UNIT 4 OCCUPATION

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

Women’s participation in the economy can be classified in various ways. In previous units we discussed the participation of women in terms of various industries, rural urban location and in formal and informal sector of the economy. In this unit we will discuss participation of women in the various occupations of the economy.
Women are participating in the economy by engaging in various occupations since time immemorial. Some of them are paid and some are unpaid. Women’s access to paid work is crucial to their efforts for economic equality and to their sense of self. But women’s paid work is generally valued as less important than men’s.

Women make tremendous contributions to the economy by working in a wide variety of occupations around the world, from teachers and secretaries to welders and doctors; from machine operators, pilots, engine drivers and astronomers to child care workers. Some women are able to get at the top in each and every occupation but majority of women across the world are concentrated in few occupations. They face occupational segregation.

Women more often find themselves in low-status, insecure jobs with few benefits. With the exception of unionised women, women still earn considerably less than men and represent the majority of the working poor in all regions.

They face various hazards at work place and also fight for their rights. Women are fighting for policy level changes across the world.

### 4.2 OBJECTIVES

After readings this Unit you will be able to:

- Critique women’s participation in paid and unpaid work;
- Explain the meaning and classification of occupations;
- Discuss the concept types, causes and affect of Occupational Segregation; and
- Suggest the measures to end occupational segregation.

### 4.3 DEFINING OCCUPATION

In simple words, ‘Occupation’ is a person’s usual or principal work especially as a means of earning a living. Occupation is also referred to as business, profession, employment, job or vocation. Basically it is the activity to which one regularly devotes oneself. Occupation can be paid or unpaid.

This distinction of paid and unpaid or productive and unproductive work did not exist in the subsistence economy. The distinction is recent and was introduced with the industrialised market economy.

Subsistence economy is mainly an agrarian economy based on production for consumption rather than exchange. It is an economy which is not based on money. Buying and selling are minimal and take place through barter.
In subsistence economy the production was undertaken in home based workshops and farms. The household was a unit of production, consumption and reproduction. The entire family and all the members of the community worked to produce basic necessities of life. The work was not structured in working hours or week days but intermingled with socialising and play; and connected to the rhythm of the seasons. The production was for satisfaction of immediate needs and not for sale in the market. This changed with the transformation of the economic system from subsistence economy to market based industrial economy.

4.4 THE ORIGIN OF PAID WORK

With the development of Industrial Age, work was moved from home and farm to factories and office buildings. Instead of working for their own immediate needs, people began to produce for sale in the market for money, which was later exchanged for food, housing, and other necessities. Thus, the society moved from a goods-based economy to a money-based economy or market economy. House hold in the market economy is viewed as a unit of consumption and reproduction only. These activities remained unpaid. The production was to take place outside the home. Productive work became paid work. The logic was taken forward to consider every thing taking place in the home as non-productive activities. This became the ideological base for the undervaluation of the productive activities carried out in the home and also outside.

4.4.1 Development of the Market Economy

Today, most economic systems are dominated by the market. Market refers to the exchange (buying and selling) of goods and services. But a market economy isn’t about simple exchange. Rather, it’s about making profit, earning capital, expansion, and growth.

With the introduction of industrial, market economy in the western countries the distinction between productive and unproductive, paid and unpaid work emerged. Men went into the factories and offices and received payment for the services they provided; women stayed home and continued on the work of reproduction and care of home and community but received no pay.

Economics has divided life into two separate categories: the economic realm and the household realm. The economic realm focuses on the market: producers, buyers, and sellers, while the household realm includes all the range of unpaid work that is necessary for the functioning of life. Because economics only counts production that produces items that can be sold in the market, the household is seen as being outside of the economic realm and therefore ‘unproductive.’ In contrast, the buying and selling and trading that takes place in the economic realm, is ‘productive.’
When women entered the paid workforce their incomes were considered supplementary to their husband’s or father’s and their work was seen as an extension of their unpaid work at home. As a result, the work they did was assigned a lesser monetary value than men’s work. Today, women’s paid work remains chronically and systematically unstable and underpaid, and much of their work remains entirely unpaid. Women’s work of bearing and raising children, maintaining a home, providing food and providing emotional support for everyone, is simply assumed unproductive, despite the fact that the economy is absolutely dependent on it. The contributions of children are also assumed to be without value.

