limited role played by women in planning and the formulation of policy in the sector. Women have also had less contact with extension services than men and generally use lower levels of technology because of problems of access, cultural restrictions on use or lesser interest in doing research on women's crops and livestock. Thus, agricultural development needs to focus on gender to create a more effective, transformational approach

that achieves poverty reduction and hunger alleviation for all, and also improves equity between men and women. In several areas, women are both the majority of farmers and the most prone to experience negative impacts due to inequity in the form of unequal access to land rights, loans, income, transportation, and education.

19.5.6 Women as Farmers and Agricultural Workers

The term women farmers and agriculture workers includes all paid and unpaid work in agriculture and its allied sectors such as animal husbandry, forestry, fisheries, agro-processing and other related activities. It refers to all women working in farm and non-farm activities. Women constitute 40 % of the agricultural workforce and this percentage is rising. An estimated 20 % of all rural households in India are *de facto* female headed due to widowhood or other reasons. The increased feminization of agricultural work and labour means concentration of women in a sector which is already experiencing a decline. Because of this the destitution of the agrarian population due to the crisis has also meant a feminization of poverty.

19.5.7 The Agrarian Crisis and Its Impact on Women

With the rate of growth of the agriculture sector declining to 1.8 % p.a. during the tenth five year plan, the destitution characteristic of the agrarian crisis has also meant a feminization of poverty. In addition, changes in cropping pattern, diversion of land for commercial crops, dwindling of forests and erosion of access to the forests has led to loss of livelihood of women particularly from tribal, dalit and pastoral communities who are the main users of forests. The high input costs of agricultural production resulting from the withdrawal of subsidies on fertilizers, pesticides and agricultural credit are aggravating the problem. Another trend reflecting the agrarian distress in the post-reform period has been the increase in distress migration. Where women migrate along with their families they have to face the double burden of taking care of the family and working on construction sites, brick

kilns etc. In addition, this results in women becoming more vulnerable to trafficking and other types of exploitation besides leading to increase of violence against women.

19.5.8 Towards Framing a Gender Impact Strategy for Agricultural

Development: (An analysis by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Agricultural Development Initiative)

1. Agriculture has the power to be transformative for reducing hunger and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Although, it is known that women currently provide 60-80% of the agricultural labour in our areas of focus, they have limited access to the resources and opportunities needed to maximize and profit from their contributions. These limitations constrain both female farmers' ability to improve their lives and that of their families. These limitations also constrain the transformative power of agriculture to alleviate poverty and hunger.

2. The Agriculture Development initiative recognizes that in order to achieve the required impact, every resource and tool available should be used to ensure that women are active participants in every aspect of work. To that end, a gender mainstreaming strategy can ensure that the practical needs and strategic interests of women and girls are considered in each proposal and that understanding the complexities of gender roles helps refine our project goals and design. Our strategy ensures that gender is at the forefront of how the work is conceptualized and executed. Thus, those who are most burdened and least empowered must be both the primary beneficiary of resources as well as the catalyst for effecting lasting change in agricultural development.

3. Gender Impact should imply that women and men are actively engaged in all processes so as to allow them to voice needs and priorities and be heard by leaders, policy makers, and donors. This means special effort must be taken to hear from and listen to those voices most marginalized from influential networks and those least likely to have access to functioning markets and services. A greater enfranchisement and participation by women and smallholder farmers will lead to improvements in health, nutrition and poverty both for women, men, and families throughout the community.

Box 3: Key Questions

- ☐ What roles do men and women play in each stage of agriculture?
- ☐ How have these roles changed over the past 23 years?
- ☐ How are the roles men and women play in agriculture affected by age, marital status,

wealth, ethnicity, and tradition?

☐ Do the roles which men and women play affect their bargaining power within and

outside the household?

☐ Are gender roles in agriculture different depending on whose land the work takes place

on and on which terms; i.e., owned, sharecropped, mortgaged, farm labour?

Source:

<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN018206.pdf>

accessed on 14th July 2010.

Check Your Progress Exercise: 2

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer this question.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. What do you understand by the term women farmers?

2. Explain briefly the impact of the agrarian crisis on women.

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19.6 ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY CONCERNS

Women's interface with the environment comprises their engagement with land, forest, water resources in addition to their role in resource management. The previous section on agriculture includes a broad discussion on these aspects and hence for avoidance of repetition, the same issues will be discussed in terms of the environmental risks and women's role for environment protection.

19.6.1 Linking Environment and Gender: An Introduction

The discussion on Gender and Environment is based on two guidelines:

1. That gender mediates human/environment interactions and all environmental use, knowledge, and assessment; and
2. That gender roles, responsibilities, expectations, norms, and the division of labour shape all forms of human relationships to the environment

Examples from Rwanda: (1) The annual population growth rate in Rwanda is very high -- over two percent. Any attempt to introduce family planning by aid agencies is met with considerable resistance by the government, churches and mosques. This is a gender issue, not

a women's issue, because men control all three of these institutions. (2) At a site where American engineers had drilled new water wells, the quality of the groundwater was far higher than the river water that was traditionally the source of water for the community.

Women, who collected water, did not have to travel as far, because the wells were closer to the community than the river was. However, the wells remained unused, Why? Because the main opportunity for social interaction among young men and women was when women went to the river to collect water while the men were fishing or irrigating crops.

These are two examples to understand why the issue must be termed as gender and environment rather than women and environment. The two broad guidelines noted above manifest themselves in a variety of environmental relations and interactions, including:

- Gender differences are evident in the use and management of natural resources, and unequal relationships in the family, community, etc. To mediate women's access to resources;
- Gender differences are visible in livelihood strategies that are rooted in particular uses of the environment;
- Gender differences are visible in knowledge of the environment, knowledge of specific resources, and of environmental problems;
- Gender differences are obvious in responsibilities for managing, owning, or using resources, and in rights to resources;
- Gender differences can be seen while engaging with the environment, in perceptions of the environment as well as in perceptions of the nature and severity of environmental problems.

The connections between gender relations, environmental change and vulnerability have only begun to be studied. Vulnerability to the effects of degraded environments are gendered and

the effects of improvements in environmental quality do not impact a community in the same way. The impacts differ depending on factors such as race, age, class and gender. Besides, the abilities to cope with or compensate for environmental change are gendered.

19.6.2 Differences in Gender Impact of Environmental Risks: Some Examples

A gender-segregated workforce results in different experiences for women and men in relation to environmental risks. Consider these examples:

- Men might be exposed to toxic chemicals used in mining; women will be exposed to pesticides used in the export flower-industry;
- Women's and men's income-generating activities may require specific resources (fuel, water) that produce particular wastes;
- Environmental pollution produces different health hazards for men and women - - women may be particularly vulnerable to home-based hazards such as indoor fumes;
- Women's domestic responsibility to provide resources for the household (water, fuel, food) increases when resources become scarce;
- If environmental hazards produce illness, men and women have different responsibilities for caring for ill family members;
- Responses to environmental change differ with age, class, family hierarchy, and gender;
- Biases in educational and training systems can imply that women are less equipped than men to understand, cope with, and anticipate environmental change or resource conditions.

One of the cumulative effects of all these gendered relationships is that even perceptions of the environment and of the state of the environment are often shaped by gender.

Check Your Progress Exercise: 3

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer this question.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. Discuss two examples of environmental risks associated with women.

19.6.3 Gender Equity in Environmental Projects

In the 1980s, Governments and development agencies became much more aware of the need to consider gender issues in their environmental and natural resource management programmes. This led to changes in project design and implementation. Policy makers first came to appreciate that women 'play an essential role in the management of natural resources, including soil, water, forests and energy...and often have a profound traditional and contemporary knowledge of the natural world around them'. (World Bank, 1991). The exclusion of women from environmental projects -- through deliberate neglect or belief in the gender neutrality of projects - would thus be a formula for project failure.

A few years later, donor agencies came to see women as especially vulnerable: 'their responsibilities as day-to-day environmental managers ...make women both victims of and contributors to the natural environment's degradation and pollution.' (Ibid).

On the other hand, gradually, awareness grew of many grassroots success stories of women fighting to conserve local resources - - such as those described in Power to Change (Women's Feature Service, 1994). This then led to women being viewed as 'major local assets to be harnessed in the interests of better environmental management' (Davidson cited in Braidotti et al, 1994).

In some countries, the new environmental projects are based on an assessment of whether natural resource users are male or female so that the delivery of services 'reaches the right people'. For example, social forestry schemes have been redesigned, recognizing the diverse uses of tree products and different species preferences of men and women: men typically want timber for construction and fencing, while women need fodder and wood fuel. And, in water and sanitation activities, women's participation on water committees or in maintaining facilities is becoming the rule rather than the exception.

19.7 NEW APPROACH: THEORY VS PRACTICE

The rationale for the new approach is not always visible at the time of implementing the projects. The reasons for this practice being ineffective at times are:

First, project intentions can be subverted. As an example, the case of leaving environmental management to community level institutions (such as those promoted by the Aga Khan programme in northern Pakistan) can be cited. Such programmes do not guarantee women's access to project resources. In fact, the aim of involving women at all stages of the project often makes women do voluntary work, without giving them a fair share of project benefits.

Second, compared to a gender analysis of the underlying problems, environmental projects promote a limited set of aims. Policy documents (e.g. World Bank, 1991) acknowledge that lack of property rights reduces women's capacity to conserve environmental resources but the new approach does not address this issue. Donors still favour giving women access to credit, to help them manage resources and build up assets. It is immature to assume that traditional male control over land and other assets will not extend to the newly possessed natural resources. Thus, any attempt to give women authority within isolated projects without taking into account their limited property rights is almost certain to fail.

