
UNIT 1 DEFINING WORK

Nilima Srivastava

Structure

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this first Unit of the Course 'Women in the Economy', you will get a holistic understanding of what constitutes work for women both in public and private spaces and how do the two interface in the lives of women. In the beginning you will read about how the concept of 'work' has been defined by international agencies and what have been the definitions of work in Indian system of accounting, what kind of changes the concept has undergone to reach its present understanding. The next section focuses on facets of work women perform in society, how it is always undervalued, remains under- enumerated in national economy and by women themselves. In the last section of the Unit you will read about why it is important for work done by women to be duly valued and made visible in national economy by redefining the whole concept of work vis-a-vis women. The unit also discusses on feminist debates on the issue of women and work.

Let us cast a look on the objectives of reading this unit.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Explain the concept and meaning of work;

- Analyse the type of work women perform at home and at the place of work; and
- Discuss the implications of under enumeration of women's work.

1.3 CONCEPT OF WORK

Women's lives are unavoidably connected to their households. There are two dimensions within which they work - within households and outside them. Therefore, women's work cannot be understood in isolation from the larger social and economic structures within which households and economies are located.

We must first of all define what constitutes 'work'. Does it cover only those activities which are undertaken outside the home, and is paid for, and fall under the purview of 'economic activity'?

Box. No. 1

When one looks at work from a gender perspective, the very definition of what constitutes work becomes a contested domain. It is now widely accepted that realm of work is not a 'gender neutral' sphere where only qualifications, skills, performance determines a person's entry or progression in any occupation/profession. Gender is a valid determining factor with regards to available options and choices a person makes, wages earned and availing opportunities or upward mobility.

United Nations Organisation estimates that women constitute half of the world's population, perform two-third of the world's work, earn one-tenth of the world's income and own one-hundredth of world's property. This UN statistics make it very evident that gender inequality with respect to women's work and its valuation is grossly under enumerated.

Box. No 2

International Labour Organisation (ILO) data on labour force participation for persons aged 15 years and above in India was 55.6% in 2011, while it was 69.9% in Brazil and 74.1% in China. In the same year, the worker (15 years and above) to population ratio was 53.6% in India, while it was 64.8% in Brazil and 70.9% in China. (Shaw, 2013, p.25)

Let us review the situation of Indian workforce according to the latest available estimates (NSSO, 68th Round, 2011-12)

- In 2011-12, 36.4% of the Indian population was active in the labour force, that is, either working or actively seeking work according to the UPS.
- Of the total population, 35.4% were employed and 2.7% were unemployed.
- In terms of type of employment, 50% of Indian workers were self-employed, 20% were employed on a regular wage or salary and 29% were on a casual wage.
- In terms of participation in the labour force, the proportion of males in both rural and urban areas was much higher than that of females.
- Further, rural female participation in the labour force fell in 2011-2012, just as it had after 2004-2005 and 2009-10. The trend for rural female participation, saw a drastic fall after an increase in 2004-05. Urban female participation, which also increased in 2004-05, fell in 2009-10 and then increased marginally in 2011-12, but to a level lower than that in 2004-05.
- In general, female participation in the labour force has been low and is falling. This decline in participation of females in the labour force, especially in rural areas, has been dubbed 'de-feminisation' (Abraham 2013). Further, no significant increase in the proportion of female workers was in either secondary sector or tertiary sector employment in rural areas. This is in keeping with the trend of fewer women in work, especially in rural India.
- Urban female workers in the secondary and tertiary sectors have grown as a proportion of total workers in the last decade or so, but this increase is meager, relative to the number of women leaving the labour force in rural areas.(Shaw, 2013)

In the following paragraphs, let us reflect on some of the ways by which 'work' and 'worker' has been defined by different Indian agencies and also by international ones.

Census was the primary source of data on employment in the country till National Sample Survey Organisation(NSSO) started carrying out nation wide surveys in 1990's.

In 1951, Census classified 'worker' on the basis of income as 'self supporting persons' with sufficient income for maintenance and 'earning dependents' with income 'not sufficient for maintenance'.

In 1961 census, the definition of worker was changed and it was based on duration of work with/ without remuneration. This 'duration of work' was considered more than one hour per day throughout the greater part of the

working season for seasonal agricultural and household industry workers. For, 'other workers', the bench mark was, the duration of employment during any of the 15 days preceding the enumeration.

In 1971 census, '**worker**' was defined as someone whose main activity was participation in productive work. All those whose main activity was domestic work were categorized as '**non-workers**', even if these people were engaged in some productive work. From 1981 census, enumeration of '**marginal workers**' were also recorded.

Thus, as a result of changes in definition of work/ worker, we see change in work scenario of the country. In 1961 census there was a surge in number of women workers which nose dived in 1971 census as it under reported women workers due to conceptual bias in definition of work that did not include unpaid family worker's as workers. Census in 1981 again plumated as a much larger and more variable number of marginal women workers could be incorporated in WPR. (Mazumdar and Neetha, 2011).

'Work' is defined as participation, which can be physical or mental in nature, in any economically productive activity, with or without receiving any kind of compensation/ wage in cash or kind. Any person engaged in 'work' as stated above is categorized as a 'worker' but mainly undertaken by women, can comprise of any of activity like unpaid work on farm, family enterprise, cultivation, milk production even for domestic consumption or some kind of part time work, all fall under the purview of work. Work also includes effective supervision and providing direction of work. (MGSE-009, Book 1 Unit 2)

Census of India categorises 'workers' as main workers, marginal workers, cultivators, agricultural labourers, household industry workers, and other workers. These categories are defined as follows:

Main Worker: Those who worked for major part (six months or more) of the year preceding the date of enumeration (referred to as reference period).

Marginal Worker: Persons who worked for less than six months of the reference period are termed as marginal workers.

Cultivator: A person who is engaged in cultivation of land owned by government, private institutions or persons as landlords for wages or payment in cash or kind, will fall under the category of 'cultivator'. For a person to fall under this category, the person should be involved in activities like ploughing, sowing, harvesting and post harvesting activities of crops other than plantation crops.

Agriculture Labourer: A person working on somebody's land for wages in money or kind, share basis and has no risk sharing in cultivation. This

category of worker share no right in leasing, owning of the land on which s/he works.

Household Industry Worker: A worker who is working for an industry at home and within the precincts of the house where the household lives, in urban areas or within the village. The industry is not run at the scale of registered factory under the Indian Factories Act.

Other Workers: All workers who have been engaged in some economic activity during the last one year but do not fall under any of the above mentioned categories are called 'other workers'. Other workers may be employed as government servants, municipal employees, teachers, factory workers, plantation workers, those engaged in trade/ commerce/ business, mining, construction, political or social work, priest; all fall under the category of 'other worker'.

Box. No. 3

Before issues of women's work and contribution were discussed internationally, women in India deliberated on the role of women in a planned economy. The congress party had constituted a National Planning Committee in 1939-40 and as part of this a sub-committee was set up which was supposed to advise on women. This sub-committee was chaired by Laxmibai Rajwade and had Mridula Sarabhai as member secretary. The report that was submitted by this sub-committee documents that a woman worker should have full control of her earnings; a ban should not be imposed on night work for women since it only excludes them, rather the hazardous nature of those occupations should be lessened; the family should not be seen as the economic unit since that assigns a secondary role to the women earners. The most significant contribution of the sub-committee was to suggest that the economic value of housework should be recognized and that women should get all the facilities and rights that workers do for domestic work. This document unfortunately did not receive the importance it should have. (Krishnaraj, 2000)

Let us now look at how NSSO categorises Indian workforce while carrying out nation wide surveys.

The NSS categorises workers into three categories of employment and/ or activity status as (1) self employed (2) regular salaried and (3) casual labour.

A higher proportion of the female workforce is always found to be concentrated in the 'self employed' category. Within the category of self employed, there are three sub categories namely, 'own account worker',

'employer' and people who are working as 'helpers' in household enterprise and are not paid.

NSSO's definition of **own account workers** include a whole range of workers, especially women, who are engaged in 'piece wage' work at home. So, to according the status of self employment to this category of work, looks a misnomer as these worker and work for some entrepreneur/ traders or other kind of employers and receive wages for work completed on the basis of piece rate.(Mazumdar and Neetha, 2011).

NSSO in its 68th Round on Employment and Unemployment Survey (EUS) report presents four categories of workers: usual principal status (UPS), usual principal subsidiary status (UPSS), current weekly status (CWS), and current daily status (CDS). (Krishnamurty and Raveendran, 2008, pp.6-9)

- **Usual Principal Status (UPS):** The labour force is typically measured through the usual principal activity status (UPS) which reflects working of an individual over a reference period of one year. A person is classified as belonging to labour force, if s/he had been either working or looking for work during longer part of the 365 days preceding the survey. In case, the total period of being within the labour force is equal to the total period out of it, priority is given to labour force participation.

The UPS measure excludes from the labour force all those who are employed and/ or unemployed for a total of less than six months. Thus, persons who work intermittently, either because of the pattern of work in the household firm or enterprise or due to economic compulsions or other reasons, would not be included in the labour force unless their days of work and unemployment totaled over half the reference year.

- **Usual Principal and Subsidiary Status (UPSS):** The Usual principal and Subsidiary Status (UPSS) category was introduced to widen the UPS concept to include even those who were outside the labour force on the basis of the 'majority time criterion' but had been employed during some part of the year on a usual basis.

In NSS 61st Round Survey, all those who were either unemployed or out of labour force but had worked for at least 30 days over the reference year were treated as subsidiary status workers. **UPSS is thus a hybrid concept incorporating both the major time criterion and priority to work status.**

- **Current Weekly Status (CWS):** The concept of Current Weekly Status (CWS) has been in use in labour surveys in India even before 1970, when the recommendations of the **Dantwala Committee** became

available. It was primarily because the agencies like International Labour Organisation(ILO) use estimates of employment and unemployment rates based on weekly reference period for international comparisons. Under CWS, a person is classified to be in labour force, if s/he has either worked or is seeking and/ or available for work atleast, one hour during the reference period of one week preceding the date of survey.

The classification under CWS is based on the status of each person during the last seven days. Priority is assigned to 'working' over 'not working but seeking or available for work', and to both 'working' and 'not working but seeking or available for work', over 'neither working nor available for work'. The advantage of CWS is that it uses a shorter reference period of seven days and as such recall lapses are expected to be comparatively lower. Further, it facilitates easy classification and analysis by sub-rounds to identify seasonal patterns. The major disadvantage of CWS is that it classifies persons with very nominal work of even one hour during the reference week into work force and labour force.

- **Current Daily Status (CDS):**

The Dantwala Committee proposed the use of Current Daily Status (CDS) rates for studying intensity of work. These are computed on the basis of the information on employment and unemployment recorded for the 14 half days of the reference week. The employment statuses during the seven days are recorded in terms of half or full intensities. An hour or more but less than four hours is taken as 'half intensity' and four hours or more is taken as 'full intensity'.

An advantage of this approach is that it is based on more complete information; it embodies the time utilisation, and does not accord priority to labour force over outside the labour force or work over unemployment, except in marginal cases. A disadvantage is that it related to person-days, not persons.

Let us now read how International Labour Organisation (ILO) looks at 'work'. The ILO has developed the concept of '**decent work**'. Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives.

Decent work has been defined by the ILO and endorsed by the international community as being productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

Decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; provides security in the workplace and social protection for workers and their families; offers better prospects for personal development and encourages social integration; gives people the freedom to express

their concerns, to organize and to participate in decisions that affect their lives; and guarantees equal opportunities and equal treatment for all. '**Decent Work Agenda**' is a balanced and integrated programmatic approach to pursuing the objective of full and productive employment and decent work for all, at the global, regional, national, sectoral and local levels. It comprises of four pillars, namely:

- employment creation and enterprise development;
- social protection;
- standards and rights at work;
- governance and social dialogue

(Source: ILO FAO Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work)

Women all around the world have been doing paid, underpaid and unpaid work in homes, factories, field, forests, mines and offices. Over and above, cooking, cleaning and caring, a large majority of women perform tasks such as collection of fuel, fodder, water, animal husbandry, kitchen gardening, raising poultry. All these activities augment family resources. If women would not do this work, these good/ services would have to be purchased. Moreover, women also produce babies thus provide future labour power for the economy. (Patel, 2014)

Box No. 4

The committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) was constituted by a resolution of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Government of India, on 22 September 1971 with Dr. Phulrenu Guha, then Union Minister for Social Welfare as Chairperson. The Committee was set up to review the changes in Indian women's status that were expected to result from constitutional equality, governmental policies and social reforms since independence. It was appointed at a time of increasing disillusionment with the development paradigm which was increasingly being questioned by women's movements in many countries. Pressure from these movements led to the adoption of the Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women by the UN General Assembly (1967). This was followed by a UN decision, requesting member states to submit reports on the status of women in their countries, in time for the International Women's Year (1975).