The same process was introduced by the western industrialised countries in their colonies along with industries and market economy. Let us take the example of India.

4.4.2 The Indian Situation

The system of census records was introduced by British rulers in India. A very interesting debate took place when the census was introduced in 1871 (Kalpagam 1994 p.17). Dr. Farr who had earlier worked on UK Census, was asked to help in the classification of occupations. He had an idea that every person should be represented as having an occupation. He introduced “Domestic Occupation” as a category with an idea that women who perform only domestic work should also be included in the occupation tables. Dr. Farr’s idea was opposed vehemently with the argument that women and children cannot have any occupation, they are dependent for their comfort and support on men and men are engaged in occupations to provide for them. This ideological base of census introduced by the British continued even after independence. The leaders and intellectuals connected with the planning process of the economy after independence also had the same upper and middle-class world view of women which saw women as dependent on men. They simply ignored the reality of masses of working women in poor urban and rural families. Feminist economists have challenged this understanding and a process of engendering five year plans and data gathering system is under way.

Check Your Progress:

1) Write the definition of occupation.
3) What is Market Economy?

In the following section we will continue our discussion on women and their association with paid work.

4.5 WOMEN RECORDED AS WORKERS

Every woman is a working woman because without their work the economy can not function. However, labour force statistics do not reflect this because the estimate of Women's Labour Force Participation has been particularly sensitive to biases in methods of enumerating workers. Coverage varies according to what is counted as work, whether it is an activity that results in sale and brings in an income i.e. gainful economic activity; or whether it is an activity that adds to the resources of the household or society, regardless of it resulting in sale or not. The method used in the Census of India is to count gainful economic activities.

The proportion of women in paid work is increasing over the years but we can observe in table 4.1 the gap in labour force participation across the world. In Table 4.1, 59 per cent of women from the age group 15 and above in the world are recorded to be in the paid labour force. The range is 92 percent in Burundi, at the top of the ranking, to 22% in Pakistan at rank 135, the last entry.

Table 4.1: Labour Force participation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female-to-male ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The labour force participation rate in this table refers to the 15-to- 64-year-old age bracket.

4.6 WOMEN WORKING: OCCUPATION MAPPING

The proportion of women in the paid work has increased during the last few decades and women have moved into many fields which were once considered male-dominated. However for the majority of the women workers the sexual division of labour is still very real. Even among paid work women still find themselves over-represented in traditional occupations which are an extension of their unpaid work at home, i.e. keeping house and shop, taking care of children, and sewing clothes. These low-status, low-paying, female-dominated occupations like secretaries, sales clerks and food servers are described as Pink-collar jobs.

For many women the choice of this work is determined more by economic necessity than career choices. This kind of work also more easily allows them to leave the workforce for a time while they are having children and return when their children are older.

4.6.1 Global Job Ghettos for Women

Some of the occupations world wide are considered as ‘Job Ghettos’ for women because women are concentrated in those occupation. Following are the example job ghettos for women in various countries.

- Austria - chimney-sweeping
- China - cotton and rice harvesting
- Hungary - electronics assembly
- India - lace-working, food and fish processing, handicraft, cottage industries
- Iran - weaving
- Nicaragua - coffee picking
- Nigeria - street food vending
- Nepal - road building
- Turkey - tobacco processing
- United Kingdom - office-cleaning


While women across the world are found in a wide variety of occupations, pink-collar jobs and job ghettos exist in every country, developed and developing both.

4.6.2 Occupational Structure

Let us examine the occupational structure in a developed country like USA and a developing country like India. We can observe from Table No. 4.2 (on the next page) that the occupations like secretaries and assistant, nurses, school teachers, maids and housekeeping, receptionists, child care workers, book keeping, teacher assistants, etc, have more than 80% women workers.
The situation is not different in India. Look at the Table no. 4.3. In India, 40 percent of total women workers are engaged in agriculture and fishery work and 37 percent in the elementary occupations.