19.8 THE WAY FORWARD: EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S CONTROL OVER RESOURCES

Is there any way of strengthening women's control over resources in environmental projects? Legal changes guaranteeing women independent property rights and increased political representation are needed at the national level. However, such reforms take time. They also need to be complemented at the local level by building up women's capacity to claim the new rights attained.

One approach suggested for environmental projects is **support for collective action by women** (Agarwal, 1994). This has the potential to confer inalienable use rights - - though not necessarily property rights -- over natural resources. Women have more chance of exercising rights as a group than as individuals. Wasteland development projects in India (such as the Bankura projects in West Bengal) have successfully supported women's groups efforts to regenerate forests and improve land productivity. They also build on women's greater use rights over common property than on privatized lands. But women need to keep the initiative here: new government policies in India are formalizing collective management

of forests under male-dominated communal institutions, undermining women's traditional property rights in forest resources.

Support for women's collective actions in addressing natural resource management problems is one instance of a general strategy to strengthen women's bargaining power in their relations with men. Other examples need to be found to develop the policy relevance of this approach to a broad range of environmental problems.

While women's involvement is important at all levels of decision-making, their participation is critical in the successful transfer of technologies at the community and household levels, as this would have an immediate effect on their surrounding environment, and their health and livelihood. This would also influence their decision-making powers in the community/ household. Attention should be paid to the fact that women at different stages of their life, for instance at their reproductive age, would be affected differently by the adoption of Environmental Sustainable Technologies.

19.8.1 Women, Water and Sanitation

Focusing on water issues, women are major users of water, and also discharge most of used water from a household - through cooking, washing, cleaning, bathing children, etc. They are also key players in maintaining the hygiene of family members. For the water to be used in a sustainable manner, it is important that they are made aware of the interrelationships between the technologies selected, the way it is applied and used in the provision of potable water, the discharge of used water, and issues related to sanitation and health. It is thus important to involve women in both the decision-making process, i.e. selection of ESTs, as well as in implementation, i.e. adoption and use of ESTs.

The key decisions for which it is necessary to consult women include: the situation of water facilities; choice of technology; the selection of pump caretakers, water committee members and other personnel; and the choice and management of the financing system. If women are well represented at higher levels, grassroots participation will be more effective.

Special care must be taken that women's participation does not become just a source of cheap labour. To date, women's involvement has been largely in voluntary construction work or as water committee members, in stereotyped roles: fund-raising, collecting fees, health and hygiene education, or cleaning. With appropriate training, women can also be involved in technical and managerial aspects of water supply and sanitation. There is scope, for example, to involve women in the management of credit schemes and revolving funds in Rajasthan in India shows that employing women rather than men as pump mechanics has higher initial costs but in the long-term brings greater efficiency and social benefits.

Box 4 CASE STUDY: In the suburbs and districts of Dibuchi, people drilled bore wells within the boundaries of their houses, where they also dug holes for toilet purposes. This resulted in water contamination and the spread of water-borne diseases, which led in turn to the death of many children. Such a situation could have been avoided if EST was selected and adopted in an appropriate manner, taking women's needs and wishes into consideration.

19.8.2 Experience from Bangladesh: Bangladesh Cyclone Response fails to meet Women's Needs

Disasters are not always gender-neutral. Studies in Bangladesh show that women suffered most following the 1991 cyclone and flood.

Among women aged 20-44, the death rate was 71 per 1000, compared to 15 per 1000 for men. Since emergency warnings were given mainly by loudspeaker and word of mouth, women's lower literacy does not explain these findings. Other factors lay behind women's higher mortality. Women were left at home by their husbands to care for children and protect property. Women's saris restricted their mobility. Women were malnourished compared to men and physically weaker. During the cyclone, the lack of purdah in public shelters may also have deterred women from seeking refuge.

"Women were left at home to care for children and protect property"

Following the cyclone, the lack of female personnel in emergency medical teams inhibited women from seeking medical care. Equipment taken into disaster areas was inadequate to meet the needs of women. Many women lose breast-feeding infants during environmental disasters. Pumps to express breast milk are essential to avoid serious infection and debilitating pain. Equipment and medication are also needed to handle the increase in miscarriages which always follows disasters.

19.9 THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION ON ENVIRONMENT

This section has been drawn from the documents of – *United Nations Environment Programme* , *UNEP's Division of Early Warning and Assessment* , *UNEP's International Environmental Technology Centre : Advancing the Sustainable Development Agenda; The UN Women's Conference, its implementation and follow up including the Beijing Review 2000; Presented by Jane Esuantsiwa Goldsmith, On the 18th February 1999 UNED-UK held its annual conference titled 'Towards the UN Millennium Assembly)*

"Women have an essential role to play in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption patterns and approaches to natural resource management."

- The platform for action on environment makes the link between poverty and environmental degradation, and that everyone's co-operation is needed to eradicate poverty to achieve sustainable development.
- The Platform highlights the contribution and potential of women in promoting sustainable development.
- Through their management and use of natural resources, women provide sustenance to their families and communities.
- Women's indigenous knowledge of ecological linkages and ecosystem management are the main labour force for subsistence production.
- Women are more likely to be around, constituting a more stable part of the population—they are more likely to make a long-term commitment and investment in their communities.
- Women have often played leadership roles or taken the lead in promoting an environmental ethic re-cycling, local level activities.
- There's been a rapid growth of women's NGOs working at local, national and international level.

However, women remain largely absent at all levels of policy formulation and decision-making in natural resource and environment management.

- Their skills and experience are marginalized in policy making.
- Women are rarely trained as professional natural resource managers, planners, and agriculturalists.

19.10 SUMMING UP

Women have always played a central role in agriculture, undertaking a wide range of activities relating to food production, processing and marketing. In addition, women play a key role in land and water management in all developing countries. The five main gender issues that have emerged as being of particular significance in the agriculture and rural development sector include access to land and water resources; access to credit and other support services; gender differences in roles and activities; gender and agricultural extension and research; women's empowerment and equal access to decision-making as well as gender, agricultural biodiversity and commercialization. Thus, the mainstreaming of gender into the agriculture sector is a key strategy not only for the promotion of equality between men and women, but also for sustainable agricultural and rural development. The linkages between gender relations, environmental change and vulnerability are important as vulnerability to the effects of degraded environments are gendered and the effects of improvements in environmental quality impact people differently. The impacts differ depending on factors such as race, age, class, and gender. Besides, the abilities to cope with or compensate for environmental change are gendered. Thus, there is a need to focus on the vulnerabilities of women to changes in the environment and climate change so that actions and initiatives for empowerment of women (through strengthening of women's control over resources) can be taken.

19.11 GLOSSARY

GDP (Gross Domestic Product): The total market value of all final goods and services produced in a country in a given year, equal to total consumer, investment and Government spending, plus the value of exports minus the value of imports. The GDP report is released at

8.30 am EST on the last day of each quarter and reflects the previous quarter. Growth in GDP is what matters, and the GDP growth of the United States has historically averaged about 2.5-3% per year but with substantial deviations. Each initial GDP report will be revised twice before the final figure is settled upon. GDP numbers are reported in two forms current dollar and constant dollar.

Bio-Diversity: The variety of life on earth at all its levels, from genes to ecosystems, and the ecological and evolutionary processes that sustain it.

19.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

1. Water, land, natural resource management.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

1. Women engaging themselves in agriculture and its allied activities.
2. Feminization of poverty, loss of livelihoods, diversion of land to commercial use, withdrawal of subsidy, reduction in agricultural credit.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

1. Earthquake, cyclone

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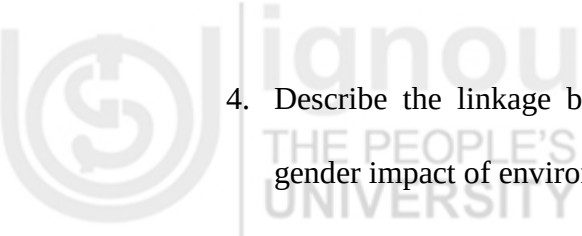
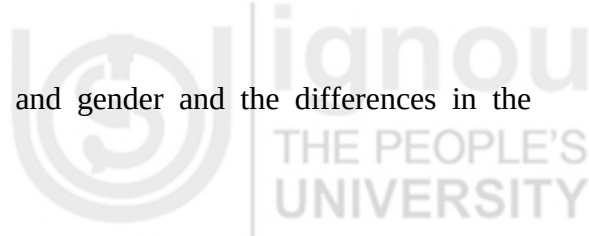
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19.14 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1. Discuss gender issues and needs in the agriculture sector.
2. How does commercialization of agriculture impact women? Explain briefly.
3. Analyze the rationale for mainstreaming gender in the agriculture sector

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4. Describe the linkage between environment and gender and the differences in the gender impact of environmental risks.