The Report entitled "Towards Equality" was submitted to the Minister for Education and Social Welfare on 1st January 1975 and was tabled before the Parliament on 18th February 1975. Following a protracted discussion of the Committee's findings, the Indian Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution authorizing the government to mount comprehensive legislative and administrative measures to remove the

disabilities and discrimination that Indian women continued to suffer from. This report was a landmark in many respects and resulted in the initiation of several mechanisms with a focus on women's development. Some of the major policy initiatives that followed the report were the setting up of Women's Welfare and Development division in the Ministry of Social Welfare, formulation of a National Plan of Action for Women and enactment of important legislations for the protection of women's rights. But beyond these, the major influence of the Report of the CSWI has been in reworking the perceptions of the government, women's organizations, academics, the media and concerned individuals on the role and status of women.

It is time to assess your learning from the last few sections that you have finished reading in this Unit.

Check Your Progress:

1) *How do Census, NSSO and ILO define work?*

2) *Write a few lines about*

i) *Main, Marginal and Other workers*

ii) *UPS, UPSS, CWS and CDS.*

Let us now read how sexual division of labour in patriarchal society has affected the status and position of women workers.

1.4 GENDER ROLES: SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

Different societies and cultures assign different roles and responsibilities to men and women. However, in the developed nations, today the boundary between these perceived roles and responsibilities for men and women is becoming thinner and faint. But, in not so developed and developing nations, men have more visible and recognized roles because of their association with productive and paid work than women who are engaged more in invisible work and therefore, not economically accounted for.

Men's roles are located in public sphere whereas women's roles relegate them to the private space of household.

However, household is the centre of the production of human resources. It is within the household that human resources are primarily reproduced and maintained. By and large, human beings are 'privately' produced within the household. Further, the women play an important role in production. Due to biological reasons, the onus of reproduction lies with the woman. And, due to a sexual division of household labour along gender lines, the maintenance of human resources also becomes their prime responsibility.

Women work and they have always worked. However, the larger and common understanding of work which relates it to the labour market and to remuneration, excludes both women and their contribution to society. It is the conceptualization of what constitutes 'work' that determines the value and worth attributed to women. Issues related to women's work relate to women's activities both within and outside the household. However, several issues originate from structures that are set within households. Hence, it becomes imminent to begin with analysis of women's role in the household, that closely shapes the discrimination they face in the labour market at home.

The ideology of patriarchy, determines a sexual division of labour which assigns to women the prime responsibility of care of all the members of the household - men, children, the aged and the ill. In an extended family, hierarchy allocates a different status to each member and the work-burden is determined accordingly. There is also a hierarchical placing among women of extended families. This placing operates at levels different from those that are found in the world of only men and those of all the members, men and women together. The extent to which women's work will extend to geographical locations outside the household is determined by caste, class, ethnicity, age and religion.

Let us now study the kind of work women perform and how these are categorized.

1.5 TYPES OF WORK WOMEN PERFORM

Women have always contributed to a nation's social-economic development, both in direct manner by taking up work outside of home and indirectly by facilitating supply of labour and its maintenance. But, both in developed and developing nations, women are laden with cumulative inequalities that result from discriminatory cultural and socio-economic practices that regulate the status of women in society.

The chores and activities that women generally carry out do not fetch any income to the family. These tasks, perceived as their natural roles, are related to their reproductive and community resource management roles which are not economically productive, thus, not recognized and valued. In many societies women also carry out productive work but are not paid for it remain confined to family activities. Therefore, women's contributions to national economies do not qualify for accounting, making it invisible.

Work performed by women can be placed under the following categories;

- *Productive/unproductive work*
- *Visible/invisible work*
- *Paid/unpaid work*
- *Economically/socially productive work*

Unpaid work can be defined as work that does not receive any direct remuneration. It can be of two categories:

- Unpaid work **falling** within the **production boundary** of **UN System of National Accounting (SNA)**. That is to say, unpaid work that is covered under the purview of national income accounts. It is also referred to as unpaid SNA work' which includes subsistence production, work performed by unpaid family workers employed in family enterprise and work such as collection of fuel and fodder.
- Unpaid work lying outside the production boundary but falling within the general production boundary is referred to as **unpaid non-SNA work** that includes household management, care related activities and unpaid community services.

Box. No. 5

Beijing Platform for Action, UN-SNA 1993, Human Development Report 1995 and several other global documents have underlined the need to collect data on 'all forms of work' which include remunerated and un remunerated, SNA and non -SNA work. They have recommended time use surveys as a tool to capture this data.

Government of India conducted its first national Time Use Survey covering six states in 1998-99 to collect these data. It has also undertaken valuation of unpaid non-SNA work for these six states.

Feminists question women's association with housework as oppressing as it remains unpaid and thus, invisible. But, debate on household labour hang on the precincts of drawing a line between 'work' and 'nature', where roles and activities like rearing children, house keeping, educating children when performed by women in the family are called her 'nurturing roles' and not 'work'. Since, non-market activity does not have a clear criterion to distinguish work from non-work, nor 'necessary' from 'non-necessary' social labour, an arbitrary element seems to creep in that makes standards of fairness difficult to apply to gendered bargains between men and women dividing up waged and non waged work. (Barret, 1980, c.f.MGSE-009, Book 1, p.39)

Activity :

Write examples of hidden work that is performed by women and not usually seen as work.

Let us now read how variety of work performed by women remains unaccounted for or unenumerated in national economy.

1.6 ENUMERATION OF WOMEN'S WORK

As per ILO's (2008) estimation, world wide, there are only 66.9 economically active women for every 100 economically active men. The report further indicates that a large share of work (excluding house work) undertaken by women throughout the world, does not directly contribute to family income.

Box No. 6

The rate of economically active women is highest in Europe and the developed world, where there are 82 women working for every 100 men. Northern Africa and the Middle East present some of the lowest rates with 35 and 39 economically active women for every 100 men, respectively. (Ryle, 2012, p. 370)

It has been seen that while sexual division of labour was a basic feature within the home, it also extend outside into the market as well. When women move into the market for employment, they face discrimination on three accounts:

- income differentials for the same work done as men;
- overcrowding into certain jobs that are seen as suited to women; and
- innate biases of employers against hiring women as employees.

In India, housework came into focus as a problem first with studies that drew attention to the 'double burden' that women face in housework and market-related work. The care of the aged, the disabled and the sick is also the responsibility of women within households. In economies which are governed by the market, social security being minimal or even non-existent, women's contribution in the care economy becomes critical. The connection between the care economy and the market economy is the missing link and since this is not recognized, it hides from view the contribution of women's work.

Attempts were made to capture empirically what exactly women's work is and how it contributes to the economy. Gaps in data, data gathering processes and data presentation, reflect the inherent male bias in viewing women's work as supplementary and secondary. In a pioneering work, in 1976-77, Devaki Jain and Malini Chand discussed the implications of domestic work for the enumeration of workers in data collection processes. Micro time-use studies were conducted to ascertain women's domestic work.

You have read in the earlier section that at the national level, the two major sources of data for employment figures are the Census surveys carried out every ten years and the National Sample Surveys (NSS). Over the period of time, definitions, reference periods and procedures for counting 'workers' has differed. Hence, the employment rate of women has been found to be highly sensitive to the definition and method of data collection.

The major cause for under-enumeration has been located in the ideology of the 'man' as the breadwinner and 'head of the household' with the implication that women's work is secondary and supplementary. In particular, attention has been drawn to the role of women in the informal sector of the economy. You will read more about women's role in informal sector of the economy in units of Block 3 of this course.

Box No. 7

The censuses and the NSS Rounds do not map the same workforce because both use different sets of definitions for 'work' and a 'worker'.

Questions have been raised and doubts expressed about the authenticity of the estimates thrown up by the NSS and the Census. It is said that there is a gross underestimation of the number of women working in the informal sector.

The process of strengthening the information base on women is however far from complete. Gaps result from various sources, decisions taken at the stage of planning and designing the data collection effort, as also from decisions taken at the stage of processing, tabulation and enumeration. Census provides profile of whole population while NSSO provides exhaustive data set on large samples.

Let us now read why it is important to make women's work more visible. But before reading further, attempt the following exercise to assess your understanding of the last couple of sections.

Check Your Progress:

- 1) What types of work women perform within and out side of home?

- 2) What is the difference between SNA and non - SNA?

The following section focuses on why it is important that the work women perform should become visible.

1.7 IMPORTANCE OF VISIBILITY OF WOMEN'S WORK

To account for visibility of women's work is important from the perspective of their rights and also for actuality and correctness of estimation. The invisibility, unproductivity and unpaid nature of women's work push them to a marginalized position in a capitalist society and accord lower status. Thus, on one hand, invisibility of women's work leads to lapse in policy implications where their contribution is marginalized, making her a

‘dependent’ economic entity. On the other hand, women face oppression as a result of performing work that is not directly adding to family income. Thus, women face ‘double whammy’ as a consequence of her invisibility of work due to conceptual as well as operational biases. Even when they take up work outside of the private space, they are abundantly absorbed in those sectors/ services where the benefit of economic activity is not accrued to women employees.

Let us discuss the situation in context of India.

In India, to understand why and where women get employment, one has to account for the growth pattern of the Indian economy. In India, planning emerged soon after Independence and the model adopted was that of a mixed economy. The state and the market emerged as the two strongest institutions against which the household was pitted. Over time, the trajectory of planning led to growth that did not absorb women into mainstream employment channels. They were instead crowded into the informal sector, into household-based traditional sectors and into subsistence agricultural activities. Ironically, all these sectors of our economy remain marginalized in our national accounting system.

Reasons of ‘statistical invisibility’ of women in labour force, can be listed as:

- Cultural bias of a respondent who is generally the male head of the household and regarding women working outside of home a shame for the formerly, resulting in under reporting.
- Biased data collection where interviewer’s bias creeps in or it can be faulty construction of the questionnaire.
- Dominance of domestic work leading to under reporting of other types of work.
- Invisibility of women’s contribution in income generating activities at pre-marketing and non monetized stage as in case of agriculture, poultry, animal husbandry, weaving cottage industry and other such activities.
- Merger of production for self consumption and production for sale.

In the following section you will read how feminists have questioned devaluing and lack of worth societal with women’s work and consequently their contribution to economic growth of the nation.

1.8 FEMINIST DEBATES

Feminists, over time, have made attempts through several paradigms to attribute worth to the work that women do. Various methods have been tried to measure this value. Data systems have been challenged and data collection processes have been altered to incorporate women’s work.

Beginning with the classical economists, one finds that both political economists and their critiques shared a deep prejudice against the labour performed by women. Both schools of thoughts tend to consider wage labour as the only true yardstick of all labour performed under capitalism.

Karl Marx went beyond the classical political economists but he also did not realize the other unpaid component of labour which was in housework. Marxian analysis of women's work closely linked it to the capitalistic mode of production. Some of the questions raised were:

- Is housework productive or unproductive?
- How should we understand the production of labour, both biological and social?
- Do women produce a surplus through housework?

Feminists connected this ideology to the Marxian framework and showed how sexual division of labour extended from within the house to outside it. They showed that when women began working outside the house, there were income differentials for the same work, there was overcrowding of women within certain low paying sectors, women often found themselves doing jobs akin to those they did within the house and employers were biased against women labour.

Heidi Hartman and Ann R. Marusen (1980) provide a feminist critique of contemporary Marxist theory and practice. Such critique produces a model of power, production and exchange within the family, with consequences for capitalist social relations, contributing towards an understanding of patriarchy.

Reformist feminism brought out a number of situational analyses of the working conditions of rural women, whereas socialist feminists focused upon the conditions of women's wage labour, decentralization of production and informalisation of the labour market. There have also been alternative framework's to analyse women's work.