**Table 4.2: Leading Occupations of Employed Women in USA (2010)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Percentage of Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Secretaries and administrative assistants</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Registered nurses</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Elementary and middle school teachers</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Maids and housekeeping clerks</td>
<td>89.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Receptionists and information clerks</td>
<td>92.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Childcare workers</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Teacher assistants</td>
<td>92.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Personal and home care aides</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Office clerks, general</td>
<td>84.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Table 4.3: Distribution of Women Workers by Occupations in India - 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>% of women in Total workers</th>
<th>% of total women workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Legislators, senior officials and managers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Professionals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Technicians and associate professionals</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Clerks</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Service workers and Shop and Market Sales workers</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Skilled Agri. and Fisher workers</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Craft and related Trades Workers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Elementary Occupations</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Workers not classified by Occupations</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Computed from NSS KI : Key Indicators of Employment and Unemployment in India, July 2009-June 2010, Table P9, P. 176.*
Occupational Classification in India

Occupational classification in India is undertaken on the basis of the National Classification of Occupation (NCO). These classifications have evolved since independence and are revised as per International Labour Organisation’s classification to make international comparison possible. The recent classification used in India is NCO-2004. The grouping of occupations is based on the fundamental criteria of ‘type of work performed’. All the workers engaged in the same type of work are grouped together irrespective of the industrial classification of establishments where they are engaged. For example, all clerical workers have been classified in one occupational group; whether they are engaged in a factory, mine, government office or even a shop. Similarly, Drivers have been grouped together, so also those engaged in services, etc.

Along with the kind of work performed a second criteria is the level of skill involved in the performance of the occupation. “Skill” has been defined as the ability to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job.

2945 Occupations are identified and codified in NCO. Each occupation has been assigned a six-digit code, a distinct title and a definition. The occupations have been first assigned to the 10 Occupational Divisions on the basis of their job description. The Divisions have then been combined into 30 Sub-Divisions 116 Groups and 439 Families. Table 4.3 give the 10 first digit divisions of women workers in India.

Thus, 77 percent women workers in India are Gardeners and Crop Growers, Animal Producers and Related Workers, Forestry and Related Workers, Fishery Workers, Subsistence Agricultural and Fishery Workers, Street Vendors, Domestic Servants and Related Helpers, Cleaners and Launderers, Garbage Collectors and Related Labourers.

Only 30 percent of the technicians and associate professional workers are women. If we analyse this category we find that within this category women are mainly concentrated as teaching associate in Middle and Primary, Pre-Primary and Special Education. Similarly 20 percent of all professionals are women. Who are they? Again within this category women form 39 percent of teaching profession and 29 percent health professional, that includes Nursing, Midwifery, Traditional Medicine Practitioners and Faith Healers. These are traditional occupations for women. The new profession within this category is IT professionals. This is one of the growing professions that employ large number of women.
Thus even to day, in the developed country like USA and also in the developing countries like India, women are concentrated in few occupations in paid work, which are more or less extension of their domestic work. To understand this concentration of women in few occupations we should understand the concept of occupational segregation.

### 4.7 OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

Occupational segregation is the distribution of groups defined by ascribed characteristics, mostly gender, across occupations. Basically, it is the concentration of a similar group of people (be they males, females, whites, blacks, etc.) in a job. The levels of the occupational segregation ranges between perfect segregation and integration. Perfect segregation occurs where occupation and group membership correspond perfectly, where no job is populated by more than one group. Perfect integration, on the other hand, occurs where each group holds the same proportion of positions in an occupation as it holds in the labour force (Weeden, 2008).