UNIT 20: WOMEN IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL ECONOMY

Structure

20.1 Introduction

20.2 Objectives

20.3 Brief Global Overview

20.4 Defining Informal Economy – A Debate

20.5 Women in Formal Economy in India

20.5.1 The Equal Remuneration Act

20.5.2 Maternity Benefit Act

20.5.3 Problems in Implementation of Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS)

20.6 Women in Informal Economy in India

20.6.1 Violation of Basic Human Rights in Informal Sector

20.7 Scenario in the Post- Vishakha Guidelines Period

20.8 Gender-sensitive Recommendations related to Employment

20.9 Summing Up

20.10 Glossary

20.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

20.12 References

20.13 Questions for Reflection and Practice

20.1 INTRODUCTION

The transformation which has taken place over a period of time in the socio-economic-political front still has not brought significant change in the lives of women. The gender division of work keeps assigning women exclusively to house chores, reproductive

activities and home and family care tasks. Besides, social and demographic changes are taking place such as migration, the increase of divorce rates, and women who are head of families, etc. The effects of this division are expressed through an overload of work without social acknowledgment, lack of time for training and entertainment and a deficient access to information systems which reduces the opportunities to enter the labour world, the possibilities of participating in social life and politics and decision-making chances. These, among others, are some of the causes why women usually represent the majority in the performance of informal activities.

20.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Describe the status of women in the formal and informal economy in India;
- Analyze the perspectives of the informal economy in India and the place of women in the context of the informal economy; and
- Explain the salient features of social security legislation related to the informal economy in India.

20.3 BRIEF GLOBAL OVERVIEW

Post World War II, it was widely assumed that with the right mix of progressive economic policies and resources, traditional economies would transform into dynamic modern economies. And in the process, the traditional sector comprised of petty traders, small and marginal producers as well as an entire gamut of casual jobs would be absorbed into the modern capital-intensive formal economy resulting in complete abolishment of such

economic activities. This perspective received a sound foundation in successful rebuilding of Europe and Japan after World War II and the mass production that took place in Europe and North America between the period of 1950 and 1960. By mid-1960s, this perspective had received a jolt from persistent widespread unemployment problems in developing countries which weakened the economic foundations of these countries too. The International Labour Organization (ILO) despatched a series of large multi-disciplinary 'employment mission' in response to this scenario to various developing countries. The first of such missions to Kenya in 1972, headed by Keith Hart, a social anthropologist, brought forth the fact that the traditional sector was not only just thriving but actually expanding to include the profitable and efficient enterprises as well as marginal activities. Here, the Kenya Mission chose to use the term 'informal sector' coined by Hart in his study on Ghana in 1971 rather than the traditional sector for a series of small-scale and unregistered economic activities that took place.

At that juncture, there were two schools of thought that existed. One believed that once these countries like Kenya, Ghana and other developing countries would receive sufficient level of modern industrial development, it would result in abolishment of the 'informal sector' altogether while the other school of thought argued that industrial development might take a different course altogether where the informal sector might go for massive expansion in future.

By the 1980s, the debate took an amazing path to witness that in North America and Europe the production processes itself went through a change. Mass production gave way to small-scale, decentralized, 'flexible specialization' resulting in the informalization of employment relations altogether. Standard jobs became non-standard. Atypical jobs turned hourly jobs (with few benefits) or piece rate jobs (with absolutely no benefit) followed by subcontracting the production of goods and services to small-scale informal units. Thus the

informal economy made a somewhat permanent footprint the world over. The 1980s saw the changes in the socio-political situation in the Soviet Union. Thus Soviet countries, Africa, Central and Eastern Europe gradually became associated largely with informalization of the workforce. In Asian countries millions of people who lost formal jobs due to the economic crisis switched to the informal sector to remain employed as a survival strategy. During the 1990s, at the advent of globalization, the global competition forced the erosion of formal employment relations by encouraging the firms in the organized sector either to hire the workers at low wages with few benefits or outsource the production of goods and services to informal units.

20.4 DEFINING THE INFORMAL ECONOMY – A DEBATE

Over these years, while the informal economy took its shape, the researchers with ILO tried to broaden the concept of ‘informalization’ of employment relations. The focus had shifted from the enterprises which are not legally regulated to the employment relationships that are regulated, stable or protected socially. In a nutshell, the new definition of informal economy is made up of the nature of employment rather than the characteristics of enterprises. Thus, under such circumstances, the new definition of informal economy is outlined as comprising of all forms of ‘informal employment’ that is, employment without secure contracts or worker’s social protection in the form of benefits; small unregistered enterprises; own-account operators; unpaid family workers; set of temporary or part-time workers; domestic workers, casual or day labourers and many more such employment relations. Therefore, it is evident that the debate of defining informal economy too has gone through various stages within the research findings of ILO as well as within the domain of the respective countries also.

In India, the literature revealed that there are broadly three different types of usage of the term “informal economy”. Predominantly, the demographic surveys and the government plan documents are the main users of such a term. It covers the labour force that falls precisely outside the organized sector work organizations. Although this has served the purpose of governmental planning and projections as well, it fails to answer many a question related to the structure of employment of each sector it comprises of. Central Statistical Organization (CSO) is the other major user of this term. According to CSO, the unorganized sector includes all those enterprises and household industries which are not regulated by any legislation and which do not maintain annual accounts or balance sheets. In both the definitions and its explanations there exists a legal framework for sure albeit with the possibility of changing its nomenclature with even a change in the legislation itself. Hence, it is quite an inadequate tool for social analysis.

The other source where the term is commonly used is the academic discipline of Economics. Mostly the economists tried to explain the term through certain characteristics of this sector such as “... organization of capital, nature of products, technologies that are used, the markets that this sector serves or the pattern of consumers of the products...”. This definition too suffers a lot of lacunae in the sense that it is not very concrete. The exact nature of activities that this sector comprises of is very different from one place to another place within a country like India at a given point of time which makes it difficult to generalize. Secondly, to build the definition on the basis of products, nature of market it caters to, and the level of technologies that it adopts also faces a lot of limitations. Most of the time, the strong linkages between the formal and informal blurred because the formal sector enjoys the opportunity of low production cost of the informal sector to manufacture its products which are geared to the general market. Outsourcing the piece rate production in the informal sector

in a decentralized manner to reduce the operational cost in the formal sector often poses a difficult challenge in framing the informal sector in its entirety.

The third conspicuous perspective about the informal sector can be traced from the point of view of the trade union movement in the country. As the Trade Unions cater mostly to the labourers in the formal sector, it may be called as the protected sector while the informal sector may be called the unprotected sector. Now the problem arises out of the presence of informal sector labourers within the formal sector in the form of contract labourers engaged for certain jobs performed predominantly by them albeit without any recognition from trade unions for their benefits.

For statistical purposes, the informal sector is regarded as a group of production units which form a part, within the System of National Accounts (SNA), of the household sector as unincorporated enterprises owned by households. Charmes observed that the informal sector is defined, irrespective of the kind of workplace, the extent of fixed capital assets, the duration of the activity of the enterprise and its operation as a main or secondary activity, as comprising:

- 1) Informal self-owned enterprises which may employ family workers, and employees on occasional basis, for operational purposes and depending on national circumstances, this segment comprises either self-owned enterprises or only those which are not registered under specific forms of national legislation.
- 2) Enterprises of informal employers which may employ one or more employees on a continuous basis and which comply with one or both of the following criteria:
 - a) size of the establishment below a specified level of employment;
 - b) non-registration of the enterprise or its employees

Ghosh opined that “In 2002, ILO argued for defining the informal economy as ‘comprising the marginalized economic units and workers who are characterized by ‘serious

deficits in decent work' -- labour standard deficits, productivity and job quality deficits and organization and voice deficits. Reducing these deficits in the informal economy will promote the transition to recognized, protected, legal – and therefore, 'formal' - activities and ensure decent work”.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. What industries/activities constitute the informal economy?

20.5 WOMEN IN THE FORMAL ECONOMY IN INDIA

In the formal or organized sector there are industrial legislations and other protective legislations for workers. Most of these legislative provisions, unfortunately, seem to be working against the interests of workers, lack implementation and need reform. Government regulated minimum wages ensure only the bare essentials of survival but even that basic level is denied to workers in the informal sector. Factory inspectors usually avoid reporting as employers complain of low profitability, threaten closure and bribe them to keep quiet. At present crèches are provided in industries that employ more than 30 women employees and there too, ways and means are used to avoid this facility by the employers. There is no provision for providing crèches in the service sector and for both men and women working in shifts.

20.5.1 The Equal Remuneration Act

In India, The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 was enacted pursuant to Article 39 (d) of the Constitution of India providing for the payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers, for providing equal opportunities to women and men and for the prevention of discrimination on the grounds of sex against women in the matter of employment. The task of ensuring that there is no discrimination is very difficult, as there is no effective way of implementing the limited findings of the advisory committee. Secondly, the definition and evaluation of the same work or work of similar nature leaves much to be desired. Even the courts have used different expressions relating to valuation of identical work. This is one of the least invoked legislations.

20.5.2 Maternity Benefit Act

The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 provides for maternity benefit in case of childbirth, miscarriages, abortions, Medical Termination of Pregnancies (MTPs) and tubectomy. Establishments employing less than ten persons are left out from the purview of the Maternity Benefit Act or the Employees State Insurance Act. Under the present Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 the eligibility for maternity leave is that the women before availing the leave must have worked for eighty days in that establishment or organization. These eighty days include paid holidays and weekly holidays and the period for which she was laid off. In many organizations they are never allowed to complete the required number of days on record.

The women movement is demanding an umbrella legislation to cover all women (from formal/ organized as well as informal/unorganized sectors of the economy) under maternity protection and ratification of ILO the Convention No. 183.

20.5.3 Problems in Implementation of the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS)

The women's movement strongly supports the demand that nation-states from the developing world must introduce EGS. Wherever EGS is already introduced, there is a need for

stocktaking as the advisors of Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister for the Common Minimum Programme, Ms. Aruna Roy and Jean Dreze have circulated the draft of the Employment Guarantee Act.