Amartya Sen (1990) presented the bargaining and entitlement theses and concept of 'cooperative conflict'. With a theory of entitlements, Sen shows a woman's opportunity to get employment outside the home as one of the crucial variables that give her a better fall back position, a better ability to use and deal with threats and a higher 'perceived contribution' to the family's economics position.

1.9 REDEFINING WORK

The foregoing discussion on women and work makes it imperative to review how work is defined and projected in accounting system of a nation's

economy. Should the concept of work be confined to the trapping of 'done outside of the home' and fetching income/ payment/ wage/ monetary remuneration.

It is a well-established fact that by not recognizing women's multiple activities and contribution to a nation's economy, women's status and thereby, gender equality gets institutionalized and perpetuated. The situation leads to their further exploitation and oppression in other spheres of life as well. Thus, women fall prey to a vicious circle where their labour is devalued thereby, they are pushed to the margins in all matters and spheres of development and empowerment, be it political processes, policy and legislations or any sphere of nation building.

As a result of vociferous feminist debates and intervention by UN agencies, there is a wider acceptance of the scope and significance of women's work. Absence of gender analysis and unavailability of sex disaggregated statistics of female participation in labour at micro level highlights the inadequacy in tackling the question of redefining 'work' vis'-s-vis' women. The concept of work has to account for the following aspects to construct a 'holistic definition' of work:

- Broadening the definition of work to include occupational categories specific to women;
- Economic activity to cover cultural, regional and seasonal nature of work; and
- Mechanism to estimate women's unpaid work in terms of time and remuneration.

Let us now have a look at some of the measures that have been introduced at national and international level to redefine work.

At national level, the definition of a 'work' has been rectified from time to time to increase base of working women.

Some steps undertaken at international level are

- International Labour Organisation (ILO) held a convention in 1985 to revisit International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO)
- Efforts by United Nations, Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) led to change the guidelines for the World Programme of Agricultural Censuses.

(Bullock, 1994, c.f.MGSE-009, Book 1, p.16)

1.10 LET US SUM UP

Women's work may be for the market or for the consumption of members of the household. Work for the market may be located within the premises of the household or outside of it. Their work may receive economic remuneration or else it may generate goods and services which would otherwise have had to be bought from the market. Their work contributes towards the production and maintenance of human beings within the household in immense measure.

It is important to recognize and value not only the economic contributions of women, but also their social contributions like care of children, sick and elderly people and other activities women undertake for the family and the community.

1.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss the notion of income and work as per the understanding gathered from censuses and NSSO? Give examples to support your argument.
- 2) Discuss how enumeration of work carried out by national and international agencies in its present form is biased against women.
- 3) Explain feminists' perspective on women's work.

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UNIT 2 PRODUCTIVE AND REPRODUCTIVE WORK

Rajini R. Menon

Structure

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- 2.2 Objectives
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2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 1, you read about how ‘work’ has been defined and conceptualized and categorized by various data generating systems both within India and Internationally. You will now read how feminist economists have argued about devaluation of women’s work, both productive and reproductive. The Unit begins with introducing you to traditional and contemporary discusses with regards to women’s work followed by a section on what constitutes productive work of women and how reproductive function performed by women contribute to market activities and production process.

In the next section you will read feminist discourses on paid and unpaid care work that is mostly performed by women, especially in developing economies and Third World countries.

In the last part of this unit you will read about importance and necessity of measurement and valuation of productive and reproductive work followed by international methods to measure women’s work.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you would be able to:

- Describe importance of productive and reproductive work carried out by women;
- Explain feminist perspective to evaluation of work done by women; and
- Discuss importance methods of ascertaining value of women's work and contribution to national economy.

2.3 TRADITIONAL DISCOURSES – WOMEN AND WORK

Early discourses on women and work can be traced by unravelling the discipline of economics and the its theoretical background. Traditional economic theories are based on the assumption that family is the basic economic unit. Individuals are free agents and they have rational choices. There can be two spheres of work **economic realm** and **household realm**. The economic realm focused on buyers, sellers, market whereas the household realm positions itself on the range of unpaid work that is necessary for the functioning of economic realm. Items that are sold in market are only counted as production and hence household realm was outside the purview of economic realm. A rational man makes maximum profit as a producer and maximises utility as a consumer.

In economic realm, work is any activity or expenditure of energy, that produces services and products of value to other people. Although Work can be performed without wages, salaries, or income. Economically speaking, labor market work is strictly work performed for a wage. These terms are then tied to the term production. Work is productive, if and only if, profits are produced. By that logic, if man marries his cook, national income will reduce as wife is not paid for cooking.

The capitalist system regard women merely as a convenient source of cheap labour and part of the 'reserve army of labour' to be drawn on when there is a shortage of labour in certain areas of production and discarded again when the need disappears (You have earlier read about in MWG-002 Block 2, Unit 1). We saw this during both World Wars, when women were drafted into factories to replace men who had been called up into the army and then sent back home when the war ended. Women were again encouraged to enter the workplaces during the period of capitalist upswing of 1950s and 1960s, when their role was analogous to that of the immigrant workers as a reservoir of cheap labour.

Throughout its history, capitalism has proved adept at causing patterns of labour supply to change in accordance with demand, and this is particularly so in the case of female labour. In all societies, and particularly in developing countries, there remain essential but usually unpaid activities such as cooking, cleaning and other housework, provisioning of basic household needs, child care, care of the sick and the elderly, as well as community-based activities. These are largely seen as the responsibility of women. This pattern of unpaid work tends to exist even when women are engaged in outside work for an income, whether as wage workers or self-employed workers. Women from poor families who are engaged in outside work as well, usually cannot afford to hire others to perform these tasks, so most often these are passed on to young girls and elderly women within the household, or become a 'double burden' of work for such women. These processes are also integral into capitalism. The production of both use value products and exchange value products by women is essential for the accumulation process, and if anything this reliance has become even more marked in recent years (Ghosh, 2013).

Women have been the traditional household producers and the traditional subsistence farmers but receive no pay for their work. It was quite simple for economists to leave them out of any economic analysis. A large amount of research has been conducted showing that 'nonproductive' and domestic work not only make a contribution to, but are a very necessary part of any nation's economy. It has been estimated that if unpaid household work and subsistence agriculture were incorporated into an economic analysis, the amount of global production would increase by a third (United Nations Development Programme 1990, p. 32).

According to Carrasco (2001) the production of goods and services that takes place in the domestic sphere or that is channelled through unpaid work (for example, voluntary work) has been made invisible and, ultimately, has been considered as non-work, by confusing production with production for the market and work with employment.

Thus, the original definition of work is restricted to include only those activities that present the characteristics of the labour market. Gorz (1995) states that the notion of work as we understand it today is an invention of industrial capitalism (Cited in Celebriti and Misa 2009).

Let us now have a look at contemporary discourses on women and work.

2.4 CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSES – FEMINIST ECONOMICS

The assumptions of traditional economics had devastating consequences on women. **Feminist economics grew in response to the restricted and**

inadequate view of ‘the economy’ offered by mainstream scholarship. The dissatisfaction stemmed from two key elements.

- One was the fact that mainstream economics traditionally privileged the monetized aspects of the economy, while ignoring the sphere of ‘social reproduction’ or ‘unpaid work’, which included both subsistence production (particularly significant in much of the developing world) and unpaid care (for family, friends and neighbours) that kept the social fabric together.
- The second element of dissatisfaction shared by other heterodox economists, whether from a structuralist, political economy or human development perspective—concerned the validity and usefulness, for rich countries as well as poor ones, of the ne-oclassical assumption of ‘rational choice’ as a model of individual behaviour and of the broader macroeconomy and society.

One strand of thinking within economics that did not ignore the unpaid/invisible sphere of social life, but that, nevertheless, analysed it with limited ne-oclassical analytical tools, was the ‘**new home economics**’ (NHE) pioneered by **Gary Becker** and colleagues. The result was a problematic view of family relations that was premised on heroic assumptions (altruism on the part of the head of household), ignored power relations and inequalities (in welfare outcomes and in access to income and assets) and produced circular arguments like, women specialize in homemaking because they earn less in the market, and they earn less in the market because of their household responsibilities. The main argument to take from this brief reference to the NHE is that, that feminist economics was not only critical of the fact that ne-oclassical economics ignored the invisible and unpaid sphere of social reproduction, and even when it did turn its gaze to this realm, its analytical tools effectively dissolved all differences between an idealized market sphere (found in textbooks) and the social sphere.

It is time to assess your understanding of last couple of sections and check your progress.

Check Your Progress:

- 1) *What is meant by double burden of work?*

2) *Why did feminist economics emerge as an ideology?*

3) *Differentiate between the two spheres of work?*

Let us now understand what is productive and reproductive work.

2.5 PRODUCTIVE AND REPRODUCTIVE WORK

In this context one of the key challenges for feminist economics was to make visible the so-called invisible or unpaid economy. Let us read how do the two labelled as productive and reproductive work affect women's status in society.

2.5.1 Productive Work of Women

The tendency to highlight the unpaid economic work has a long-standing history within the debates on gender and development, going back to the Women in Development (WID) tradition and the work of the Danish economist **Ester Boserup**. From the perspective of the WID advocates, the importance of Boserup's book (*Women's Role in Economic Development* in 1970) was that, it challenged the assumptions of the 'welfare approach' and highlighted women's importance to the agricultural economy. Sub-Saharan Africa, in

particular, was singled out as the great global area of ‘**female farming systems**’ in which women using traditional hoe technology assumed a substantial responsibility for food production.

Moreover, Boserup posited a positive correlation between the role women played in agricultural production and their status vis-à-vis men. One reason why Boserup’s research was picked up so enthusiastically by WID advocates was that it helped to reject the narrow view of women’s roles as mothers and wives, which underpinned much of earlier development policy vis-à-vis women. In general, a great effort was made to distinguish WID from women’s programmes that were carried out under the rubric of health or social welfare. Instead of characterizing women as needy beneficiaries, WID arguments represented women as productive members of society.

2.5.2 Reproductive Work

One of the most pervasive themes of the present feminist movement is the emphasis placed on the role of reproduction as a determinant of women’s work, the sexual division of labor, and the subordinate/ dominant relationships between women and men.

The emphasis on reproduction and on analysis of the household sphere indicates that the traditional focus placed upon commodity production is insufficient to understand women’s work and its roots in patriarchal relations. In order to fully understand the nature of gender discrimination at work, women’s wages, their participation in the development process, and implications for political action, analysts must re-examine the two areas of production and reproduction as well as the inter linkage between them. An example here is the internal labour market model of gender differentials in the work force. This model represents a step forward from neo-classical explanations of women’s secondary status in the labor market. It focuses on the internal organization of the capitalist firm to explain sex segregation and wage differentials, rather than on factors of supply and demand developed by other models. The dynamics of this internal organization tend to foster the formation of job ladders and clusters that create hierarchies among workers. Sex is one factor by which workers can be separated. In this model, occupational segregation, wage differentials, and other types of discrimination by sex are viewed as resulting from the hierarchical and self-regulatory structure of production.

Two policy implications can be drawn from this model:

- Radical policy would involve elimination of the hierarchical structure of production, perhaps by some form of workers’ control and equalization of wages. To the extent that this would eliminate or reduce differences among workers, it would tend to eliminate or reduce differences by sex.

- A less radical policy would involve equal opportunity and affirmative action plans that take the structure of production and the labour hierarchy as given, but would make each job equally accessible to men and women.

Both of these policies have a major flaw. They focus only on the structure of production and do not take into consideration women's role in the area of reproduction. If women face a double day and if child-care facilities are also not available to them, neither of the two policies are likely to fully solve the problem of women's secondary status in the labor market.

Box No. 1

Feminist argue that domestic work must be shared between women and men, child-care services must become available, and both patriarchal relations and gender stereotyping in the socialization process must be eliminated to realise women's true potential in market economy.

Within the Marxist tradition, it is interesting to note that **Engels** thesis does contain an analysis of the interaction between reproduction and production. His view of the origins of women's subordination links the productive sphere to the introduction of private property in the means of production and the need to pass it on from one generation to the next-through reproduction, that is, with the need to identify paternity of heirs through the institution of the family and the control of women's sexuality and reproductive activities. The Engels thesis can be projected to situations, such as those prevalent in industrialized societies, where large segments of the population do not own the means of production, but where there still is a hierarchy and class differences within the propertyless classes. Engels himself did not extend the analysis in that direction. For him, as for Marx, the production of means of subsistence and the reproduction of human beings are the two fundamental levels of human activity. However, both Engels and Marx assumed that the elimination of private property and women's participation in commodity production, made possible by industrialization, would set the preconditions for their emancipation. Thus, the initial connection between production and reproduction found in Engel's thesis became blurred with the assumption that transformation of productive structures would automatically erase women's oppression.