**Box No. 4.2**

**Women Challenging Perfect Segregation**

In October 2011, Shanti Tigga became the first woman to qualify as a combatant in the Indian army after doing exceptionally well in her physical tests. She joined a regiment of the Territorial Army, which recruits volunteers with the aim of helping the regular Army. TA volunteers are rarely involved in combat duties. Tigga was one of the few to volunteer and the first to pass the physical tests alongside men, without any dilution of standards. But the chances Ms. Tigga will actually be involved in combat any time soon are actually pretty slim. For now, she will mainly be involved in support duties. Still, recognising Ms. Tigga could one day fulfill a combat role is a huge step for the Indian Army, where women have never even been recruited in combat positions and where, in most roles, they are forced to retire early the army official said (Mehta, 2011).

An example of perfect segregation was the Indian Army. In several of the army activities at the border, women are not allowed. Women were first allowed to join the regular Army in 1992 but they are still not allowed to join combat units, unlike in countries like Israel and the United States. Instead, they are only recruited in medical, engineering and other support units.

In most occupations there is less than perfect segregation. For example women are predominantly represented in domestic services. As per NSSO estimates in 2004-05, the number of workers employed in private households,
largely domestic servants are 4.75 million. Of this 3.05 million are women. From all types of domestic servants 87% of the housemaid servants are women. (Neetha, 2009).

The segregation is observed in traditional or old occupations and also in the occupations considered to be New Economy. In the traditional fishing communities, women though actively involved in fish culture, net making and selling the fish catch, were forbidden to ‘throw the net’ or to harvest. A well-known activist and feminist trade unionist working with fisherwomen has explained this in her key note address in the Workshop on Women in Indian Fisheries.

**Box No. 4.3**

*Extract from ‘Fisheries - A Feminist Perspective’*

“...It is well known that women have always been involved in various aspects of the fishing industry. There are instances where women have traditionally been equal partners to their menfolk even in capture fisheries, such as in Vietnam, Sri Lanka and some countries in South America, West Africa, the Caribbean, and the South Pacific. In some of these countries they are hailed as skilful navigators, and in some others they also participate in the construction of sea-going craft.

The norm, however, is that there is a gender based division of labour in this industry. Although it is likely that such a division of labour has evolved historically (a certain amount of specialisation eventually becoming gender specific), there are other reasons too (not so logical, however) that have contributed to this. Thus the woman in Kerala is not allowed to step into the sea because she, being “impure” would “contaminate” it. Similar taboos and myths are seen in other countries too.

Women play their role in the system generally by marketing the fish or by making nets. Unfortunately such a division of labour invariably implies that the woman’s contribution is less worthy. However, as Alice Schlegel (1977).

“...under conditions of subsistence, the inter dependence and complementarity of the separate male and female domains of work is the characteristic mode, based on diversity, not inequality.”

*Extract from ‘Fisheries - A Feminist Perspective’, by NALINI NAYAK (1992, p.9).*

Let us examine occupational segregation in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES), which are considered to be fast growing sectors in the new economy. It was
expected that the rise of new economy will increase the productivity and also increase the employment opportunity, particularly for women (Unni, 2008).

Women’s Share in IT industrial category has increased from 14.5 percent in 1999-2000 to 17.7 percent in 2004-05. But within IT industry the share of women in the total workers in Hardware consultancy declined whereas in Data Processing and Data Based activities the share has increased considerably. Thus, the occupational segregation is observed not only in traditional occupations but also in the ‘New Economy’.

**Check Your Progress:**

1) **What are job ghettos? What are the job ghettos for women at the global level?**

2) **What are the occupations in which women are concentrated?**

3) **Give examples of occupational segregation in old and new occupations.**
4.8 TYPES OF OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

Within occupational segregation, there are two major types:

(1) Horizontal Segregation and (2) Vertical Segregation

4.8.1 Horizontal Segregation

Horizontal segregation is said to exist where a workforce is made up mostly of one gender, race, or other ascribed characteristic.

For example in food processing industries like papad rolling, fish processing etc, most of the workers are women. Similarly most of the Primary Teachers, Nurses, Receptionists, Beauticians, etc. are also women on the other hand Civil Engineers, Corporate Managers etc, are more likely to be men. These are examples of horizontal segregation.