In India (in Maharashtra), as far as the EGS is concerned, at the implementation level, it has been revealed that women have never been paid maternity leave benefits, though the Act says so. The problem is the stipulation of 185 days of work; EGS work is never that long; it is in bits and pieces. The entire work of a woman regardless of where she is working should entitle her to maternity benefit.

Though wages are apparently equal between men and women, the allocation of work is different men do trench digging which carries more wages. Women have been saying they can also do this work without trouble. Secondly, wages are often paid to the group of a few from the same village on the basis of equal pay for men and women but the group leader determines how much a woman gets. This should be remedied.

The most serious complaint is lack of facilities—shelter and lack of schooling for the children of women who are the major reporters for EGS work.

The most serious lacunae are the stopping of registration of applicants. This has made it difficult to know how many need work. The work site merely records how many turn up. The absence of registering how many want (not just turn up) with details of who the applicants are again loses data regarding the status of the worker-- small farmer, marginal farmer, landless worker etc; details of land holding. Plans will be better done if one knows the status of the worker also with regard to improving agriculture.

The timing of EGS work is another problem. It clashes with seasonal migration. The most important demand of women workers on EGS sites is skill up-gradation. They are tired of unskilled manual labour and building roads. The objective of employment under EGS is building good infrastructure. But it is done so badly that the asset does not last even one year.

This needs to be rectified. More choices and better technologies should be introduced in EGS work. Labour processes and labour relations in EGS work should be humanized and gender-sensitive. Women employees working for the scheme should not be targeted for population control programmes.

20.6 WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY IN INDIA

The changing pattern of work organization had a major influence on nomenclature of the workforce in a developing country like India. The industrial processes went through a major change. It was evident that certain products which required simple manufacturing process to be done, the production process was not much diverted and continued to take place as usual in the main production unit. The more complicated production process which involved more skilled operations got diverted in part to the informal units where the unskilled part of the process was being carried out from outside by the temporary or contractual workers while the more skilled part was being retained within the production unit with much sophisticated technology by using 'core permanent' workers on the company's own payroll. This opened up the avenue for women workers mainly engaged in unskilled jobs in the light consumer goods manufacturing sector. Simultaneously, the changing economic system resulted from the economic crisis worldwide coupled with progressive technology mounting pressure on illiterate, unskilled women to remain at the periphery by entering the casualized informal sector for sheer survival. Here again the increased number of women in the labour force increased the competition in job availability. Any sign of non-cooperation or any work-related grievance can bring the supply of work to an end abruptly. The absence of an organizational set up makes the women vulnerable to the manipulation that holds sway over the market and the capital. Hence, having been employed outside the legal domain, the casualized set of workers especially women, were denied the very access to the basic civil rights that were on offer by the State in the organized set-up.

20.6.1 Violation of Basic Human Rights in the Informal Sector

The informal sector as opposed to the formal sector is often loosely defined as one in which workers do not have recognition as workers and work without any social protection. In the informal sector, women workers are forced to work without contracts, without social security, with low wages under bad working conditions. In the absence of health insurance, income security, it is difficult for women workers in the informal sector to place importance on their health. The lack of income security often has a direct impact on the access to education for the children of women workers in the informal sector. They are not able to study and alleviate their poverty. Often children get absorbed into the informal sector themselves as adults due to lack of education or as children to help adults earn more (e.g. home-based workers, vendors, self-employed) Unorganized labour is usually perceived as 'poor' and as a beneficiary, consequently there are provisions in the national budgets to help them out of their poverty and vulnerability. They are treated as beneficiaries of anti-poverty programmes. The main concern of informal sector workers is irregular employment.

Box 1: Rag Picker: Poorest of the Poor

A Case Study of Women Rag Pickers in Mumbai has revealed that urbanization and the use of land for large-scale agriculture have led to mass migrations to the cities, where the displaced rural poor eke out a living on the margins of India's over-crowded cities. Unable to find work in the formal sector, many turn to street trading and rubbish collection in order to survive. Rag picking is a caste and gender-based activity. Rag pickers comprise the poorest of the poor – an estimated 25,000 of them in Mumbai, dwelling in shanties, mainly women and children who collect garbage -- plastic, paper, metal, etc., usually from municipal dustbins, landfills and garbage dumps for recycling. They work seven days a week, earning on an average less than Rs. 60 / 70 a day. They help maintain the environment of Mumbai by

keeping the streets clean and recycling and re-using waste. Mumbai produces 6000 metric tons (600 truckloads) of garbage every day, of which around 7 to 8% is collected by rag pickers. Rag pickers are highly vulnerable because they have few assets and few alternative livelihood options. Because of their hazardous working conditions the rag pickers suffer many more illnesses and injuries than the general population. Rag pickers live in constant fear of displacement, while others simply sleep on the pavements. Illiteracy among rag pickers and their children is high, and access to formal training or employment is non-existent. Many rag pickers have limited knowledge of their rights as citizens, including basic rights like access to free primary education.

No skills training

Women are not taught specific skills and are themselves diffident to take up skill training. The government's existing ITI network has a low number of women students. There is a need for improvement of courses and optimal use of space and teachers.

Abuse in Special Economic Zones

Adoption of export-oriented models and competition for foreign investment has led to the opening of more and more Special Economic Zones (also Free Trade Zones and Export Processing Zones etc.). In these zones labour laws are generally not applicable. Women are being used as 'cheap labour' force. They work under harsh working conditions. There is the abuse of labour and human rights and several instances of sexual harassment at the workplace. Governments have had a tendency to turn a blind eye to the abuse by capitalists to keep foreign investment inflow intact.

Night Work- the Issue and the Debate

Business process outsourcing has resulted in thousands of call centres employing young, computer savvy, and English knowing women for night work. The women's

movement is divided over this issue. One point of view supports night duty if the safety of women is ensured by safe transport facility; groups of women do night duty together and absence of sexual harassment at the workplace. The majority of women abhor night duty as they find it difficult to counter the opposition of family members; at times it is unsafe and injurious to their children's interests. In Mumbai, bar girls campaigned to work at night, as their work is possible only during that time and also more remunerative. According to ILO, 'night signifies a time period of at least 11 consecutive hours, including an interval between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.'. But many women workers face a lot of problems due to work at night including sexual harassment, molestation and rape. It is unfair to put a blanket prohibition on night work as discrimination against women to prevent access to jobs and contravening the principle of equality. The questions regarding sexual harassment and assault on them needs to be addressed. The state and employers must be forced to provide a safe work environment and safe transport to women employees.

Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

Accusations of sexual harassment are much more common today, reflecting the new consciousness and a new sense of power of people to end inappropriate behaviour directed towards them. The existence of an effective, informal conflict resolution process is immensely important.

Sexual Harassment at the Workplace (SHW) has remained one of the central concerns of the women's movement in India since the early eighties. During the 1980s, militant actions by the Forum Against Oppression of Women (Mumbai) against sexual harassment of nurses in the public and private hospitals by the patients and their male relatives; ward-boys and other hospital staff; of air-hostesses by their colleagues and passengers; of teachers by their colleagues, principals and management representatives; of Ph.D. students by their guides; so on and so forth received luke-warm response from the trade unions and adverse media

publicity. But this type of trivialization did not deter women's rights activists. More and more working women started taking systematic action against SHW. Baailancho Saad (i.e. Women's Voice) in Goa filed a public interest litigation in 1990 to bring amendments in the antiquated Rape Law that defined rape in a narrow sense of 'penile penetration into the vagina'. Several women's groups came forward in support of new concerns that encompassed the variety of forms of sexual violence against women including SHW.

During the 1990s the most controversial survivor of brutal gang rape at the workplace involved an employee of the Rajasthan state government who tried to prevent child-marriage as a part of her duty as a worker of Women's Development Programme. The feudal patriarchs who were enraged by her (in their words), "a lowly woman from a poor and potter community") 'guts' decided to teach her a lesson and repeatedly raped her. After an extremely humiliating legal battle in the Rajasthan High Court the rape survivor did not get justice and the rapists who were "educated and upper caste affluent men" were allowed to go scot-free. This enraged a women's rights group called VISHAKHA that filed public interest litigation in the Supreme Court of India.

Before 1997, women experiencing SHW had to lodge a complaint under the Indian Penal Code Section 354 that deals with 'criminal assault of women to outrage women's modesty' and Section 509 that punishes an individual/individuals for using 'word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman'. These sections left interpretation of 'outraging women's modesty' to the discretion of the police officer.

In 1997 the Supreme Court passed the landmark judgement in the Vishakha case laying down guidelines to be followed by establishments in dealing with complaints of sexual harassment. The Court stated that these guidelines were to be implemented until legislation was passed to deal with the issue .

Pursuant to this, the Government of India requested the National Commission of Women (NCW) to draft the legislation. A number of issues were raised regarding the NCW draft produced, and ultimately a Drafting Committee was set up to make a fresh draft. A number of women's organizations are part of this Committee, including, from Mumbai, Majlis. Majlis was asked to make the draft. Some women's organizations and women lawyers associated with Trade Unions in Mumbai have collectively worked on the draft with Majlis. Particular concerns while drafting have been to include the unorganized sector and to incorporate provisions of labour law. The bill introduced in the Parliament was known as The Sexual Harassment of Women at The Workplace (Prevention and Redressal) Bill, 2004. The Bill provided for the prevention and redressal of sexual harassment of women at workplaces, or arising during and out of the course of their employment and matters connected thereto, in keeping with the principles of equality, freedom, life and liberty as enshrined in the Constitution of India and as upheld by the Supreme Court in Vishakha vs. State of Rajasthan [1997(7) SCC.323] and as reflected in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which has been ratified by the Government of India.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. Briefly describe the violations of basic human rights in the Informal Sector.