Traditional Marxist thinking and traditional leftist and liberal politics have followed a similar pattern. The new emphasis on reproduction is the result of the questions posed by feminists. It can be viewed as an elaboration of the simplifications inherent in Engel's initial formulation. A variety of recent studies on women in Third World countries have focused on the interaction between production and reproduction to analyze women's work. **Maria Mies's**

(1981) study of Indian women lace makers in Narsapur, Andhra Pradesh, for example, shows how the seclusion of women has conditioned their participation in nonhousehold production. Although lace making is a 'producing' industry geared toward the international market, it is highly compatible with seclusion and domestic work. Women are engaged in lace making as much as six to eight hours a day, in addition to their household chores. Their average daily earnings amount to less than a third of the official minimum wage for female agricultural laborers. This situation persists even though the industry has grown considerably since 1970 and represents a very high proportion of the foreign exchange earnings from handicrafts in the region. Many of the women are the actual breadwinners in their families. Mies argues that this highly exploitative system has in fact led to greater class differentiation within local communities as well as greater polarization between the sexes. The system is made possible by the ideology of seclusion that rigidly confines women to the home, eliminates their opportunities for outside work, and makes them willing to accept extremely low wages.

2.6 ACCUMULATION, PAID WORK AND UNPAID CARE WORK: FEMINIST DISCOURSES

There have been important debates within feminist economics on how to conceptualize the connections between the sphere of market-based capital accumulation (the commodity economy), on the one hand, and that of non-market based social reproduction (the unpaid care economy) (Razvi, 2007).

In the context of 'fiscal restraint' and the creeping commercialization of public welfare services (through the imposition of 'user fees' and other charges), it is argued that the cost of providing care was being increasingly shifted from the monetized public sector to the unpaid care sector. For example, changes in the organization of the health sector, which were leading to shorter stays of patients in hospitals—essentially cost-saving devices for the public sector, were being matched by longer periods of convalescence at home and greater expenditure of nonmonetized resources on patient care.

At the same time, structural adjustment policies also favoured the production of 'tradable' goods, be it agricultural commodities or manufactured products. This too, often translates into an intensified demand for female labour, especially in the context of economic crisis that was pushing large numbers of women into the paid work force (especially of the informal kind) as a way of countering the drop in real wages of other earners in the household. Women, it is argued, are the ones who take on a disproportionate share of the costs of 'adjustment' through the intensification of both their paid and unpaid work, with adverse implications on their physical and mental health.

The tensions between the commodity economy and the unpaid care economy become particularly stark during periods of economic crisis, with adverse implications for women. The process of capital accumulation even in successful development episodes such as in East Asia in the 1960s and 1970s, engenders a potential trade-off with levels of non-market output. Exports are needed as a way of generating foreign exchange (to avoid long-run aid dependency), through agriculture as well as diversification of exports toward manufactures and services. Countries that have grown rapidly (in East Asia, for example) have managed such diversification, typically by increasing exports of garments and electronic products, which are often produced by employing 'cheap' female labour. The basic problem here is that a sustainable capital accumulation process requires an increase in marketed output to generate tax revenue and foreign exchange. But this may be at the expense of production of non-marketed output. Also, extending the working day cuts into time for sleep, leisure and self-care, with adverse implications for human capabilities.

Let us now discuss why it is important to measure and assign valuation to both productive and reproductive work.

2.7 NECESSITY OF MEASUREMENT AND VALUATION: PRODUCTIVE AND REPRODUCTIVE WORK

Though capitalist economies considered "the appropriation of time as a foundational and permanent element in social relations under capitalism, the time allocated to caretaking and re- production is not factored into the analysis of the relationship between productive and reproductive work. Even in Marxist analyses, reproduction is examined as merely a substratum of the production process." (Avila 2007, p. 132). In the space-time relationship between productive and reproductive work, only the time allocated to productive work is considered valuable. **Housework is therefore a key element in the process of reproduction of labourers from which surplus value is taken.** Since it is usually women who do housework, it has been observed that it is through the reproduction of the labour force that women are incorporated into the surplus value nexus, which is the sine qua non of capitalism. (Rubin 1998, p. 20). Feminist economic theory has developed the concept of '**care economy**' to refer to the space where the **labour force is reproduced and maintained**, including all those activities that involve cooking and cleaning tasks, housekeeping in general, and caring for children, the sick and the disabled.

A large part of the activities in the care economy are performed within the sphere of the family. This is especially so in the Third World where particularly, they are performed by women, who receive no pay for their work. This is complemented by services provided by the public and private sectors, which make up the paid care economy. (Salvador, 2007)

The role played by the state as care provider will determine the load of care assigned to family, volunteer labour, and/or the market. If no public policies are in place to regulate the care economy and its distribution, the family is disproportionately burdened (particularly in the case of women who must pull double or triple work shifts) and the possibilities of social advancement for low-income women are limited (Salvador, 2007).

With the publication of 'The Economics of Household Production' by **Margret Reid** articulating the 'third person' criteria, a consistent basis was provided for distinguishing productive activity from other non-economic activity in economies not organised for the market. The test was simply whether a given activity could be performed by a person other than the person receiving the benefit. Thus, cooking was a productive activity, eating was not.

Logically, if an activity can be performed by someone else, then it is theoretically possible to pay them for it. That is, there is a potential market for that good or service. For instance, it makes little sense to pay someone to watch TV for you because you will not receive the benefit. However, it is possible to pay someone to prepare food for you, or more controversially, to have sex with you. Thus, these services are at least potentially marketable. This 'third person' criteria has been adopted as standard in most studies which seeks to value non-market production.

Box No. 2

*In 1947 **Simon Kuznets**, who had helped design and implement national accounts in the United States, argued the need for the international system to incorporate subsistence non-market production. Attempts were made to include subsistence production in the national accounts of some countries in the 1950s and 1960s, but it was the push by the women's movement in the 1970s which really focused on the importance of non-market production.*

***Ester Boserup's** foundational work in 1970, *Women's Role in Economic Development*, clearly showed the key role of subsistence production in Third World economies and the pivotal role of women in those economies. She noted the inadequacy of market based accounts, stating that the present system of under-reporting subsistence activities not only makes the under-developed countries seem poorer than they really are but also makes their economic growth rate appear in a more favourable light than the facts warrant.*

It is the concept of 'Third person' criteria represented an important challenge to Western notions of development, and it was a feminist challenge in as much as Boserup showed that it was women who did most of the subsistence work. Yet, her case for counting many of these women's activities was that they were part of subsistence production, not that women's household

labour was productive. However, this latter argument was taken up by the feminist movement. **Ann Oakley's** foundational work in the early 1970s was followed by a series of studies which clearly saw housework as work, as productive and as done mainly by women. Nearly forty years later, the figures still show that **women do about twice as much unpaid household work as men.**

By 1975, OECD statistician **Derek Blades** was able to survey some 70 countries' attempts to incorporate subsistence agricultural production into GDP. However, while noting that women's traditional domestic role made the division between domestic and subsistence activities unclear, he found the case for including women's domestic labour 'considerably weaker' than for subsistence production.

The feminist critique of national accounts has been carried in various international fora, most notably with the recommendation from the UN Conference on Women in 1985. It was reaffirmed at Beijing in 1995, to measure and value unpaid work. But it was **Marilyn Waring** who popularised the feminist critique of the SNA with her landmark book, **Counting for Nothing** (1988). Using examples from all over the world, Waring ridiculed the system which classified women as 'economically inactive' women, who worked long hours providing the basic necessities of life, while valuing as (welfare enhancing) 'growth' the 'work' of the men in the missile silos with their fingers on the nuclear button.

Check your progress by undertaking the following exercise.

Check Your Progress:

1. *What is understood by care economy?*

2. Write a line or two on the following:

- a) *Esler Boserup*
- b) *Marie Mies*
- c) *Margret Reid*
- d) *Simon Kuznets*
- e) *Ann Oakley*
- f) *Marilyn Waring*

In the last section of this Unit you will read about how women's work, both productive and non-reproductive is measured internationally.

2.8 INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MEASUREMENT

According to the **United Nations System of National Accounts** of 1993 (SNA), which provides the conceptual framework that sets the international statistical standard for the measurement and classification of economic activities, some unpaid work activities are deemed 'economic work' and, much like paid work, are considered to belong within the '**SNA production boundary.**' Other unpaid work activities are classified as 'non- economic.'

Unpaid Economic Work

SNA 1993 convention indicates that the unpaid economic work can be measured and included in annual estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These unpaid, economic work pertain to: (a) production of fixed assets for household use, such as building a house; (b) subsistence production work, such as crop cultivation, animal husbandry, forestry and fishery for own use; (c) collection of basic necessities, like water and fuel wood from common or private lands; (d) collection of raw materials for income generating activities like crafts and other manufacturing; and (e) activities such as unpaid family work for crop production that reaches the market , as well as animal grazing, agro-processing, and food processing for sale. Accordingly, unpaid economic work consists of activities in procuring inputs and producing for own use, as well as for the market. In practice, data collection gaps make measurement and inclusion of many of the above mentioned activities in National Income and Product Accounts very difficult.

Other types of unpaid work are deemed by the SNA (1993) to be 'non-economic' and are relegated outside the SNA production boundary. **Non-SNA unpaid work**, often referred to as work that falls 'outside the SNA production boundary,' consists of household maintenance, cleaning, washing, cooking, shopping, providing care for infants and children (active and passive care), care for the permanently ill or temporarily sick (as well as for older relatives and the disabled), and all volunteer work for community services. Recognizing these as contributing to society but not to the 'economy,' the SNA recommendation is that parallel (satellite) accounts to the **National Income and Product Accounts (GDP)** should be constructed.

Satellite Accounts of Unpaid Work or Extended SNA (ESNA)

In 1993 SNA formally recognized that non-SNA (ESNA) activities are productive and they contribute to well being. It has therefore recommended to measure these activities in a satellite account, which is linked to the main national account. This satellite account should use the same concepts whenever possible. That is, this account will be an extension of the national accounts to include unpaid household services and voluntary services of men and women in a system of household accounts.

Let us now read about ways in which unpaid work can be measured.

2.8.1 Methods of Valuation of Unpaid Work

Valuation of unpaid work can be done either by **valuing the labour input** that has gone in to the work or by **valuing the output** generated by the work. The former is known as the input method or a wage based valuation and the latter is known as the output method or product based valuation.

Input method: Under the input method, the value of unpaid work at the individual level is computed by multiplying the time spent by the person on unpaid work with an appropriate wage rate. At the aggregate level, the total time spent on unpaid work is multiplied by a set of appropriate wage rates.

The selection of the wage rate is a very critical issue here. Two types of wage rates may be used:

- Replacement wage rate i.e. the wage paid to a person who produces a similar service in the market, or
- The opportunity cost, i.e. the wage rate forgone by the person who is performing the unpaid work.

The market replacement wage rate can either be a generalist rate (for example, wage rate of a housekeeper) or can be specialist rates. The generalist wage rate could be the wage of a domestic paid worker, as

prevailing in the local market. The specialist wage rates of different specialized activities comparable with the relevant domestic activities.

The opportunity cost, the forgone wages by the persons engaged in unpaid work are calculated on the basis of the age, education and qualification of domestic workers. Valuation of unpaid work based on the opportunity cost determines the values looking at the person (education, age, qualification) and not at the activity.

Output Method: Under the output method, value of unpaid work is calculated by multiplying the units of output with the wage rate per unit of output. The direct valuation of unpaid work by the output approach would need data on the output of the unpaid work, such as the number of meals prepared, number of clothes washed and ironed, area of house cleaned, children taught etc as well as the data on the wage rate per unit of output, such as the labour charge of each meal prepared, charge per item of clothing washed and ironed, labour charge per child cared etc (Hirway,2005).

