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## UNIT 3 Differences in Roles and Activities

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### Structure

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Objectives

3.3 Roles and Activities

3.4 Women's role and activities in Agriculture, Industry and Service Sector

3.5 Women's role and activities in other fields

3.6 Gender Analysis and gender mainstreaming

3.7 Gender Development Index

3.8 Summing up

3.9 Glossary

3.10 Answers to check your progress

3.11 References

3.12 Questions for reflection and practice

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### 3.1 Introduction

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*“A woman is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutes details of the activities of man. She has the same right of freedom and liberty as he”*

**(Mahatma Gandhi)**

Gender is a concept that deals with roles and activities and indicates the relationship between men and women. Women play many different roles and their roles played within family or outside vary across nations. Traditionally, women roles were confined to home and they were taking care of the children. However, woman as a gender in the development of the nation has been recognized only during the last three decades in many countries. Women now play different

roles and perform varying activities. Their increasing roles and activities outside home thus brought many tangible changes in the form of division of labor and their earnings changed over even the male dominance in most of the societies. Thus, women's changing roles and activities influence their ability to be educated, to earn, to struggle for equal ownership rights and be a major participant in decision making both at family and outside. Today, the changes in socio-economic, cultural and political environment also impact increasing participations of women in many spheres. Such participation of women is also one of the factors responsible for any autonomy that is deeply sought.

Moreover, women nowadays participate in many activities like education, media, art, culture, sports, service sector, politics, science and technology etc. Effective participation of women in these spheres is an important element to eliminate gender disparity.

The major focus of this unit is to learn and understand the major roles and activities that women play in different sectors of the economy and also in other fields, importance of gender analysis and the need to empower women to perform their roles for the betterment of the society.

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### **3.2 OBJECTIVES**

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After studying this Unit, you would be able to

- discuss role and activities of women in agriculture and other fields and sectors;
- define the significance of gender analysis and gender mainstreaming; and
- analyse the need for empowering women.

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### **3.3 ROLES AND ACTIVITIES AND GENDER NEEDS**

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Women constitute almost half of the world's population and are the most underutilized human capital. The economic contributions of women fall short of their potentials mainly due to improper recognition of their roles and activities. Even when women work for same hours as that of men, they earn less than men due to wage differences.

Gender role is referred to learned behaviors of men and women in a given society or community. It is the distribution of roles and responsibilities conditioned by age, class, race, ethnicity,

religion and by the geographical, economic and political environment. More specifically, in rural livelihood the roles played by both men and women are multi-dimensional and dynamic and are impacted by various policies, the institutional mechanisms and the rules as well as the gender relations institutionalized in households, communities, and beyond. Rural women's roles and status in agriculture, as well as their roles in off-farm activities and employment, vary widely from region to region (FAO, 2011).

Moreover, differences in gender roles could also occur in response to changing economic, natural or political circumstances, including development efforts. At household level, the roles played by gender can be broadly classified as productive and non-remunerative. Productive role implies the role played by the individuals (mostly by men) who work for wages or salary which can be exchanged for a value. Non-remunerative roles (mostly played by women) are the tasks performed to maintain or develop the productive role. This distinction has to be changed as women can also play both productive role and become earning member in the household.

Thus in any society or community men and women play multiple roles. The major roles that women normally perform are reproductive. Men perform both productive and community politics. Men are able to focus on productive role and could play their multiple roles sequentially. Contrarily, women have the capability to play their roles simultaneously and even balance time, energy and other claims for each of them. Henceforth, when women and men perform differing roles, they also have differing gender needs.

Understanding such gender needs is fundamental to formulate development policies for each sex. The disparity in access to resources, health (women and girl children are more subject to malnutrition than men), education (the literacy levels of women are less than men), food, wages etc. necessitates formulating many policies and programs exclusively for women development.

Moreover, the traditional and fundamental views of possession of goods alone translate into well-being to all household members were challenged by Sen (1998). Sen argues that possession is different from the ability to benefit from the characteristics of these goods. The possession of the commodity or the utility does not act as a proxy for well-being, but rather what the person actually succeeds in doing with these goods and their characteristics. For example, a land owned

by male head in the family does not automatically guarantee the well being of women, unless the right to use it is extended to women. Sen (1990) earlier argued that household gender relations profoundly affect the intra-household distribution of commodities and the ability of each gender to use particular commodities. Both women and men collaborate to bring wealth into the family, but that the division of wealth is a source of conflict. In many cases, wealth is not divided as per the share brought-in by each of the household member. Rather, division is determined by relative power. In most households, thus men hold more power than women resulting in more control over assets and expenditure by men. Understanding this is fundamental to study gender roles.

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### **3.4 WOMEN'S ROLE AND ACTIVITIES IN AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY AND SERVICE SECTORS**

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Women play various roles in major sectors of the economy. Women's roles in agricultural households for instance can be affected by three distinct decision making units. Firstly, the role played by woman as the coordinator of production endowments and consumption for the entire family members. Second, the role played by women in substitution of labor force (hired) with that of their own labor. Thirdly, the decisions with regard to introduction of individualistic bargaining or collective coordination of the family, which preserve the distinct endowments of the individuals in the family and possible differences in preferences or needs of every member in the household.