20.7 SCENARIO IN THE POST- VISHAKHA GUIDELINES PERIOD

Several organizations have conducted survey research on SHW that were widely disseminated. The survey by Sakshi, Delhi throws up some worrying data where 80 % of respondents revealed that SHW exists, 49% had encountered SHW, 41% had experienced SHW, 53% women and men did not have equal opportunities, 53% were treated unfairly by supervisors, employers and co-workers, 58% had not heard of the Supreme Court's directive of 1997 and only 20 % of organizations had implemented Vishakha guidelines. Controversy over SHW by the senior manager of Infosys, by the chairman and managing director of NALCO, Medha Kotwal petition on SHW of a Ph. D. student by her guide in M.S. University, Vadodara and complaint against a senior professor of Lucknow University, complaint of SHW by the film star Sushmita Sen against CEO of Coca Cola have made employers alert about the economic burden and efficiency loss due to SHW. Still, most private companies refrain from investing funds in such committees.

A Sophia Centre for Women's Studies and Development study shows that awareness and implementation of the Supreme Court's guidelines is very low and there is need to spread awareness on the same. Study of Samhita, Kolkata throwing light on the processual dimensions of Bhanvari Devi Case have alerted the state and civil society to the enormity and gravity of the menace called SHW. Recently The Times Foundation organized a workshop for the corporate world on SHW. Testimonies of several participants of the workshop revealed that SHW is prevalent even in the companies where the victims are highly educated and have considerable economic leverage. Similar views have been expressed in the business journals, (Business Today, 1-9-2002).

In order to address Sexual harassment in the informal and small-scale industries, free trade zones, special economic zones, the labour departments may be directed to set up complaints committees and give them publicity or it could be made mandatory for every

industrial estate and export zone to have its governing body set up a grievance cell for complaints.

This will require co-operation between women's groups, official bodies, trade unions and employers. Women's groups can play an active role in disseminating information about sexual harassment and redressal procedures in industrial zones and estates. They can also raise the issue of the definition of skills and equal pay for comparable work so as to tackle gender inequality at the workplace. The Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention) Act must be implemented by the states to provide a remedy within the criminal justice system. This is to provide for prevention of sexual harassment of women and women employees that is work-related.

20.8 GENDER-SENSITIVE RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT

Some of the major recommendations which are gender-sensitive are highlighted in this section.

A. Policy for Women's Employment

A policy for women's employment has to include strategies for challenging the sexual division of labour and gender ideology inside as well as outside the workplace.

Policies for access include access to employment, education, training, credit etc. The policies may include:

1. Policies to improve the quality of employment, including her position in the household.
2. Policies to preserve employment and to protect material and human resources and assets.
3. Proper Implementation of Laws, Schemes
 - a. The existing labour legislation, i.e. the Industrial Disputes Act, the Factories Act, the E.S.I.S. Act and the Minimum Wages Act, should not be withdrawn but strengthened to cover all workers.

- b. Some mechanism is required to evaluate the value of work under ERA.
- c. Minimum wages need to be strictly implemented with ward level committees of workers.
- d. Employment Guarantee Scheme: The central and state government has to ensure macro policies that will absorb workers in labour-intensive units and occupations. The Employment Guarantee Scheme needs to be expanded and improved for urban workers. The focus of such employment schemes can be on building infrastructure, slum development and housing. The National Renewal Fund should be extended to cover the unorganized sector and a substantial part should go into the retraining of workers.

B. Law Reform

- i. Maternity Benefit for all working Mothers irrespective of the number of employees. Crèches should be provided for children of all workers and not merely women workers irrespective of the number of employees. There could be a common fund for each industry.
- ii. Family Leave: The minimum paid maternity leave period to be applicable to all working mothers irrespective of the necessary length of continuous service or the number of employees, irrespective of whether married or unmarried and whether the child is natural born or adopted; birth or adoptive fathers of a new child entitled to paid paternity leave on the birth or adoption of a child; employees to have a right to take time off to care for children, disabled or sick dependants. The options available include: Unpaid leave with automatic re-entry to an equivalent post in terms of grade, type of work etc.; part-time working; temporary re-arrangement of working pattern; flexi-time request right available to working parents with young children (below 5 years of age) or employees who have to care for disabled or sick dependants. The request can cover the employees right to return to work following availing of any of the above leaves. The staff member must undertake in writing to return to work. No employee will suffer a detriment, be unfairly dismissed or be discriminated against for a reason connected with pregnancy, childbirth, maternity, paternity, adoption, dependant care

leave or the right to request flexible working, or time off to take care of a dependant. There shall be no loss of seniority, sick leave entitlements and incremental progression.

Legal Protection for Informal Sector

Legal protection has to be given to the informal sector worker in the form of regular employment, notice period, compensatory pay or some form of unemployment insurance. It has been a long-standing demand of the representatives of the informal sector workers, trade unions and NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) that workers should be registered as daily or piece-rated workers with an identity card. This single measure would provide information on the number of irregular workers and access to them for welfare measures. Social welfare for the informal sector workers can be implemented by levying a cess on employers in industrial estates. Social services can be dispensed to the workers through existing government infrastructure and tripartite boards.

C. Needs of Women Workers in the Informal Sector

Recognition as workers, supplementary development programmes, vocational training for skill upgradation, provision for maternity benefit and post-natal medical facilities, protection against domestic violence and sexual harassment, family benefits, medical reimbursements, retirement benefits (old age pension), insurance schemes and policies, compulsory savings schemes, microfinance schemes and interest-free loans, legal guidance and awareness.

D. Emphasis on Education and Skills

A clear emphasis needs to be given to education, type of education of the poor and especially of women. Women's access to employment is limited (amongst other reasons) because of lack of education and skills. The central and state government has a free education policy for girls but there is no follow-up on the number of dropouts. Girls usually drop out

from high school. Special attention and incentives should be given to girls and parents for them to return to school.

E. Capacity Building and Training

Extra allocations of funds will be necessary for tying up the training institutions with job placement organizations or industries. Training for jobs have to be combined with additional inputs around building other life-skill, towards critical awareness about women's status, improvement in negotiating skills and programmes around building and maintaining women's assets including savings.

F. Social Audits

International consumer and workers groups have attempted social audits at the firm level to ensure workers' rights. They have to be made mandatory not only for export firms but for all production units.

G. Self Help Group Movement

Self Help Groups are organizations of women from the downtrodden section of the society that empower women to be self-reliant through capacity and confidence building and by making micro-credit available and accessible to women. The SHG movement has taught women the value of saving and the strength of working as a group.

Some of the problems faced by the movement are:

- Weak groups being formed.
- Delay in gradation of groups by banks.
- Negative impact of subsidy seekers .
- Implementation by NGOs with inadequate experience – need for their training.
- Provision of bank credit to 'defaulters'.
- Insensitivity of bankers.
- Delays in release of money by District Rural Development Authorities.

- Lack of group activity.
- Lack of participation of members in economic activities.

Recommendations for strengthening the SHGs:

- Groups should be only formed by NGOs or Women's Development Corporations with the requisite knowledge and ethos of SHG development and micro-credit movement.
- Once an NGO is selected, the nurturing grants should be released every quarter to it, after reviewing training milestones, group savings and internal lending data and not on the basis of bank gradation. NGOs should receive nurturing grants for at least five years, during which they should support the group.
- A state level agency should be appointed to train NGOs and also be permitted to appoint their own NGOs to implement the programme in addition to implementation through its field workers.
- SHG groups are not broken up by the banks insistence to drop the member who is a defaulter or whose family member is a defaulter of the bank.
- Along with initiatives improving the programme delivery mechanism, bankers need to be trained and sensitized every three months, because of the high turnover of bankers in rural areas and the ignorance of bankers coming from urban postings to the needs of rural areas.
- NGO releases should not be made contingent to the group taking up economic activities. NGOs should be evaluated on the basis of group capacity building and training.
- This SHG movement is now at the crossroads and is poised for expansion and the problems need to be addressed immediately.

H. Property and Land Rights

There is much gender bias in our property laws. Everything appears equal on paper and that is where it ends.

Recommendations

- Testamentary powers that deny daughters their property rights should be restricted.
- Daughters should be allowed full right of residence in the parental dwelling houses.
- Women must be given 'the right to residence' hence putting private household property in the joint names of partners. Care, however, has to be taken that wherever women have property in their name, men do not appropriate it under the pretext of property being in the joint name.

A woman, on being abused in her matrimonial home, has little choice but to continue to endure it. Her natal household is usually unwilling to have her back for fear of the social stigma attached to single women. These and other considerations restrict a woman's reliance on her parents' households in times of potentially dangerous marital relations. The Bill on Matrimonial property has been drafted that needs to be passed. The matrimonial property bill will give her rights.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. List the recommendations for strengthening the SHGs.

20.9 SUMMING UP

The informal sector with fewer qualification requirements concentrates the conditions of higher instability and lack of social protection. In general, contracts are verbal and do not consider any kind of social protection or minimum wage and they are paid by the piece or on

delivery. On the other hand, domestic work (the category which has the lowest salaries and social protection within the informal sector) provides 22 per cent of the new jobs for women generated between 1990 and 1998. Therefore, the same happens with other dimensions and training policies strategies, the incorporation of the gender perspective into the informal economy is fundamental to improve its quality and relevance.