Box No. 3

In theoretical literature, there are two main approaches to the valuation of the unpaid work: (i) Input-related method, based on imputing value to labour time spent on unpaid work, and (ii) Output-related method, based on imputing market prices to goods and services produced (for eg., imputing market price to the fuel wood collected , home made utensils, etc.). From the perspective of accounting for unpaid work, input-related accounting is superior to output-related accounting. For example, if women have to walk longer to fetch water, input-related accounting will show an increase in the time input, though there is no increase in output. Thus intensified effort of women is valued in input-related accounting.

2.8.2 Data Sources

The data needed for compiling the input-output tables can be:

- 1) household time use surveys (for labour inputs and outputs) - with additional information on outputs,
- 2) household expenditure surveys - for household expenditure on raw materials, capital goods etc, and
- 3) supplementary information on the relevant prices and wages (for example, the prices of meals, child care etc).

Like the input- output tables of the SNA, the household input-output tables present the activity structure of the household sector of the economy and present the uses of intermediate commodities, labour and capital in each type of productive activity undertaken by the households by unpaid labour

and own capital. Thus, household input- output tables can form the basis of a set of accounts for the ESNA activities of households.

Box No. 4

Not many countries have produced satellite accounts for household unpaid services. Germany was perhaps the first country to produce such accounts. Australia, the Eurostat and some Eurostat countries individually, United Kingdom etc. have compiled such accounts. These accounts have shown that the value of ESNA is comparable with the value of the GDP.

Time Use Surveys

Time Use Survey has been an effective tool in unfolding the statistical invisibility of unpaid work across countries. Time Use data helps in public policy making at both macro level and micro level. At macro level, time use data have been used in the construction of augmented economic and social accounting systems (conventional economic accounting systems provide only the productive activity in market economy and ignores the productive use of nonmarket time and leisure). At micro level, intra household behavioral models are built using the time use data, which has implications in terms of fiscal policy. For instance, studies have focussed on the use of non-market time in childcare and in the care of elderly, intra household division of labour, analysis of leisure activities and time stress, set of production activities etc.

Interpreting Time Use Data in India

Time Use Surveys (TUS) are increasingly accepted for getting better statistics on the size of the labour force of a country, as well as the contribution of women to the economy. The recent major macrolevel TUS conducted in six major states, viz., Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Orissa and Tamil Nadu, during July 1998 to June 1999 by the Central Statistical Organization of India is a pioneering attempt not only in South Asia, but also among developing countries. This large scale Survey of 18,591 households in India gives a better understanding of how time is allocated across gender in the economy and provides some insight into the extent of statistical invisibility of women's work in India. The TUS covered all members of the household aged 6 years and above.

The TUS in India categorized activities into three classes: SNA activities (that get included in GDP calculations), extended SNA activities (that do not get included in GDP but should be included in the satellite accounts) and residual non-SNA activities.

In the following section, you will read about how time use statistics may affect policy formulation.

2.8.3 Implications of Time Use Statistics for Public Investment

Fiscal policy interventions in terms of infrastructure can lead to substitution effects in time allocation of women from care economy to market economy, which has implications for reducing the poverty in the household and also in enhancing the education and health status of the household. Therefore, the analysis of time use statistics can help in formulating better fiscal policies in terms of infrastructure requirements. It differs across regions, again in which time use statistics can be revealing. There is need to ensure complementary fiscal services for better gender sensitive human development as gender related issues cut across sectors and for instance, investing in water supply infrastructure may be a prerequisite for improving the enrolment of girl children, which time use statistics can reveal.

Link between Public Infrastructure and Time Allocation

It is often argued that mainstream expenditure such as public infrastructure is non rival in nature and applying gender lens to these is not feasible. This argument is refuted by the time budget statistics. The time budget data revealed that this argument is often flawed, as there is intrinsic gender dimension to the non-rival expenditure. For example, the time allocation in the economy activities like fetching of water and fuel involves more girls and women and infrastructure investment with gender sensitive water policies and energy policies can really benefit women.

Prima facie, increase in public investment in infrastructure is negatively related to the time burden of women spending in fetching of water and fuel. There can be possibilities of substitutability between unpaid work and market work by women through increased investment in infrastructure by government. There can be a link between deterioration in infrastructure and rural poverty. In terms of fiscal policies to redress poverty, the aspects of time poverty is often surpassed. Time poverty affects income poverty. Fiscal policies designed to redress income poverty can be partial if it does not take into account the aspects of time poverty. This policy discussion has gender dimension as women are time poor and fiscal policies designed for poverty alleviation needs to incorporate the time allocation aspects across gender.

The time allocation in SNA activity of women is found inversely related to the public infrastructure. This result indicates that better infrastructure can lessen the unpaid SNA work of women. But, there is no evidence that the release of time locked up in unpaid SNA work of collecting water through better infrastructure have a substitution effect towards market work. This gets further reinforced by the positive link between infrastructure and time allocation in Non-SNA activity. It is to be noted that rise in the

time allocation in Non-SNA for women is forced leisure due to the paucity of opportunities in terms of employment. The policy suggestion arising from this analysis is that infrastructure investment lessens the time stress of women in unpaid SNA activity; but complementary employment guarantee policies are required along with infrastructure investment to ensure substitution effect of unpaid work with market work, which in turn can have impact on household poverty.

Box No.5

Time poverty affects income poverty, but infrastructure in tandem with employment policies are required for redressing the capability deprivation of the household. But, employment guarantee policies without sufficient public investment in infrastructure can be equally flawed as women are time poor and better infrastructural facilities are required to release the time locked up in the unpaid activities to have a smooth transition of them towards market economy.

Government Employment Guarantee Programmes and Time Allocation of Women

Newly created employment opportunities can serve as a vehicle for transforming women's lives by reducing the unpaid work burden and, thus, altering the paid-unpaid gender division of labour. In some cases this will translate to prioritizing public investment in infrastructure that reduces unpaid work, such as rural water projects, feeder roads and building separate *toilets* in schools for girls and boys, which will reduce the time allocated to fetching water and walking children to school, as well as allow female students to go to school. In other instances it will require investing directly in work activities that are 'invisible' like, childcare, elder care, and care for the chronically ill. To truly benefit those most in need, programmes will have to be context-specific. The best way to guarantee this is by participatory community-based project design processes that directly engage with women and women's groups.

Public job guarantee programs designed with these concerns in mind will have three distinct benefits. **First**, they will generate income for participants, simultaneously setting a wage floor for all, including some benefits (depending on the design of the program). These newly created jobs may or may not be always filled by women. It could be that women are the ones employed as construction workers while young men provide home- based care to the chronically ill. But in all cases, in addition to income, capacity building and skill acquisition will be gained to varying degrees. **Second**, the goods and services delivered will become part of the basket of consumption for underserved communities and populations, in itself a contribution to pro-poor development. **Third**, and quite significant for promoting gender equality,

this may turn out to be a very powerful redistributive policy of unpaid work burdens.

The importance of employment guarantee programs in our context is that, if well designed, they can reduce unpaid work while redistributing the cost of reproduction by creating jobs for both women and men instead of reinforcing the existing gender-based division of unpaid labour. If such projects are not gender-informed, the danger is that they may create a typical 'double' day effect for women.

2.9 LET US SUM UP

Early discourses on women and work can be traced to the discipline of economics and its theoretical background with focus on buyers, sellers, market making work being productive if and only if profits are produced.

Whereas the household realm positions itself on the range of unpaid work that is necessary for the functioning of life.

Thus, for feminist economists work is not only that activity or expenditure of energy, that produces services and products of value to other people but, work can be performed without wages, salaries, or income. Economically speaking, labor market work is strictly work performed for pay.

Feminist economics grew in response to the restricted and inadequate view of 'the economy' offered by mainstream economic thinking. One of the most pervasive themes of the present feminist movement is the emphasis placed on the role of reproduction as a determinant of women's work, the sexual division of labor, and the subordinate/dominant relationships between women and men.

2.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Is it important to measure both productive and reproductive work done by women. Discuss with the help of examples.
- 2) Explain the relevance of international standards for measurement of work done by women.
- 3) Analyse time use statistics for public investment implications on women's work.

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UNIT 3 SEGMENTATION

Harshada Rathod

Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Nature of Segmentation of Labour Market in India
 - 3.3.1 Causes of Segmentation: Demand Side
 - 3.3.2 Causes of Segmentation: Supply Side
 - 3.3.3 Effects of Segmentation
 - 3.3.4 Remedies
- 3.4 Wage Differentials
 - 3.4.1 Nature of Wage Differentials
 - 3.4.2 Determinants of Wage Differentials
 - 3.4.3 Causes of Wage Differentials
 - 3.4.4 Measures to Remove Wage Differentials
- 3.5 Lets Sum Up
- 3.6 Glossary
- 3.7 Unit End Questions
- 3.8 References
- 3.9 Suggested Readings

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Women have been participating in the labour force from time immemorial. But, today in the labour market they do not have the same standing as their male counterpart. Women workers are concentrated in the informal sector and are paid low wages. In the organized sector where women participation is low, promotions are few and far between. Women work in a segmented labour market. Their working conditions are pathetic and being in informal sector they are not covered by social security legislations. Segmentation (see Glossary) of labour not only have detrimental effect on women as workers but also accrue loss to national economy.

This plight of women is not peculiar to India; but is the universal from countries that are less developed to industrialised developed world. However, in this unit the focus of our study is India. Let us go through the objectives of reading this unit.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the nature of the segmentation, its causes, effects and remedies;
- Analyse causes and effects of wage differentials;
- Explain the ways to integrate women with the labour market; and
- Discuss possible solutions to remove wage differentials.

3.3 NATURE OF SEGMENTATION OF LABOUR MARKET

According to the 2001 Census, there were 127.2 lakh female workers in India, of which as many as 94.67 per cent were in the unorganized sector. In case of male workers also 89.07 per cent of them were working in the unorganized sector. Whereas 10.91 per cent of male workers were in the organized sector only 5.28 per cent of female workers were in the organized sector. This shows that **concentration of women workers is in the unorganized sector both in absolute and relative sense.**

Let us discuss the scenario in detail.

- If we take into consideration the classification of workers into 'main' and 'marginal' workers (You have read about these categories of workers in Unit 1 of this Block), the Census of India 2001 statistics clearly indicates how women's position in the labour market is weak in relation to the male workers. Thus, of the total marginal workers, 60.92% are female and only 39.07% are male. This situation is just the reverse in the case of 'main' workers. Of the total 'main' workers, a very high proportion, 76.72% consists of male workers where as only a small proportion, 23.27% consists of female workers. Considering the 'category of main' workers, in 2001 Census analysis, it is found, that a **substantial majority of female workers**, almost 46.22 lakhs are **engaged in agriculture**. In this category, 53.60 lakhs of them work more as agricultural labourers while only 32.90% work as cultivators.
- If sector-wise situation of male and female workers is compared on the basis of 2001 Census statistics, we find that 79 per cent of female workers work in the **primary sector** as against 63 per cent of male workers in that sector. Thus, more of women workers are occupied in agriculture and agriculture related tasks.
- When we analyze the **employment in the secondary sector** we find that only 13% of female workers get job in the industrial sector as against 19% of males. The disparity is more prominent in the tertiary sector where only 8% of female workers get jobs as against 18% of male

workers. Thus, women get fewer jobs in the tertiary sector and hence are very few in the higher salary brackets.

- Even when women are employed in the secondary and tertiary sector, they do not get equal opportunities in all the industries. NSSO has classified industries into approximately 384 divisions. Only in 55 types of industries, intensity of women's employment is high. In these industries, women form more than 40% of the total workforce. The situation in tertiary sector is in no way different. In trade and commerce sector, male workers account for 8.98% of the jobs while only 2.26% of female workers are engaged in this sector. In transport and communication sector 3.54% male workers are employed but only 0.32 per cent of female workers are engaged there.

Thus, we see that analysis of macro data sets make women workers disadvantageous status evident. Let us now look into causes of the situation discussed above.

3.3.1 Causes of Segmentation of the Labour Market: Demand Side

Segmentation of the labour market is primarily the result of the patriarchal structure of the society. Employers, as well as workers, who are mostly men, assume that the primary role of women is inside the house, as wife and a mother. Here we discuss some of the important factors that lead to segmentation of force on the basis of gender.