4.8.2 Women Challenging Horizontal Segregation

The Indian women have challenged horizontal segregation by entering in various occupations considered to be male bastions. Let us look at some examples. Harita Kaur Deol became the first Indian woman pilot in the Indian Air Force (IAF), on a solo flight in 1994. Surekha Yadav of Central Railways became the first motor woman in Asia and ferried lakhs of passengers every day on Mumbai’s lifeline. Women have become drivers and conductors not only in the public transport system but also in the private transport. Susiben Shah who runs Priyadarshini Taxi Service in Mumbai has employed several women taxi drivers. Sunitha Choudhury became Delhi’s first woman auto-rickshaw driver in 2004. Now several women work as driver to transport children to their schools. They have also entered the male dominated field of truck driving.

4.8.3 Vertical Segregation

Vertical segregation is similar to the glass ceiling, where opportunities for career advancement for a particular gender, race, or other ascribed characteristics, are narrowed. Thus it is about a barrier women face in moving upward in the occupation.

In economics, the term glass ceiling refers to “the unseen, yet unreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements.”(USDL, 1995)
Participation

The glass ceiling metaphor has often been used to describe invisible barriers (“glass”) through which women can see elite positions but cannot reach them (“ceiling”). These barriers prevent large numbers of women and ethnic minorities from obtaining and securing the most powerful, prestigious, and highest-grossing jobs in the workforce. Moreover, this barrier can make many women feel as they are not worthy enough to have these high-ranking positions, but also they feel as if their bosses do not take them seriously or actually see them as potential candidates.

The glass ceiling continues to exist although there are no explicit obstacles keeping women and minorities from acquiring advanced job positions - there are no advertisements that specifically say ‘no women hired at this establishment’, but they do lie beneath the surface. These invisible barriers exist in developed and also developing countries like India.

A recent study Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia 2011 by Community Business surveyed 21 large multinational companies in six countries in Asia namely, China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore, to see how women are doing at junior, middle and senior levels of management. According to this study, women are best represented at the junior level, less so at the middle level and are least represented at the senior level.

Women comprise about 29 percent of the workforce at the junior level in these companies in India, which drops off to just fewer than 15 percent at the middle level and less than 10 percent of the workforce at the senior level.

Similarly, The Grant Thornton International Business Report is an annual survey of the views of 6,000 senior executives in privately held businesses all over the world. According to this report women account for just about 14 percent of the top management in companies in India. Though it is higher compared to previous years it is very low as against 21 per cent across the world, In terms of functional areas, human resources emerged as the favourite among Indian women, with 23 per cent holding senior positions in this space, followed by 16 per cent in financial positions and 10 per cent in sales.

This is an example of vertical as well as horizontal segregation, as women are not only fewer at the top but they are heavily concentrated in Human Resource Department.
Breaking the Glass Ceiling

Every corporate environment is said to have a ‘glass ceiling’ when it comes to women moving up the ladder of success. However there are some Indian women who could break the glass ceiling. Indra Nooyi the CEO and President of PepsiCo. is one of them. Naina Lal Kidwai proved her capacity from being Head of Investment Banking at ANZ Grindlays during 1982-1994 to Vice Chairman JM Morgan Stanley. She is one of the most successful and famous Indian businesswomen of today. She is Country Head and Group General Manager HSBC Group India. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw transformed Biocon into one of the leading biopharmaceutical firms in India. Indu Jain is the Chairperson of Times Group. Sulajja Firodia Motwani, the Joint Managing Director of Kinetic Motors and Managing Director Kinetic Finance is one of the few successful women entrepreneurs.

Let us look at the causes of occupational segregation.

### 4.9 CAUSES OF OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

In the following paragraphs you will read about factors and forces that lead to occupational segregation on the basis of gender.

#### 4.9.1 Gendered Division of Labour

One of the major causes for the occupational segregation is the gender-based division of labour in which women and men are responsible for different tasks. Within this division, women are seen as primarily responsible for the activities of the home and family, while men are seen as responsible for non-domestic tasks, such as those in the economy and the polity. Biological difference between men and women is used to create gendered divisions of work which is not natural but created by the society. Social interpretations of biological differences are used to prevent women from taking certain work or learning some skills. For example in many agricultural societies use of the plough is considered as man’s job and women are forbidden to use plough though they are involved in all other agricultural activities.