20.10 GLOSSARY

System of National Accounts: The System of National Accounts 1993 is a conceptual framework that sets the international statistical standards for the measurement of the market economy. It is published jointly by the UN, the Commission of the European Communities, the International Monetary Fund, OECD and the World Bank. The System of National Accounts consists of a integrated set of macroeconomic accounts, balance sheets and tables based on internationally agreed concepts, definitions, classifications and accounting rules. Together, these principles provide a comprehensive accounting framework within which economic data can be compiled and presented in a format that is designed for the purpose of economic analysis, decision making and policy making. (Source; United Nations Policy Decisions).

CEDAW (Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women):

adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly is often described as an International Bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

20.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

1. i. Informal self-owned enterprises which may employ family workers, and employees on occasional basis, for operational purposes and depending on national circumstances, this segment comprises either self-owned enterprises or only those which are not registered under specific forms of national legislation.
- ii. Enterprises of informal employers which may employ one or more employees on a continuous basis and which comply with one or both of the following criteria:
 - a. size of the establishment below a specified level of employment
 - b. non registration of the enterprise or its employees

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

1.
 - No skills training
 - Abuse in Special Economic Zones
 - Night Work
 - Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

1. Groups should be only formed by NGOs or Women's Development Corporations with the requisite knowledge and ethos of SHG development and micro-credit movement. Once an NGO is selected, the nurturing grants should be released every quarter to it, after reviewing training milestones, group savings and internal lending data and not on the basis of bank gradation. NGOs should receive nurturing grants for at least five years, during which they should support the group.

A state level agency should be appointed to train NGOs and also be permitted to appoint their own NGOs to implement the programme in addition to implementation through its field workers.

SHG groups are not broken up by the banks insistence to drop the member who is a defaulter or whose family member is a defaulter of the bank.

20.12 REFERENCES

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20.13 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1. Provide the global overview of the informal economy.
2. Elaborate the debate on defining the Informal Economy.
3. Critically analyze the emergence of the informal economy worldwide.
4. Analyze the problems involved in implementing the Employment Guarantee Scheme.

UNIT 21: NEO-LIBERAL ECONOMIC POLICIES

Structure

21.1 Introduction

21.2 Objectives

21.3 Neo-liberal Economic Policies

21.4 SEZ, EPZ, EOU and FTZ

21.4.1 Special Economic Zones: Impact on Labour

21.5 Business Process Outsourcing (BPOs) and Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPOs)

21.5.1 Gender Empowerment through ICT

21.6 Mega Development Projects

21.6.1 Mines

21.6.2 Dams

21.6.3 Palm Oil and Mono Crop Plantations

21.6.4 Trans-migration, Encroachment, and Land Appropriation

21.6.5 Militarism and Government Impunity

21.7 Summing Up

21.8 Glossary

21.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

21.10 References

21.11 Questions for Reflection and Practice

21.1 INTRODUCTION

This Unit analyzes the changes in status of women after neo-liberal policies were introduced. During the process of globalization and emergence of SEZs, EPZs, EOUs, IT industry, the condition of labourers, especially the condition of women workers changed in both positive and negative directions. On the one hand, it created employment opportunities. On the other, it leads to deterioration of the working condition.

21.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- acquaint the students with the history of neo-liberalism and neo-liberal policies;
- analyze the working conditions in SEZs, EPZs and EOUs etc. and its impact on women workers;
- discuss the positive and negative aspects of emergence of the ICT sector with reference to women's employment; and
- review the conditions of the displaced population, especially of women, due to construction of mega development projects.

21.3 NEO-LIBERAL ECONOMIC POLICIES

The liberal school of economics became famous in Europe when Adam Smith published a book in 1776 entitled "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations". He and his followers advocated the abolition of government intervention in economic matters. No restrictions on manufacturing, no barriers to commerce, no tariffs, he

said; free trade was the best way for a nation's economy to develop. Such ideas were "liberal" in the sense of no controls. This application of individualism encouraged "free" enterprise, "free" competition - which came to mean, freedom for the capitalists to make huge profits as they wished.

Economic liberalism prevailed in the United States through the 1800s and early 1900s. Then the Great Depression of the 1930s led John Maynard Keynes to propound a theory that challenged liberalism as the best policy for capitalists. He said, in essence, that full employment is necessary for capitalism to grow and it can be achieved only if governments and central banks intervene to increase employment. These ideas had much influence on President Roosevelt's New Deal - which did improve life of many people. The belief that government should advance the common good became widely accepted. But the capitalist crisis over the last 25 years, with its shrinking profit rates, inspired the corporate elite to revive economic liberalism. That is what makes it "neo" or new. Now, with the rapid globalization of the capitalist economy, neo-liberalism is being witnessed on a global scale.

Since the 1960s the term 'globalization' has been used to describe technological processes and advances that have made our world seem smaller. In terms of economics, an aspect of economic globalization greatly refers to the inexorable integration of markets, nation-states, and technologies to a degree never witnessed before -- in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before. The predominant ideology steering economic globalization, macroeconomic policy and political decision-making in much of the world is referred to as neo-liberalism.

Neo-liberalism means that the enterprises or private enterprises should be free from any bonds imposed by the state. There should be greater openness to international trade and

investment. Neo-liberalism advocates no price controls and total freedom of movement for capital, goods and services. It is recommended that public expenditures for social services like education and health care and safety-net for the poor should be reduced. Maintenance of roads, bridges, and water supply should be privatized. Government regulation of everything that diminishes profits should be removed, including protecting the environment and safety on the job. State-owned enterprises, goods and services including banks, key industries, railroads, toll highways, electricity, schools, hospitals and even fresh water should be sold to the private investors to improve efficiency. The concept of “The Public Good” or “Community” should be eliminated and replaced with "individual responsibility,"

From a gender perspective this theory assumes that women have lower levels of education and on-the-job-training while their participation in the labour market is constrained by the intermittent nature of their natural childrearing roles or mothering. Free plays of market forces have made the majority of women more vulnerable in labour and product markets. This has often led to their relative invisibility in other spheres of life, including that of work and labour. Economic liberalization policies are based on the neo-liberal ideology, which currently dominates the increasingly integrating world economies. This process affects men and women in different ways. According to Chineze J. Onyejekwe (2004), women’s experiences with this process are extremely complex and diverse-- both positive and negative.

In terms of employment, for example, women have benefited from this process. The OXFAM report of 8 February 2004, states that in the past 20 years, trade liberalization has created employment for millions of women who now occupy between 60-90% of jobs in the labour-intensive stages of the clothing and food supply chains. In Kenya, 75% of factory workers are women, in Sri Lanka 85% and in Cambodia up to 90% are women (one in five of all 18-25year old Cambodian women have jobs in the garment industry). In China’s

Guangdong province, four out of five people working in the garment sector are women under 25 (there are 26 million migrant workers in the province). A significant number of the women workers in other countries include: 48 percent in India, 74 percent in the Philippines, and 80 percent in China. In this regard, economic globalization has opened up niches for women to create opportunities, particularly for their livelihood. Despite these benefits, labour market regulations based on the neo-liberal ideology negatively impact on women.

Laissez Faire in the labour market has threatened the employment opportunities of the adult married women. During the last one decade, there has been drastic increase in the girl child labour. Marked feature of neo-liberal policy is enlightened self-interest activated through market forces in the era of economic globalization. Globalization rides on the back of cheap labour of women and children. The landscape of the urban and rural informal sector in dozens of South Asian (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal) and South East Asian (Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia) countries, Indo-China (Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam) and China is flooded with sweatshops, ghetto labour markets and stigmatized migrant workers. Under globalization women have been the first victims of downsizing and rationalization. Their subjugation and exploitation have increased through retrenchment, unemployment, and increase in contract/sub-contract work, home working and loss of livelihood. Indicators such as declining workforce participation rate, casual employment status, growing number of women in the unorganized sector, all point to the marginalization of women. These impacts include among others, the feminization of labour, low-income, and the feminization of poverty.

Neo-liberal economics emphasizes efficiency and growth but it has often failed large segments of the population, particularly women who have largely borne the negative impacts of these policies. In this process, there is therefore the need to institutionalize regulations and structures that will provide for women's welfare and empowerment.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. What has been the impact of neo-liberal economic policy on women?

21.4 SEZ, EPZ, EOU and FTZ

Special Economic Zones (SEZs), Export Processing Zones (EPZs), Export-Oriented Units (EOUs) and Free Trade Zones (FTZs) are geographical regions where production takes place for export purposes. In these geographical regions export promotion takes place through economic laws which are more liberal than a country's typical economic laws. In its basic form, a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is simply a cluster that brings together different industrial or other producing units. Whereas the idea that creating spaces with good infrastructure facilities and simplified procedures assists industrialization is not new, the current SEZ idea goes beyond this by assuming that providing infrastructure is not enough. There have to be tax breaks, highly subsidized land and little or no compulsory worker protection to encourage private investment. This strategy is increasingly presented as one of the chief instruments by which a country can achieve rapid industrialization through promotion of exports.