- **Secondary role:** Whatever a woman does in the labour market is viewed as her secondary role. She is not looked upon as capable of providing household finance and her income is only viewed as marginal income or secondary income. However, at times, income of all the member is needed for the family's survival.
- **Patriarchal nature of the society:** We have a patriarchal society. Patriarchal attitude carried on for generations make it difficult for the employers to realize the reality and accept women as equal partners.
- **Women's commitment towards work:** There is a misconceived notion about women's sincerity towards work. Employers assume that women would be irregular for work. More of absenteeism and less of sincerity is anticipated from women. It is because of this attitude of men that the demand for women workers is confined to only low skill and low paid jobs.
- **Effect of modernization:** Along with this traditional attitude, the effect of modernization and mechanization has also worked against women. When new machines are employed for doing work earlier done by

women, men are employed to run the machines. This leads to the replacement of women workers by men workforce. But, as women were not properly organized in the trade unions, there is not enough resistance. This gives us a picture of change in demand for women workers in the wake of modernization.

- **Effect of legislation:** Other factor causing reduction in demand for women workers, is the laws enacted to protect them. Certain benefits like maternity benefits and provision of crèches add expenditure to the employers existing cost. Principle of equal pay for equal work also reduce the employers inclination of paying a lower wage to women workers as cost of added benefits/provisions is over and above the wages. This also led to tead reduction in the demand for women workers.

In the following section you will read about the supply side of causes of segmentation of labour force.

3.3.2 Causes of Segmentation of the Labour Market: Supply Side

The same patriarchal attitude which leads to the segmentation of the labour market on the demand side is also responsible for the segmentation on the supply side. Let us examine a few other prominent factors.

- **Patriarchal Attitude:** Patriarchal attitude of parents and of society in general, make women workers position weak in labour market. The girl child does not get the same attention in terms of nurturing and care. Their entitlement in terms of food or medical care is less than that of boys in the family. They are generally anemic and bear more disease burden. A girl child normally is not allowed to continue in the secondary school. Even if they are allowed, they are not given equal opportunity as their brothers to choose a field of education that they prefer for career building.

Patriarchal values expect women to concentrate on certain disciplines and professions that are said to be feminine. These patriarchal values are so internalized by the women themselves that very few of them aspire for education in the fields so called 'reserved for men'. Even after completing their education, often they are not in a position to decide whether to work or not and if at all, how long to remained employed. The situation now is changing, though we still find patriarchal mindset prevalent in some sections of Indian society.

- **Patriarchal Structures:** Patriarchal societal structure leads women to regard home keeping and rearing children as their primary duties. Hence, women often look for work which is near home and opt for

work timings which can be adjusted with their domestic duties. They often give up opportunities of promotion which involve change of work place or additional responsibilities at the existing or a new work place.

Also, patriarchal structures along with patriarchal attitude is responsible for lack of geographical mobility of women. At the time of marriage, women migrate to live with their in-laws or their husband. They also follow their husbands when they migrate for work. This restricted mobility affects women's supply in the labour markets.

- **Strength of Bargaining:** One more limiting factor on the supply side of women labour force is their inability to bargain. It is a known fact that bargaining power of labour depends upon the strength of their union. But, trade unionism among women workers is not easy as they find it difficult to spare time for union activities. Trade union activity involves active participation where they will be needed at different places for long span of time for different kinds of union activities. While the male members are able to spare their time for these women are not.

3.3.3 Effects of Segmentation of Labour Market

Segmentation of labour market is undesirable as it leads to discrimination against women workers. Segmentation results in lower payment being made to women workers in comparison to male workers. Let us cast a look on other effects that segmentation has on female labour force.

- **Lack of Capital Intensive Technology:** Segmentation keeps women workers concentrated in certain fields where less capital intensive technology is used. In those Indian industries where a significant percentage of workers are women, the capital/labour ratio and output / labour ratio are both below the all-India all-industries-average.
- **Vulnerability of Loss of Job:** For women workers, employer's strategy remains 'last in, first out'. Segmentation makes women the most vulnerable workers. At the onset of depression they are thus the first workers to be removed from the job. Unfortunately, they are the last to be taken back on the job when situation improves.
- **Redundancy of Women workers:** Another serious effect of segmentation is the greater extent of unemployment of women workers as a result of patriarchal social and economic structures.

In the following section you will read about some of the ways to mainstream women workforce and overcome segmentation.

3.3.4 Remedies to Integrate Women With the Labour Market

- **To Overcome Patriarchal Attitude:** As we have seen the root cause of segmentation of labour market, both on the demand and supply side,

lies in the patriarchal attitude regarding women's role - as a housewife, mother and also as workers. Special efforts should be made to change this attitude. Women's organization should also make exceptional efforts to uproot the internalization of patriarchal attitude by women themselves.

- **Awareness about adverse effects of segmentation of Labour Market:** Men should be made aware of the adverse effect labour market segmentation has not only on women but also on employers. Women also must be made aware of the ill effects of labour market segmentation who accept it as their destiny.
- **Role of civil society:** All organizations dealing with labour should be made receptive to the fact and there should be special measures taken to orient the employers in both the private and the public sector to encourage gainful employment for both men and women.
- **Gender Inclusive Policies:** Policies that are gender sensitive and promote gender equality should be promoted. Special incentives should be instituted to encourage members of both the sexes for achieving excellence in educational activities to performance at workplace.
- **Advocacy by Government:** There should be continuous effort, by governmental as well as the non-government organizations dealing with women, to remove misconceptions which regard 'home' as the only sphere of work for women. Imaginary adverse effects women's work will have on their children and other familial responsibilities should be discouraged. Research should be encouraged in this field to remove such misconceptions.
- **Encouragement Formal Education:** Special efforts should be made to see that girl children enroll for primary education in equal number and special attention should be paid to reduce the drop-out ratio. They should be encouraged to go in for higher studies by giving special scholarships. If women venture into untrodden areas of study previously not opted by women, they should be given special incentives.
- **Childcare Facilities:** Special facilities like maternity leave, crèche to take care of the children of working women etc, must be made available so that women can enter the organized sector of the labour market. Since individual employers will be unwilling to bear the cost, the State should shoulder the responsibility. This will minimize the resistance of employers to women employees.
- **Equal Remuneration:** Women should get equal remuneration as men in the same occupation. This has not been possible in spite of the fact that India has ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention. So, there

Check Your Progress:

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In the following section you will read about the nature, determinants, causes and effects of wage differentiation.

3.4 WAGE DIFFERENTIALS

Wage differentials has been a practice that has been faced by women workers from the time of industrialization. Here, we will discuss various aspects of wage differentials between and men and women workers.

3.4.1 Nature of Wage Differentials

There are differences in the wages paid to the men and women workers. This is found around the world and is not something peculiar to India. This is generally done by reserving certain categories of work for women and other categories of work for men and by paying higher rate of wage for the categories of work reserved for men. A case study given below will illustrate this point clearly to you.

Box No. 1

Studies by Nirmala Banarjee in West Bengal revealed that small industrial units paid lower wages to female employees compared to male members. She mentioned in another of her study that beedi rolling workers in Calcutta were paid different wages depending on whether they were male or female. Women workers were getting Rs. 3/- per 1000 beedis, while men were getting Rs. 10/- per 1000 beedis plus a daily allowance. This discrimination was because men were working in the factories while women were working from their home. Women have to sacrifice household work to finish the job in time. They also take the help of their young children and aged relatives to complete the work in time. After making all these adjustments and sacrifices they get lower wages. Since they do not work in the factory premises they do not get the protection of Labour laws. In view of the fact that they are doing the work from home, they do not get facilities like lunch break. And for all this they are paid lower wages than men doing the similar work in the formal sector.

Though Equal Remuneration Convention No. 1000 was passed by I.L.O. in 1951 and was ratified by India. Equal Remuneration Act passed in India in 1976, makes it obligatory on the employers to pay equal remuneration, but the female workers are till now paid less than the male workers.

The NSSO (1996) Report shows that not only in agriculture but in all other areas of employment like industry, finance and services, women are paid lower wages. Thus, while women are paid 90.8% of male wages in agriculture,

the percentage is 67.8% in mining, 84.5% in finance sector and 72.0% in service sector. The wage differential is seen not only throughout different sectors of employment, but also in the some profession. At the same educational level, women get 85.5% of men's salary in nursing, 71.4% in teaching and 87.4% in clerical jobs. If this is the plight of educated women, one can well imagine the predicament of illiterate and semi-literate women.

Box No. 2

The wage differential is seen in both public and private sectors but, it is marginally less in the public sector. Thus, the Male: Female wage ratio is 1.01, 1.28 and 1.27 respectively in agriculture, manufacturing and service in the public sector. The ratio is 1.47, 1.61 and 1.58 in the private sector in the respective fields.

With women's increased participation in paid work there is mixed evidence that, the gender-wage gap has shown a tendency to diminish. In some industrialized countries, such as, the United States of America, the gap appears to have narrowed. In others, such as, Japan, it has widened. Similarly, in developing countries, such as El Salvador and Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Singapore, Taiwan, and Province of China, the wage gap has widened.

Even though the evidence is sparse, trade expansion and liberalization with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows are likely to affect gender wage gaps in two ways: (a) through differential impact on the demand for female and male labours; and (b) through increase in bargaining power relative to organized workers in industries that are directly affected by the export of capital.

FDI flows might be expected to drive up the wages of women workers because they tend to stimulate demand for female labour. By contrast, the increased ability of businesses to relocate all or some segments of their production across national borders puts a downward pressure on the wages of workers in the affected industries. The little existing research suggests that the latter effect has been stronger.

It is also argued that the signing of the **North American Free Trade Agreement** (NAFTA) and concomitant threat of moving offshore, helped manufacturing employers in the United States of America to successfully resist the demands for wage increase. Likewise, FDIs by MNCs tend to move away from the newly industrialized economies, where wages and working conditions have improved, to less developed countries, such as India, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, and more recently Bangladesh, China and Viet Nam. Women's wages relative to men's might thus be unlikely to rise if women are more heavily concentrated than men in industries where capital is

'footloose' (i.e., where the threat by businesses to move offshore is highly credible). Indeed, that is likely to be the case in many low-wage sites in developing countries which attract FDIs. Not surprisingly, wage differentials are especially marked in those developing countries or areas which pursue export-led industrialization or have Economic Processing Zones (EPZs).

By contrast, in some developed economies, such as the United States, the forces of globalization appear to have adversely affected men's wages more than women's. Over the last two decades, trade liberalization and capital mobility have eroded well paying blue-collar wages in concentrated industries where men were the well entrenched insiders. Increased international competition which reduces the bargaining power of male workers in such industries, may be one explanation for the decreasing gender wage gap. Three quarters of the decrease in the wage gap in the United States since late 1970s is estimated to stem from the decline in male real wages (Lawrence and Bernstein, 1994). At least in some counties, the narrowing of the gender wage gap reflects in part a '**downward harmonization**' between men and women.

Other factors also have influenced gender wage differentials over the past decades. There have been significant changes in the patterns of occupational segregation by sex around the world. Although women still earn less than men at every level of education, increasing number of women in higher-level jobs, especially in developed countries, have effectively improved women's aggregate labour-market income relative to men. Other important factors, depending on the region and the country, have been the following:

- the type of wage settlement
- technological change
- pattern of industrial development
- change in societal values with regard to gender inequality.

Box No. 3

Male-female pay differentials tend to be lower in countries with centralized collective bargaining. The earnings gap is relatively small in Australia, Germany, Norway and Sweden, the countries where there is centralized collective bargaining which emphasizes egalitarian wage policies in general. In Canada and the United States, the earnings gap is relatively larger because wage negotiation process is decentralized, market-oriented and is at enterprise-level (Lim, 1996; Kucera, 1998), depending on the size of enterprise. Large enterprises tend to pay higher wages to women and are more likely to hire women.

3.4.2 Determinants of Wage Differentials

For identical work profile, women are paid less. And women are confined to relatively inferior tasks and more of contractual or casual work. Women employees get differential opportunities, differential treatment and differential treatment.

- Causes of WD are gender gaps in education, skill, opportunities due to patriarchal attitude and myths about women's inferiority. Absence of affirmative action by the state and trade unions also perpetuate wage differentials.
- Effects of WD are subordination of women in the workplace, family, community and public life, son preference, man is treated as a 'bread winner' and Head of the Household.