The other aspect of gendered division of labour is gender essentialism. Gender essentialism is the view that women are more competent than men in areas such as nurturing and caring, whereas men are more competent in areas such as being a provider. Thus, whenever women enter the labour market it is considered appropriate that they take up jobs which are extension of their domestic responsibilities like pre-primary and primary teachers, nurses, etc. and men as managers, leaders, etc. These ideas lead to the view of male primacy, which presents men as more naturally suited for
Participation authority than women. Male primacy is converted into both horizontal and vertical segregation through discrimination, internalised self-evaluations and gendered expectations.

Box No. 4.5

**Women challenge cultural norms**

Tensue Gebre-Medhin is a 30-year-old woman farmer in Central Tigray, Ethiopia. Ploughing with two oxen is a centuries-old tradition in Ethiopia, but has always been the domain of men. In 1981 the agricultural section of the TPLF (Tigray People’s Liberation Front) trained Tensue in oxen ploughing. While her husband was still alive, she did not have the chance to apply what she had learned. After his death she had only one ox and followed the tradition of sharecropping with a man who also owned an ox. This meant she had to give half her harvest to the man. Moreover, for every two days the man ploughed his land, he ploughed only one day on hers.

Tensue therefore decided to plough by herself. Her father was not happy to see her do this, because it was against the local culture. Nevertheless, he complied with her request to lend her a donkey to pair with her ox. In addition to breaking the taboo against women ploughing, Tensue thus introduced the idea of a donkey-ox draught team. This was a new system in the area, but she saw certain advantages. In her innovation, Tensue encountered some technical problems as a donkey has no hump and is smaller than an ox. but she found her own solutions.

When Tensue started ploughing, many people laughed at her and some cursed her, calling her an evil wisher. Because the practice had not come from the ancestors, many villagers criticised Tensue. However, the local development agent defended and encouraged her. Confident in the value of her innovation, Tensue continued practicing it, despite what others said. Last year, some women asked Tensue to train them to plough. She has even been asked to plough the land of families whose men have gone to war. The community is starting to accept her as a farmer and innovator in her own right.

- Mamusha Lemma and Fetien Abay

(http://www.agriculturesnetwork.org/magazines/global/grassroots-innovation/women-challenge-cultural-norms)

4.9.2 Gender Norms and Gendered Preferences

Men and women, from a young age, are socialised into specific gender roles that tell them how they should be and act, depending on their gender.
These gender roles then cause men and women to develop gendered preferences for work, or preferences based on the gender norms they have been socialised to accept. These gendered preferences then lead to gendered choices, in which women choose primarily occupations that are both lower in pay and lower in status.

### 4.9.3 Human Capital Theories

Human Capital theories explain the differences on the basis of educational differences, work experience disparities, etc. between men and women. According to them lower pre-market endowments are the reasons for the differences in the labour market outcomes.

For example, difference in educational levels of men and women is responsible for persistent occupational segregation. However over the years the educational differences are reduced considerably but occupational segregation is persistent. The more basic question is why women’s education level is low compared to men.

Human capital theorists also explain that men tend to rise to higher positions than women because of a disparity in work experiences between the genders. The disparity increases with years in the labour force as women are more likely than males to interrupt their careers to raise children. The argument is that women prefer to take a break in job due to domestic responsibilities. Such choices may also be attributed to the gendered division of labour which holds women primarily responsible for domestic duties.

### 4.9.4 Feminist Explanations

Feminist economists explain the occupational segregation by analysing interconnections between women’s unpaid domestic and reproductive work in the household and paid work in the labour market (Sen, 2010). According to them, women enter the labour market with the burden of unpaid household responsibilities. Thus they are forced to take only those occupations which enable them to perform their domestic duties. They have to prefer home based work, or work that allow them to adjust working hours so that they can combine their paid and unpaid responsibilities. In the absence of childcare facilities they are forced to take break during child bearing and rearing period.