In April 2000, the Government of India announced the introduction of the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) policy for the country to enhance foreign investment, promote exports and ensure upward mobility of domestic enterprises and manufactures to compete globally. The SEZs received legal sanctity after the enactment of the SEZ Act 2005 by Parliament in May 2005. The Act received Presidential assent on the 23 June 2005 and came into force in February 2006. Since then the number of SEZs created (in addition to the existing EPZs and EOUs) continues to expand and the share of international trade flows and the number of workers employed, are increasing. SEZs are tax havens. Indian SEZs need not pay income tax during the initial five years and have to pay only 50 per cent of their tax liabilities for the following two years. The new policy also provides them with a tax holiday for a ten-year period. Under the Act, the incentives offered to industries to help them to make profit often at the cost of local people, food security, environment and the “real” development of the country.

21.4.1 Special Economic Zones: Impact on Labour

A major problem with SEZs in many countries is that they propose to relax or even do away with many laws relating to labour protection, for the purpose of attracting investment into these zones. The SEZ rush is a unique war among Third World countries to win more and more foreign investments from and more and more share in exports to developed countries. It is unique because victory depends on another war — with its own people, its own working class. The victor is the one who is able to suck more blood from its own labour. In this cut-throat competition, the capital of one country flourishes at the cost of other. Whatever the outcome, labour in all countries faces inhuman hardships.

It is an almost universal phenomenon that in SEZs/EPZs labour laws are either not applicable or, even if applicable, these are moulded to give a free hand to capital. All over the world, export zones have a history of blatant labour rights violations and the instances of labour exploitation. In India also the situations are not any different. In India, prior to the SEZ Act 2005, theoretically all factory and labour legislations were applicable to the Export Processing Zones (EPZs). In spite of that, trade union activities were practically absent and the entry of non-workers was restricted. Indulging in any union activity invited extreme forms of punishment, including physical attack and loss of jobs. These unfair practices are on the rise after the SEZ Act, 2005. In India, the government initially tried to grant SEZs complete freedom from labour laws. Though having failed in this broad aim, they declared SEZs as public utility services, which has paralyzed union activities in these zones.

It has been found by the studies that a major share of the workforce in SEZs is women. These women are highly exploited with forced night shifts, no conveyance, no maternity leave, termination of jobs when pregnant, sexual harassment, denial of right to organize, no scope for collective bargaining and low wages. Since, SEZs are not bound by laws, the minimum wages paid for both men and women are lower than those paid outside the zones.

Shalini Sinha (2008) establishes that because the industries are export-oriented and the emphasis is on minimizing production costs to price the product competitively in the international market, women workers, who constitute 70-90 per cent of the workforce, bear the brunt of the competition in SEZs.

Evidence from a number of countries has shown that export-led growth has created wage employment for women in substantial numbers. Their income, quality of life and status have improved. However, gender parity in terms of wages and other benefits has not got

better. Besides, poor working conditions put women's health and safety at risk and directives against unionization weaken employees' bargaining power.

The feminization of the workforce is a common feature of SEZs/EPZs all over the world. Unmarried females are preferred though they face a high risk of sexual exploitation. They are mostly new entrants to the labour market and usually do not wish to take the risk associated with organizing activities. A major section of the workforce is composed of casual and contract workers. They have no job security. This makes them extremely reluctant to support any unionization efforts. Workers are mostly in the age group of 16-28 years. They work 10-12 hours daily and do not receive even minimum wages. The workload is such that one can work only when young. Child labour is also reported in some zones.

Evidences also indicate that during the 1990s employment of adult women decreased and employment of adolescent girls and child labour increased. Women were and are given underpaid and less skilled jobs. FTZs and EPZs thrive on young women's "super" exploitation. The employers overlook occupational health hazards. It is also observed that since there is no dearth of job seekers, the SEZ management prefers to replace a sick worker with a fresh healthy worker than to provide the workers with health facilities. Thus, the focus on profit-driven growth has taken away people's right to a decent livelihood.

Check Your Progress Exercise: 2

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the ways in which women workers are exploited in SEZs?

21.5 BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING (BPOs) AND KNOWLEDGE PROCESS OUTSOURCING (KPOs)

It is now a common understanding that women have always worked, and also that women's work has been made invisible and been less acknowledged in the past as well as in contemporary analysis. This is true of the care economy, of agricultural work as well as work in the modern economy. By the 1990s, the general scenario of gender in the world of work has undergone major changes, with increasing challenges by and for women in almost all fields of society and the economy.

Globalization has aggravated pre-existing occupational segregation by gender, and in this shifting occupational structure, while educated English-speaking women have benefited with the opening of new jobs in the Information Technology (IT) software sector and IT-enabled services sector, they are ghettoized at the low end of the value chain. The banking and financial sectors followed by the media and service sectors such as tourism have also opened new job opportunities for women, but this again is confined to a sub-set of urban women.

On the same lines, Sujata Gothoskar's (2006) observations regarding women's role and status in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector is discussed in this section. It reflects that with the increasing use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the 1990s and 2000s, the spotlight was also shared by this new technological revolution. There is an increasing body of research on the ICT sector and its impact on

different aspects of the workforce. There have been studies which argue that technology frees women to participate in public spaces as technology dissociates paid work from hard manual labour. Earlier discussions on the aptitude of women and women's brains being less developed, in terms of dealing with technology and fields like mathematics, seem to have happily fallen behind.

In this period, the Indian scene regarding women's work in the ICT sector is similar to the period when women in India entered the banking sector in large numbers. They refused promotions then as it would entail transfers and affect the education of their children and so on. Even today in the banking sector, women are in far less numbers in higher positions than men. IT seems to be replaying the same scene. The pressures of domestic life on paid occupations have remained, though women are dealing with it better now. In the case of IT, its dependence on different time zones has increased the demand for women working at night. This is similar to the occupation of nursing which had already seen large numbers of women working at night in the past. In IT many women/girls work at night in call centres. Also they are in a totally different occupation from nursing.

There is definitely no doubt that IT has opened avenues for women, especially young women in some countries of the south. Very few sectors of the economy are offering employment and the IT sector is one of them. In this sector, however, the labour market is a very specific one. Women and men from the educated strata, basically urbanized English-speaking people, who belonged to the classes and castes are the ones who are more likely to reap the immediate fruits of the IT revolution. When we look at the impact on gender balance or gender justice we also need to look at the impact on women of the deprived sections of developing countries. Thus, the impact of IT on gender equations is class, caste and country-specific.

Strictly speaking, the IT industry is in the formal economy and in that its capital is extremely well organized. After 1990, capital ruled the labour in a *laissez faire* market and destroyed the workers' organizations by employing workers on individual contracts rather than collective bargaining agreements. This trend seems to have been embedded in the IT industry right since its inception. This is an attempt to make organizing redundant. Today the IT labour market seems to be a sellers' market, with talks of poaching of the workforce by competing companies. History has also shown that women workers, organizing themselves only as workers, have not been sufficient to protect the interests of women, even as workers. The "workforce" in the IT industry is as varied as the IT industry itself. There are self-employed people. There are also the workers in call centres in Malaysia, India and the Philippines. There are users of the ICT and "community"-creators, as in the case of the Virtual Women's University in Germany. A great many facets have made it necessary to remain engaged for further work, to weave in more elements of an industry so dynamic that it changes every day. And relatively speaking, the IT industry is only just being born.

21.5.1 Gender Empowerment through ICT

As per "Information Technology Annual Report 2007-08", in India, it has been one of the major initiatives of the Government to empower women through capacity building in ICT, entrepreneurship development, IT awareness so as to enhance their employability in IT-BPO sector where the employment opportunities are growing. The Department of Information Technology has supported ICT projects relating to empowerment of women mostly for implementation in backward areas or for backward women in other districts. The list of 13 such ongoing projects is as under:

1. Capacity Building and Development of Girls - Chattisgarh.
2. Tribal Women as the Change Agent using ICT – Rajasthan

3. Empowerment of Women and Rural Youth through ICT for Sustainable Self Employment- Mizoram
4. Infrastructure creation in 10 girls Senior Secondary Schools - Rajasthan
5. Career oriented Training Facility in Multimedia & DTP Training to the SCs/STs and Women - Sikkim
6. Creation of Infrastructure in Girls' Schools - Tripura
7. Professional IT & Electronics Courses for Upliftment of ST Youth and Women - Mizoram
8. Empowerment of Women and SC/ST using ICT Tool - Karnataka
9. ICT for the Empowerment of Rural Women in Kancheepuram District - Tamil Nadu
10. Empowering of Women & SCs/STs using ICT Tools in Information Technology, Gorakhpur - Uttar Pradesh
11. Visually Impaired Women's Empowerment through Shruti Drishti - All India
12. IT for Empowerment of Women & Child Development (Project Chetna) - All India
13. Training of Graduate & Undergraduate Women (Department of Electronics Accredited Computer Courses) DOEACC-IT (Software) O/A Level Courses - All India

Women's empowerment through value added skill development in Information Electronics and Communication Technology (IECT) at DOEACC Centre, Aurangabad is encouraged through entrepreneurship development, elementary IT awareness, so as to enhance their employment opportunity. This would also help in capacity building in ICT. It is aimed to train 1110 candidates over a period of 2 years. Similarly, women's empowerment in Information Electronics and Communication Technology at DOEACC Centre, Gorakhpur is encouraged through capacity building in ICT, entrepreneurship development, ITES BPO, Computer Graphics & Animation, etc., so as to enhance their employment opportunities. It is

aimed to train 500 candidates over a period of 2 years. Professional IT and Electronics courses are conducted for upliftment of Youth and Women in Mizoram through DOEACC Centre, Aizawl. Under this project of DIT, DOEACC Centre Aizawl is training unemployed SC/ST and women candidates for increasing their employability and promoting entrepreneurship development in the areas of IT/ Electronics/ITES/Bio-Informatics etc. A project on Training of Trainers in e-Learning is being implemented by DOEACC Centres. In Phase-I, DOEACC Centres, Aurangabad and Kolkata implemented the project by training 240 teachers. The Phase II is being implemented by DOEACC Centres, Calicut, Imphal and Gorakhpur and the Centres are expected to train a total of 360 candidates.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Internet offer many benefits to both society and women. Unlike earlier technologies that displaced women, the new technologies offer the advantage of working from home, getting engaged in flexi-time activity -- options many women managing work-family balance find attractive. They make it feasible for women to maintain and upgrade skills, gain economic independence and status without becoming identical to men. In Economics, Kuznet's inverted U shape curve is well known which indicates that inequality first increases and then decreases with increase in the level of development. In the same way, new technology in the ICT sector may facilitate an inverted U curve which may be able to help women more in its later stages than it did in the initial stages. As far as economic opportunities are concerned, women tend to be concentrated in the end use, low skill Information Technology jobs such as data entry and word processing, and make up only a tiny percentage of managerial, maintenance and design personnel in networks, operating systems of software. However, women are entering into higher levels of the IT workforce, and their participation in this sector is increasing. Besides software, many of the new jobs are available to women in Business Process Outsourcing (BPOs) and Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPOs).