Despite the rapid and global increases in female paid employment in recent years, occupational segregation by sex remains a worldwide phenomenon. It can be an important indicator of women's disadvantaged position in labour market. Indeed, higher levels of occupational segregation are generally associated with poorer labour-market conditions for women, lower pay, lower status, and more limited career opportunities, among others. It can be also be a source of labour market rigidity and thus economic inefficiency.

Women are more likely to be working in 'men's job' than the opposite. But, as a rule, women are employed in a narrower range of occupations than men. Male-dominated, non-agricultural occupations are over seven times more numerous than female-dominated occupations. Women dominate in clerical and secretarial jobs and in low-end service occupations (as shop assistants, waitresses, maids, hairdressers, dressmakers), and as professionals they are most likely to be teachers or nurses. The 'female occupations' generally pay less and have lesser status and advancement prospects.

A distinction is usually made between two different forms of occupational segregation. **Horizontal segregation**, refers to the distribution of men and women across occupations (e.g., women as maids and men as truck drivers); while the other, termed as **vertical segregation** refers to the distribution of men and women in the job hierarchy in terms of status within an occupation (e.g. production workers versus production supervisors). Neither form of occupational segregation correlates well with the level of socio-economic development across countries. Both vary by region, however, which suggests that social, historical and cultural factors might be important in determining the extent of occupational segregation by sex.

The level of horizontal segregation is lowest in the Asia and Pacific region and highest in the Middle East / North Africa. It is also relatively high in other developing regions, while of average magnitude in the OECD and

transition economics in Eastern Europe. There are also large and significant differences in occupational segregation by sex across OECD sub regions. North America has the lowest level, while Scandinavia as a sub-region has the highest. The reason for the high level of segregation in the latter seems to be related to the way in which the welfare has created occupations that have remained 'female' (Anker and Melkas, 1998, p.9).

Vertical segregation, by contrast, is higher in Asia and the Pacific than in other parts of the world. Export-led industrial development has apparently opened up many industrial occupations to women (thereby significantly reducing horizontal segregation) without however, decreasing gender inequalities within occupations in term of wage, authority and career advancement possibilities.

Box No. 4

Occupational segregation by sex is often justified on the grounds that women have specific attributes which make them more suitable than men for particular types of work. It is argued that traditionally 'female' occupations involve caring types of work, manual dexterity and experience at typical household activities, all of which women are expected to possess. Similarly, subservience and docility, the other characteristics commonly associated with female workers, are thought to shape gender employment patterns.

It again time to assess your understanding of the previous sections that you have just finished reading.

Check Your Progress:

- 1) Write briefly about:
 - i) Ways of integrating women with the labour market.
 - ii) Ways to remove wage differentials in the labour market.
- 2) What is the nature of wage differentials in the labour market?

Let us now read why there exists wage differentials between men and women workers.

3.4.3 Causes of Wage Differentials

Causes of wage differentials between men and women are deep rooted in the patriarchal attitude of the society. Let us read some more causes of wage differentials.

- **Secondary wage earners:** Justification for paying lower wages to women is that men work for supporting their families while women work only for extra income. Many socio-economic surveys have shown that there is a large percentage of women who are sole supporters of their family. Census also records large number of women headed holds.
- **Not skilled to use machinery:** Wage differential is not always based on different wage rates. The difference between the average wage earnings of men and women can result from the fact that many women workers are working at a lower level in the same employment, or doing the same work in the unorganized sector as is the situation with the Beedi workers. It is also based on the fact that whenever machinery is introduced men are substituted for female labourers and are paid wages related to the increased productivity resulting from the introduction of machines. The average wage earnings of women are also lower because they get less hours of work in comparison with men and they suffer from unemployment to a larger extent.
- **Gendered division of labour:** The bifurcation of work between men and women is also a cause of wage differentials. In agriculture, weeding is predominantly a female task and is largely an off-peak activity. On the other hand, ploughing, transplanting and harvesting are mainly men's activities and they are all peak season and time-bond activities. This job differential (weeding vis-à-vis ploughing, transplanting and harvesting) and time differential (off peak work vis-à-vis peak season time-bond activities) also lead to wage differences between men and women workers.
- **Use of obsolete technology:** In industry the tasks assigned to women are usually performed by using low capital intensive technology. The processes they participate in, tend to be more primitive, using crude tools, consuming more of manual/physical energy. As a result, production tends to be slow, the product non-standardized and the wages low.
- **Engaged in despicable labour:** For example, with regard to handicrafts, women's skills mostly consist of capital and energy saving ingenuity. They are seldom found giving a definite distinctive character to the final products which leads to the survival of handicrafts. Women's skills

are limited to helping with ancillaries and are therefore dispensable making women's wages low.

- **Loose ties with labour market:** The low wages is related to the loose ties of most of the women with the labour market. Having internalized the patriarchal values, they feel that their first responsibility is to look after their homes and their children. They give up a job after child birth and reenter the job market when their children start going to full time school.

At this point, assess your understanding by attempting the following exercise.

Check Your Progress:

1) *Write the determinants of Wage Differentials.*

2) *List down the causes of Wage Differentials.*

3) *What are the factors affecting Wage Differentials?*

In the next subsection you will read how wage differentials can be minimized.

3.4.4 Measures to Remove Wage Differentials

Following measures can be instrumental in removing wage differentials.

- **Remove Segmentation of Labour Market:** Wage differentials lead to segmentation of labour market. Hence, remove segmentation of labour market by changing the factors on both the demand and the supply side.
- **Entry into Organized Labour Market:** Women must be encouraged and facilitated to enter the organized sector of the labour market.
- **Participation in Union Activities:** They should be encouraged to join trade unions in large numbers and to actively participate in the union so that they can fight wage discrimination.
- **Equal Remuneration Act:** The Equal Remuneration Act should be implemented and loop-holes should be plugged.

3.5 LET US SUM UP

The labour market, not only in India but also in other countries of the world, is segmented with reference to the sex of workers. It does not accord the same status to female workers as it accords to the male workers. There are many factors working both on the demand and the supply side, which causes these segmentation of the market. A deep rooted cause of this segmentation is the patriarchal attitude of the employers and the society as a whole. Efforts to bring about the change in mind set of employers is the most important step to irradiate segmentation of labour force. Skill development of women is a prerequisite to overcome the barren and segmentation. A variety of technical courses should be made available to women and employment opportunities in new areas should be facilitated for them. If we succeeded in integrating women within the labour market, it will not only be beneficial to women workers but to the nation's economy as a whole.

3.6 GLOSSARY

Segmentation : The process of defining and subdividing a large homogenous market into clearly identifiable segments having similar needs, wants or demand characteristics. Its objective is to design a marketing mix that precisely matches the expectations of customers in the targeted segment.

Wage differentials : The difference in wages between workers with different skills in the same industry or between those with comparable skills in different industries.

Wage discrimination : Wage discrimination means when an employer pays a woman less than a man for substantially equal work. Such compensation includes salary, overtime pay, bonuses, stock options, profit sharing and bonus plans, life insurance, vacation and holiday pay, cleaning or gasoline allowances, hotel accommodations, reimbursement for travel expenses, and other benefits. Wage discrimination may also occur in instances that do not meet the equal work standard.

Patriarchy : It is a social system in which the male gender role acts as the primary authority figure central to social organization. In family situation a man holds authority over his wife, children and property. It implies the institution of male rule and privileges and entails female subordination. Many patriarchal societies are also patrilineal, meaning that property and title are inherited by the male lineage.

Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, and economic organization in different cultures. Patriarchy also has a strong influence on modern civilization, although many cultures have moved towards a more egalitarian social system over the past century.

Modernization : In social sciences, modernization refers to a model of an evolutionary transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society. The teleology of modernization is described in social evolutionism theories, existing as a template that has been generally followed by societies that have achieved modernity

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976: This Act provides for the payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers for same work or of similar nature work and for the prevention of discrimination on the ground of sex against women in the matter of employment.

3.7 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss various causes leading to segmentation of labour market in India. Suggest methods to integrate women with the labour market.
- 2) Do you agree that patriarchal attitude of society is the root cause of segmentation? Discuss with the help of examples.
- 3) Discuss the causes of the wage differential between male-female workers in India.
- 4) What measures will you suggest to bring about wage equality? Explain by giving examples.

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UNIT 4 ESTIMATING WOMEN'S WORK

Mondira Dutta

Structure

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Objectives
- 4.3 Workforce Composition
 - 4.3.1 Census of India
 - 4.3.2 National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO)
- 4.4 Women in Informal Economy
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Unit End Questions
- 4.7 References
- 4.8 Suggested Readings

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Assessing women's work has always been one of the most arduous and multifarious exercise before the estimators of labour statistics. Unfortunately, women's work such as nursing, mothering, nurturing tasks do not form part of any national accounting system nor are a part of the GDP. They often work as unpaid workers on family farms/enterprises or in several of the informal sector activities, which are neglected while being documented. Their household work frequently gets mixed up with economic work and becomes difficult to be separated both at a conceptual level as well as at the operational level. The unorganised sector engulfs a huge chunk of such workers (more than 90%). The workers in the unorganised sector (also referred to as the informal economy) lead a life of complete unawareness and ignorance with regards to their rights and facilities. Most of the workers in this sector happen to be women belonging to the marginalized sections of the society. They are imbibed within this sector either as daily wagers, household workers or are simply self-employed.

Box No. 1

In spite of facing enormous hardship, women's work tends to be hidden, unaccounted and under accounted mainly because of the fact that the women's work is primarily seasonal, irregular and uncertain.

This unit essentially introduces the national accounting processes in India such as Census of India, National Sample Survey and other processes which enumerate women's work. The Unit will also deal with the bias and flaws existing within the system that tends to ignore the real contribution of

women in the economy. The Unit also discusses the role and contribution of women to informal economy in India.

Let us look at the major objectives of this unit.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you would be able to:

- Discuss enumeration of women workers by the national documentation processes; and
- Explain work force composition in India;
- Assess the contribution of women workers towards the informal economy of the country.

Work assignments for the women comes through a chain of middlemen. They are completely unaware as to who their real employer is. Thus, the labour laws within the unorganised manufacturing economy particularly in the urban areas have usually resulted in denial of justice for these women.

4.3 WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

The work force structure of India can be categorized under three segments. At one end of it are the elite **white-collar workers** like the senior public sector officials and the managerial class of the private sector, accounting for not more than 1 percent of the labour force. Job security and social security provisions for this category are part of their work contracts. In the present era of trade liberalization and increasing globalisation (You will read about it in detail in Block 6 of this Course) this elite group are quick to avail themselves of the salary and compensation packages that are at par with international standards.

While at the other extreme are the workers such as the self-employed, the informal sector workers and casual labourers accounting for 92 to 93 percent of the total labour force. There exists only a minimal social security provisions for this lot. It is this 93% of the work force where the concentration of women workers is the maximum and those who are outside the gambit of labour laws and social security.

In between these two categories are the regular wage employees of the public sector and the organized private sector, which account for about 6 to 7 percent of the labour force. The bulk of the government legislation for labour market and social insurance schemes concerns this particular group. The major thrust of the state activities basically hover around the minimum wage legislation and various promotional measures for employment generation, which is unlikely to be effective in view of implementation problems.

The concentration of women workers is maximum among those who remain outside the gambit of labour laws and social security.

Let us now read how census and NSSO estimate work force in India. You have already read about macro data sets like the census and NSSO in MMG-005 Block 3 Unit 4. The Indian labour force statistics mainly relies upon two major sources of information. These include the 'Census of India' and data collected through the 'National Sample Survey Organization' (NSSO).

4.3.1 Census of India

The Decennial Census conducted by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India provides data on various characteristics of the labour force, once in every 10 years, for the entire country under various demographic, social and economic characteristics. The data so collected on workers are tabulated as main worker and marginal worker.

The Work Participation Rate (WPR) is defined as the percentage of workers to the total population, which is 39.3 per cent as per the 2001 Census. The WPR in 1991 Census was 37.5 percent. Table no 1, given below show the Work Participation Rates (WPR) according to Census of India, 2001. The most significant improvement is seen in case of rural marginal workers, which improved from 0.7 percent in 1991 to 7.9 percent in 2001 for males and from 8.1 percent to 14.2 percent in case of females during the corresponding period.