Their access to education, skills, capital is limited because they are primarily seen as house wives. The families do not invest in girls’ education because in the patriarchal societies girls cannot support their parents after marriage and the return on female education is low compared to men in the labour market.
Women do not have property in their name and hence their access to capital and capacity to get loan from the financial institutions to start or develop their business remain low. Because of the belief that women are primarily housewives no effective policies are developed to improve her productivity by planners.

Thus, the gender ideology is reinforced by families, planners, and the labour market to create a vicious circle for women workers in the economy. This vicious circle of lower qualifications, lower skills, lack of capital, lower productivity and lower returns have trapped women in the unskilled, low productivity, low paid occupations.

Take up the following exercise before reading further.

**Check Your Progress:**

1) **What are the types of occupational segregation?** Explain with examples.

2) **What are the causes of occupational segregation?**

In the following section you will read how occupational segregation affect income and wage gap.
4.10 INCOME AND WAGE GAP

Occupational segregation is one of the leading causes of income inequality. As a result of gender ideology, the work done primarily by women is valued less than the work done primarily by men. In addition to the lower prestige awarded to women’s skills and occupations, skills closely associated with women’s work are systematically under rewarded in terms of pay. The gender gap in wages is caused more so by segregation across jobs than by wage discrimination within jobs.

Women in female-dominated jobs pay two penalties: the average wage of their jobs is lower than that in comparable male-dominated jobs, and they earn less relative to men in the same jobs. In addition, women’s wages are negatively affected by the percentage of females in a job as per the crowding hypothesis (Bergmann, 1974). The crowding hypothesis postulates that occupational segregation lowers all women’s earnings as a result of women’s exclusion from primarily male occupations and segregation into a number of predominantly female-dominated occupations. The higher supply of women in the female dominated occupations pulls their wages down. Given that feminine skills are traditionally rewarded less both in salary and prestige, the crowding of women into certain occupations makes these occupations valued less.

Table 4.4 gives the estimated income of men and women in various countries and also the ratio of female to male wages in these countries across the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Estimated earned income</th>
<th>Wage Equality Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>1,324</td>
<td>1,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>49,498</td>
<td>63,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>30,005</td>
<td>45,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>35,577</td>
<td>55,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>5,331</td>
<td>8,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>35,346</td>
<td>56,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>7,865</td>
<td>12,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>20,572</td>
<td>44,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,518</td>
<td>4,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Global Gender Gap Report 2011, Table D3 : Appendix D, P. 44 And Table D2 : Appendix D P. 43
4.11 BENEFITS OF PAID WORK

Despite all the difficulties and discrimination paid work is a tremendously important part of many women’s lives. It offers several benefits. The economic security provided by earning one’s own income can give women the strength to leave abusive relationships, the opportunity to provide fully for their children, and the freedom and self-confidence to choose the course of their lives. Paid work can give women intellectual and physical challenges, a social atmosphere, and the satisfaction of feeling that they are contributing to the economy and being remunerated for it. While women face barriers within the paid workforce, they are finding many ways to get around these. Women’s income in comparison to men’s has increased significantly over the last several decades as have their career options. Women have also shown spectacular success in running their own businesses.

It is not only women but the economy will also benefit from women’s paid work. Lakshmi Puri, the Assistant Secretary General of UN Women, noted in 2011 that India’s growth rate could jump by 4.2 percent if women were given more opportunities.

4.12 POLICY MEASURES

Women across the world have fought for better work opportunities, working conditions and wages. As discussed earlier not only women but the entire economy suffers due to under-utilisation of women’s capacities. As a result the governments and planners are now open to take policy measures to support women’s participation in the economy. Some of the important policy measures required to support women’s participation in the workforce and in various occupations are discussed below.

Along with sexism, racism, castism and ableism (discrimination against people living with disabilities) also limit women’s ability to secure good employment. Women in rural areas also face limited opportunities. Within the work place women are at risk of sexual harassment and in some cases sexual abuse.