Check Your Progress Exercise: 3

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the ways in which the ICT sector has helped women?

21.6 MEGA DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

This section is based on Dictaan, Eleanor P., (2008) *“Glimpses of Neo-liberal Economic Globalization and Development Aggression against Indigenous Women in Asia”*,

(Draft) Presented at the Asia-Pacific Regional NGO Consultation with the UNSRAVAW, 15-16 October 2008, New Delhi, India.

Capital-driven globalization has perpetuated tremendous human miseries by resorting to forced eviction of poor people from their dwelling place and work place due to emergence of mega development projects. People displaced due to man-made disasters in the name of development need rehabilitation in terms of proper housing, civic amenities, safe transport and work. So far, economic globalization has neglected this aspect.

Economic globalization has come into Asian countries as large-scale mining, palm oil and agricultural monocrop plantations, hydroelectric power dams, exclusive tourism

development, among others. The race to comply with the Millennium Development Goals has further galvanized these “aggressions” to multiple oppressions. The major and immediate impact of this entire aggressive development paradigm is the denial of people’s right to their territories and resources which are basic preconditions for their right to life with dignity and their right to development.

21.6.1 Mines

In the Philippines, 12 million hectares or 40% of the country's total land area have been earmarked for mining investments. More than half of these are found in indigenous territories. In the Cordillera region alone, which is basically an indigenous peoples' territory, 60% of the land is covered with mining applications.

21.6.2 Dams

In the North East Region of India, there are 168 proposed big dams in line with the country's “Look East” Policy. This is aside from the 24 others which are reportedly under construction. Furthermore, in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Orissa and Jharkhand, 1.4 million people, 79% of whom are tribal have been reportedly displaced from an estimated total land area of 10.2 million hectares appropriated for mines, industrial plants and dams for the last ten years. “Women are affected by this violent development trend in various specific ways. As far as **Narmada** goes, the state governments in charge of resettlement and rehabilitation seem to be withdrawing more and more in implementing the Narmada Award and the Supreme Court Judgment, and trying to escape with monetary compensation. However, while adult sons have a good chance of being recognized as having independent households, adult daughters are invariably counted as ‘dependents’, and thus are not entitled to any monetary compensation. Their life in the resettlement camps is confined to the house, and exposes them to an unknown life of unprecedented struggle against disease and lack of basic amenities.” (Dietrich, Gabriele, 2007)

21.6.3 Palm Oil and Monocrop Plantations

The global attempt to curb climate change which is basically attributed to the carbon emissions of the western industrialized countries is targeting the forests and sacred sites. Asia hosts the big palm oil production in the world with Indonesia and Malaysia producing 44 % and 43% respectively of the world's palm oil production as of 2006. In Indonesia alone, some 236,265.25 hectares has been devoted to oil palm plantations by 141 companies in 14 provinces mostly inhabited by indigenous peoples. As of May 2007, 514 land dispute cases have reportedly been filed as documented by local NGOs.

21.6.4 Transmigration, Encroachment and Land Appropriation

State transmigration policies facilitate indigenous peoples' loss of their lands and resources to others creating an atmosphere of conflict and insecurity especially among women and girls who are often targeted to instill fear.

In India the inception of the Land Transfer regulation has precipitated thousands of land conflict cases involving tribal people claiming their lands against non-tribals' encroachment. Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR) reports that of the 72,001 cases filed, 33,319 cases, involving 162,989 acres of land have reportedly been decided in favour of the non-tribals. In November 2007 in Nandigram, West Bengal, a number of villagers supporting the anti-land acquisition movement were shot dead and women raped by cadres of the ruling party.

In Bangladesh, settlers, aided by the government and its armed forces, continue to grab *adivasi* lands and farms despite the 1997 Chittagong Hills Tract Peace Accord that provided for a deterrent to this malpractice.

21.6.5 Militarism and Government Impunity

Confronted with opposition and community resistance, investors and developers usually employ security forces. Most often host governments provide aid through its armed forces in the guise of security and peacekeeping. Some companies have resorted to the use of private armies or civilian armed forces usually recruited from the community to further sow division among the people.

The overall impact of development aggression can be seen from the point of view of indigenous women. Displacement means that they lose their traditional spaces and livelihoods, their residential lands and villages where they grew up and raise their children without fear. They often lose farms and gardens which are the primary sources of livelihoods... their rivers, lakes and forests that support the farms and gardens while providing food, fuel and medicinal resources.

Displacement means that women are not only denied their right to access and benefit from their territories and resources but are equally disenfranchised of their productive and reproductive roles as women. As the primary nurturers and healers in the family, this entails further burden for them even just to stave off thirst and hunger for the day. Their water sources become polluted if not totally destroyed. Their farms are alienated and converted and their medicinal resources gone with deforestation, among others. Local employment, improvement of educational, health and other services and infrastructure development are usually the carrots dangled by transnational companies to lure the consent of indigenous peoples.

The benefits of employment are usually biased towards males who are usually preferred in these types of work. In the oil palm plantations in Indonesia, for example, women absorbed by companies are given work as pesticide sprayers because it is less physically taxing. Unfortunately, they are rarely given proper protective gear. When they

return home, they have to prepare food often with pesticide residue still on their skin and clothes.

The poverty that ensues from displacement has forced many indigenous women to migrate in search of livelihoods. Garo and Mandi women in the plains of Bangladesh reportedly compose a majority in Dhaka's beauty saloons. Asked why they are there, one responded that their main livelihood was farming. The father, knowing nothing on land registration lost their farmlands so that she has to find work outside the village. Many others have risked their lives and security by going abroad as overseas contract workers predisposing themselves to labour and sexual abuse as well as trafficking and prostitution.

It is also alarming to note the increasing disappearances of young women and girls from the communities. Some, as those recently reported from North East India who were brought to Singapore then Malaysia, were lured into job offers and later ended up being prostituted.

Check your progress Exercise: 4

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. What is the impact of displacement as a result of mega development projects on women?

21.7 SUMMING UP

It is evident that the present trend of globalization works in the opposite direction of what was envisaged as subsistence approach (Dietrich, Gabriele, 2007). Any development initiative can only be sustained when there is a sense of ownership by the people through effective participation. It is argued that as per Kuznet's U turn hypothesis there may be rise in work participation rate among women, but in reality the employment opportunities for women continue to be very unsatisfactory. Due to structural reforms, women are working under hazardous conditions with a lot of insecurity as a result of casualization and individual contracts and low wages. Women can be empowered through intervention aimed at building entrepreneurial skills. There is also a need to develop a mechanism for access to credit, markets, information and training. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) should be considered a priority for developing countries' women because these have the potential to integrate women with the process of development.

21.8 GLOSSARY

BPO (Business Process Outsourcing): BPO is a sub-set of outsourcing that involves the contracting of the operations and responsibilities of specific business functions to the third party service provider.

KPO (Knowledge Process Outsourcing): KPO is a form of outsourcing with high added value processes chain where the achievement of objectives is highly dependent on the skills, domain knowledge and experience of the people carrying out the activity.

21.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

1. Women's experiences with this process are extremely complex and diverse – both positive and negative. Neo-liberal economics emphasizes efficiency and growth but it has often failed large segments of the population, particularly women who have largely borne the negative impact of these policies.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

1. It has been found by the studies that a major share of the workforce in SEZs is women. These women are highly exploited with forced night shifts, no conveyance, no maternity leave, termination of jobs when pregnant, sexual harassment, denial of rights to organize, no scope for collective bargaining and low wages.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

1. ICT sector has empowered women basically by creating job opportunities at flexi time and place.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4:

1. Economic globalization has come into Asian countries as large scale mining, palm oil and agricultural monocrop plantations, hydroelectric power dams, exclusive tourism development, among others. The major and immediate impact of this entire aggressive development paradigm is the denial of people's right to their territories and resources which are basic preconditions for their rights to life with dignity and their right to development.

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21.11 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1. Give a brief review of neo-liberal economic policies.
2. Analyze the conditions of women workers in SEZs, EPZs and EOUs.
3. Do you think that emergence of ICT sector has created employment opportunities for educated women only? What are the negative aspects of emergence of the ICT sector?
4. Discuss the miseries of the displaced population, especially of women, which is the result of construction of mega development projects.