Table No. I: Distribution of Total workers, Main workers, Marginal workers and Non-workers

India	Total/ Rural/ Urban	Persons/ Males/ Females	Proportion to Total Popn.			
			Total Workers	Main Workers	Marginal Workers	Non- Workers
2001 Census (Provisional)	Total	Persons	39.3	30.6	8.7	60.7
		Males	51.9	45.4	6.6	48.1
		Females	25.7	14.7	11	74.3
	Rural	Persons	42	31	10.9	58
		Males	52.4	44.5	7.9	47.6
		Females	31	16.8	14.2	69
	Urban	Persons	32.2	29.3	2.9	67.8
		Males	50.9	47.5	3.4	49.2
		Females	11.6	9.1	2.4	88.5

1991 Census (Excluding J and K)	Total	Persons	37.5	34.1	3.4	62.5
		Males	51.6	50.9	0.6	48.4
		Females	22.3	15.9	6.3	77.7
	Rural	Persons	40	35.7	4.3	60
		Males	52.5	51.8	0.7	47.5
		Females	26.7	18.6	8.1	73.3
	Urban	Persons	30.2	29.5	0.7	69.8
		Males	48.9	48.6	0.4	51.1
		Females	9.2	8.1	1	90.8

Source: Census of India, 2001 and 1991, Government of India.

In fact, there is a perceptible decline in the proportion of main workers between 1991 and 2001 from 34.1 percent in 1991 to 30.5 percent in 2001. This sharp fall in percentage of main workers comes from rural areas especially rural males which drops to 44.5 in 2001 from 51.8 in 1991. This indicates that the agricultural activities are not providing sufficient job opportunities forcing the families to migrate and seeking job opportunities in home-based activities. A comparison of Work Participation Rate (WPR) as per the Census of India 2001 is made with the WPR estimated on the basis of sample survey by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in India (Refer Table No 2). We see that at the national level the difference between the two sets of returns is marginal.

Table No 2: Work Participation Rate (WPR)

Country	Persons/Males/Females	Work Participation Rate (WPR)		
		As per 2001 Census	As per NSSO	Difference
India	Persons	39.26	38.85	0.41
	Males	51.93	54.1	-2.17
	Females	25.68	22.45	3.23

Source: 2001 Census (Provisional)

NSSO (National Sample Survey Organisation), 55th Round (July 1999).

The WPR refers to 'Usual Status' (i.e., Principal Status and Subsidiary Status).

4.3.2 National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO)

Data collected through the NSSO gives information related to certain key parameters of employment and unemployment in its surveys annually and through a comprehensive survey on employment and unemployment quinquennially. It brings out a number of reports based on these surveys. Important NSSO rounds like 55th, 56th and the 61st gives detailed information related to workers. The 55th round of NSSO covered the agricultural and

non-agricultural enterprises during July 1999 - June 2000. It identified and subsequently estimated the magnitude of both formal and informal workers in the country. The 56th round of NSSO data provided an in-depth view of the unorganized manufacturing sector under various heads. The 56th round was conducted during July 2000 - June 2001, which covered the unorganized manufacturing enterprise as a follow-up of Fourth Economic Census held during 1998. The 61st round discusses the employment and unemployment situation in India in 2004-05. It shows a large gap in terms of employment between the men and women both in the rural as well as urban areas. The gap in the urban areas is extremely high with 57% men and only 18% women being employed. The women in the urban areas are mostly absorbed by the informal economy and remain unaccounted.

A study of the NSSO data on the basis of the 55th and 56th rounds reveal that the total employment in the country increased from 374 million in 1993-94 to 397 million in 1999-2000 (based on Usual Principal and Subsidiary Status). Out of this, around 28 million (7%) are in the organized sector and the balance 369 million (93%) are in the unorganized sector. The workforce within the unorganized manufacturing sector has been classified by the NSSO on the basis of type of employment into three categories. These are:

- Own Account Manufacturing Enterprises (OAME) - Household enterprises not employing hired worker on fairly regular basis. Here one person manages the entire process from production to marketing.
- Non Directory Manufacturing Enterprises (NDME) - Small establishments, employing workers not exceeding five in number, which include household members.
- Directory Manufacturing Enterprises (DME) - Top layer of establishments employing six or more workers including household members.

Before reading the next section, take the following exercise to assess your understanding of the sections that you have just read.

Check Your Progress:

- 1) *Name the two important sources that estimates working population in India. How do they differ in their methodology of estimation.*

2) Write a line or two on:

- a) Mariginal workers
- b) Main Workers
- c) OAME
- d) Informed sector

Let us read about the position of women in informal economy.

4.4 WOMEN IN INFORMAL ECONOMY

With Globalization, it has been observed that there is large scale redundancy and many men have become unemployed. This has forced the women to undertake work at a very low rate of payment in order to shoulder economic responsibilities during the crisis. A majority of the women work force is engaged in the unorganized sector where labour laws are not only flouted but the work conditions are fixed by the employer according to their whims and wishes. The salaries are below the prescribed norm. There are no leave or medical benefits/compensation. Table No 3 shows the proportion of gender wise worker distribution in the organized and unorganized sectors in 1991. Though the table dates back to 1991, it gives a fair idea about the high concentration of workers in the unorganized sector for both men and women.

Of the total women workforce the share in the organized sector is only 4.2 per cent, while the rest of the 95.8 per cent are in the unorganized sector where there are no legislative safeguards even to claim either minimum or equal wages at par with their male counterparts, leave alone the other benefits that the women from the organized sector enjoy.

Table No 3: Organized /Unorganized Sectors in 1991 (Figures in Millions)

Sectors	Female		Male		All	
	Actual	%	Actual	%	Actual	%
Organized	3.78	4.2	22.95	10.2	26.73	8.5
Unorganized	85.99	95.8	201.41	89.8	287.40	91.5
All	89.77	100	224.36	100	314.13	100

Source: Computed based on the Census data and of the DGE and T, Gol

The unorganized sector has a good base for supply of work due to the demand for consumer goods and other ancillary activities of the metropolitan cities. It is estimated that three fourths of the total working population, especially among the poor and the developing nations belong to the world of unorganized sector, which has been largely responsible in promoting the poverty levels within these societies. These workers are without any social security or legislative provisions. For example, in the case of accidents, sickness over long duration, unemployment or old age, the informal sector provides no alternative for the workers to fall back upon. The unorganized economy comprises of a vast range of economic activities and industries ranging from the home-based electronics assembly, garment piece-rate work, crafts, street vendors, daily wagger, textile weaving, block printing, embroidery, handicraft production, food products, etc. It's a major source of non-agricultural employment in the developing nations and therefore tends to concentrate in the urban slums of the metropolitan cities. The workers in this sector include the home-based, the self-employed, the daily wage earners, vendors and so on.

The importance of this sector can very well be judged from the study conducted by the **National Commission of Labour**, which estimated almost 60% of the national income and 60% of the home savings are contributed by the unorganised sector. According to estimates, in India, the contribution of informal sector to India's exports is roughly 40 percent (IIFT, 1999). Despite the fact that the informal economy has tremendous potential, the sector is beset with manifold problems such as obsolete technologies, unorganized production system, low productivity, inadequate working capital, conventional product range, weak marketing link and an overall stagnation of production as well as sales. Over and above all this, the situation is even more grave as only a trickle of the benefits percolate down to the grass roots consisting 90% of the workforce (Dutta, 2011). This is mainly due to exploitation by the middle persons and other entrepreneurs. Globalisation and tough competition from the mill sector has worsened the economic conditions of the women workers and they are forced to work for less than the minimum wages stipulated by the government. Thus, their lives leave much to be desired.

Women in Manufacturing Sector

Among the workers engaged in the unorganized sector, a large proportion of the women workers are engaged in the unorganized manufacturing sector. The predominant share of the unorganized manufacturing enterprises has been brought to light with the 56th round of NSSO results. Accordingly, unorganized sector enterprises accounted for 98.19%, which forms a major chunk in terms of number of enterprises (NSSO, 2000-2001). In spite of the voluminous, gigantic status and complex links to the organized sector, the unorganized economy, continues to remain largely invisible. A high

unemployment rate combined with the disguised employment, forces a large number of the workers to migrate along with their families towards the cities from interior rural areas in search of better job prospects.

Box No. 3

Work assignments for the women in manufacturing sector comes through a chain of middlemen. Women are completely unaware as to who their real employer is. Thus, the labour laws within the unorganised manufacturing economy particularly in the urban areas have usually resulted in denial of justice for these women.

Attracting mass scale in-migration (You will read more about it in Block 4 Unit 1 of this Course) to the cities from the neighboring regions, work in the informal sector tends to be one of the most flexible forms of employment, particularly the contract work, which is usually home-based. It has emerged as a key component in the restructuring of the global economy and often forms the last link in a network of international trade. It spreads across continents, producing goods sold by large retailers. The work conditions of home-based workers, including employer-employee relationships and methods of supervision are very different from those existing in the factories. Since, there is no direct control or supervision and no fixed hours of work, the method of wage fixation therefore cannot be on the time-rate basis as in the factories. In practice, it is found that the actual wages paid ought to be calculated taking into account various deductions made by the employers, and work expenses incurred by the worker. This brings down the per day earnings to a bare minimum. This massive chunk of population who face enormous hardships despite putting in colossal work inputs throughout their lives is certainly an issue, which cannot be ignored.

According to a report of the **National Commission of Labour**, (Bhatt, Ela R., 1988) the laws and statutes cater mainly, if not solely, to the organized sector, which accounts only for less than 10% of the workforce. The remaining 90 to 93% is today outside the coverage of social security systems, is more vulnerable and therefore, more in need of social security entitlements.

In a patriarchal society, the women have no means to address their economic and criminal grievances, which requires tremendous effort, resources and time. The most important issue in majority of the labour laws has been the establishment and existence of employer-employee relationship and the need to identify who is the concerned employer! Often it is hard to identify who the actual employer is. The fact mainly because of the fact that either the employer keeps changing frequently or there is no direct relationship with the actual employer. Generally, the only point of contract for the concerned target group is with a lower level intermediary - be it a beedi rolling activity, agarbatti making inside the homes, construction work or stitching on a piece rate basis.

On the other hand, most of 'self-employed' women are supposed to be their own employers. That is **one woman is responsible from production to marketing**. For example, activities like pappad, pickle and, lace making, embroidery, the Zardosi work, and so on are usually undertaken by single women.

Among the unorganized manufacturing sector as has been classified by the NSSO, a major concentration of the manufacturing enterprises is in the OAME category both for rural as well as urban areas (Refer Table No 4). In the OAME category, there is a high concentration of the women workers. While in the case of the NDME and the DME categories, these are areas of male domains. This reflects that the women mainly manage those manufacturing enterprises, which are run without the help of hired workers. Most of the self-employed and the home-based type of workers are engaged in the OAME category of manufacturing enterprises.

Table No 4: Distribution of Workers (%) in Rural/Urban Areas 2000 - 2001

Type	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
OAME	74.16	88.80	79.82	34.42	78.10	45.15
NDME	11.39	2.77	8.50	34.19	7.80	27.71
DME	14.45	8.43	11.68	31.39	14.1	27.14
ALL (in 000s)	14,706	9,279	23,985	9,875	3,219	13,095

Source: NSSO 56th Round, 2000-2001, Report No 477

Table No 4, clearly displays the pattern of gender distribution of workers. While the gap between male and female workers in OAME category for the rural areas is not so prominent, the same in the case of urban areas is quite marked. Thus, the urban cities depict a major concentration of women workers in the OAME category.

4.5 LET US SUM UP

Estimating women's work has been one of the most complex exercises before the estimators of labour statistics. The discussion above shows how women have had to come forward to shoulder economic responsibility and become the shock absorbers for the family. This is the result of globalization which has seeped into the homes making many of the men redundant and jobless. Outsourcing and contractual labour seems to have become in vogue, converting the formal labour into an informal activity. The informal labour does not have a formal employee - employer relationship and hence do not fall under the purview of labour laws. More than 90 % of the women

workers are in the informal economy and get exploited and marginalized. The largest number of the women workers in the informal economy is in the OAME category, where a single woman is responsible for the entire job that is from production to marketing. Such a scenario is generally found among the women in the urban areas. Thus, the urban areas are a common place where women are usually found engaged with OAME activities where their work contribution frequently remains unrecognised.

4.6 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss the importance of the unorganized sector in Indian economy.
- 2) Why is it that mostly women are found engaged in the OAME category in the urban slums? Explain.

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