Some of the policy measures required to change the situation are discussed below.

1) Implementation of Equality Laws

Women encounter certain obstacles and barriers that keep them away from workplaces. They also face challenges and hazards within the workplace that result in the drop out of women workers. The obstacles are social, economic and cultural in nature. It is necessary to implement certain legal provisions to counter these.
The legal provision like ‘equal pay for equal work’ and ‘no discrimination in the job opportunities on the basis of gender’ must be strictly implemented. The government should provide supervisory mechanisms for implementation of these laws. Implementation of quota/reservation for women is also an important policy measure to remove discrimination against women.

2) Education, skill and training for women

Another obstacle women face is their reduced access to training and education. This is a major impediment to accessing good paying jobs. To improve the human capital and productivity of women, the measures to support women in formal education, skill building and training is important. Free education for girls and subsidised higher education, technical education are must for improvement in their productive capacity.

3) Family leave and Child Care

Maternity, paternity and parental leave for all are a must for women to participate in the economy. Women’s role as reproducers of humankind is not only necessary for the individual families but also important for reproducing future working population. Thus it is the responsibility of the government and employees to make provision for that. Both father and mother should be responsible for taking care of infants thus it is necessary to provide not only maternity leave but also paternity and parental leave.

One of the biggest obstacles that keep women away from the workforce is the absence of quality and affordable child care. This is especially critical for women to fit in the demands of paid and unpaid work. Child care facilities are an important factor in allowing women to reconcile their professional and family obligation. Given the patriarchal nature of the society women tend to bear the majority of the care giving responsibility. Thus a well established day care system for children will support women’s employment.

4) Access to property and financial recourses

Women find it difficult to start their own business because most of the property is in the name of men or controlled by men. As a result women do not get loan from the banks. Women need control over property and financial resources to establish themselves as entrepreneurs. Government should take measures to increase women’s access to financial resources.

5) Removal of gender discrimination and sexual harassment at workplace

Women face gender based discrimination and sexual harassment at the workplace. Many times they are forced to leave the job or are pushed in to low productivity and inefficiency due to sexual harassment. A
Participation mechanism to prevent sex based discrimination and sexual harassment at the work place will help women to deal with such situations. In the case of Vishaka & Others vs State of Rajasthan & Others the Supreme Court of India, in the judgment on 13 August, 1997 gave specific guidelines to prevent sexual harassment against women at the work place. Strict implementation of these guidelines law against sexual harassment is very much the need of hour..

4.13 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have explained women’s participation in various occupations in the economy. With the emergence of market economy and paid work women’s work was defined as unproductive and became underpaid or unpaid. Over the years numbers of women in the paid work have increased but they are mainly concentrated in pink collar jobs. There are global job ghettos across the world and women are concentrated in few jobs that are mainly an extension of their unpaid domestic work. Majority of the women face horizontal and vertical segregation in the job market but there are few women who are able to enter male dominated occupations and are also able to break the glass ceiling to reach the highest level of the professions. We have explained various theories to understand the occupational segregation. Occupational segregation is one of the major causes of wage and income gap between men and women. The under utilisation of women’s capacity in the economy is not only women’s problem but also affects the growth of the economy. Government and employers can take several steps to prevent discrimination against women and reinforce equality, provide family leave, child care and access to financial resources and stop sexual harassment at work.

4.14 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1) The distinction between paid and unpaid work emerged with the development of the market economy. Explain with the help of examples.

2) Discuss the difference in the nature of women’s paid work from men’s paid work in the economy.

3) What is occupational segregation? Explain the types of occupational segregation.

4) What are the theories to explain occupational segregation? Explain the feminist viewpoint about occupational segregation in detail.

5) Discuss the major policy changes required to make changes in the occupational segregation.
4.15 REFERENCES


Global Gender Gap Report 2011, Table D3 : Appendix D, P. 44 and Table D2: Appendix D P. 43.


(http://www.agriculturesnetwork.org/magazines/global/grassroots-innovation/women-challenge-cultural-norms)


### 4.16 SUGGESTED READINGS