Rural women also perform numerous labor intensive activities in agriculture. Women are engaged in collection of wood (a major fuel source for cooking), fetch clean drinking water, upkeep of livestock and its other associated activities like feeding, milking and processing of milk. It is thus evident that the women are playing a dominant role in the agriculture, livestock production and in overall management activities. Unfortunately, the women engaged in such activities are uneducated, unskilled and tradition-bounded; therefore their productive capacities are also low and referred as unskilled labor. Though rural women also help to produce and their role is instrumental in production of the cereals, legumes and vegetables, their economic contributions are considered only secondary or sometimes even become unaccounted. Thus agriculture sector is underperforming because women, who are often a crucial resource in agriculture, face constraints or limitations that reduce their potentials to express and ultimately the productivity.

Thus women in agriculture play a major and crucial role in translating agricultural production into food and nutrition security not only for the well-being of their own families but also for their communities. When women could earn an income, it is more likely to be spent on food and children's needs. Moreover, women are more responsible than men for selecting and preparing food (utilization and nutrition) for their families as well as for the care and feeding of their children. They manage households and keep engaged in livelihood strategies and income generating activities to support their families and their communities.

While performing such roles and performing activities at household, farm and allied activities, women are prone to drudgery. In order to reduce farm women's drudgery, Family Resource Management Component had been included in the All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Home Science to collect the relevant ergonomical data relating to farm women for designing women friendly equipment. These components aim at identifying the maximum drudgery prone activities performed by the women workers in household, farm and allied fields and their impact on women's health and efficiency. The project also focuses on collecting the relevant ergonomics data for designing women friendly technologies. Based on the study, the different farm activities performed by women, average time spent and other ergonomical information are estimated and shown in Table 1.

**Table 3.1 Drudgery prone activities performed by Farm Women**

<b>Farm Activities</b>	<b>Percentage of performers</b>	<b>Performance frequency score</b>	<b>Time spent (Hrs/yr)</b>
Weeding	54	1.55	234
Cutting/uprooting	55	1.02	218
Transplanting	57	1.01	186
Cleaning	51	1.27	52
Sowing	49	1.03	49
Bunding	46	0.96	66
Removing stalks	39	0.97	72
Picking	33	1.02	83
Winnowing	34	0.97	40
Collecting and bringing fodder	39	4.45	481
Cleaning shed	43	4.81	137
Milking	44	4.47	335
Collecting dung	39	4.78	144
Feeding animals	43	4.82	166
Processing milk	45	4.43	168

Source: Report of National Task Force on Technological Empowerment of Women in Agriculture, National Commission for Women, 2004, New Delhi, pages 22-23

It could be seen from the Table 1. that women perform various farm activities. Among these, collection and bringing fodder to animals, milking, cutting and weeding are the highest physiological activities performed by women. The performance frequency score also indicate the more frequent operations engaged by women. Thus, as per report of the task force, the total cardiac cost of work was highest for weeding activity followed by collecting and bringing fodder, transplanting, washing clothes and fetching water. The highest physiological cost for weeding is followed by collecting and bringing fodder and fetching water. Score for rated perceived exertion for collecting and bringing fodder, weeding, transplanting and fetching water were thus found very high, indicating that the women experience a lot of difficulties in performing these activities.

Women, compared to men, are also exposed to more work hazards. Women, while working especially in agriculture, also subject to various health hazards. Most of the women are employed in low-skilled, poorly paid activities and they are often exposed to health hazards. The following are the magnitude of various health hazards faced by farm women when engaged in agricultural operations (Table 2.).

**Table3.2 Nature and Magnitude of health hazards**

<b>Farm Activities</b>	<b>Health hazard reported (%)</b>
Transplanting	50.0
Harvesting	26.5
Threshing	50.0
Drying	33.0
Par boiling	67.0
Cleaning of livestock shed	47.0
Fodder collection	23.0
Milking	27.5

Source: DARE/ICAR Annual Report 2003-2004, page 174

It could be seen from the Table 2. among the various health hazards, the magnitude of hazard reported was highest when women do par-boiling of rice and other agricultural commodities. Though the modern rice mills have replaced the traditional method of par boiling, the practice even followed by small volume of producers.

In view of the critical role of women in the agriculture and allied sectors as producers, concerted efforts have to be taken such that the various welfare programs should be contemplated and to reach them in proportion to their numbers. The programs for training women in soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development and other occupations related to agriculture like horticulture, livestock, fisheries etc. have to be expanded to benefit women workers in the agriculture sector.

Women can also take initiative and can play pivotal role in controlling environmental pollution. The woman is the key to provision of health services for the family and society. She is the key agent who can provide child care, hygiene, and nutrition for the entire family. Women play a vital role in the promotion of environmentally responsible behavior in the residential setting and also in activities related to preservation of natural resources (Anita, 2012).

Women play significant role in watershed development activities also. Their role of in watershed projects is mainly to increase wages through the watershed earth works. Their active participation in the watershed areas through SHGs resulted in better performance of the project and has also empowered the women especially their economic status (Johnson et.al, 2013).

Women's role in industry and service sector is also commendable. Women contribute to industrial production. Over 200 million women are employed across all industry sectors, with half of this number in developing countries. Essentially, the women of nineties have created niches of their own and perform multiple roles as mother, wife and executive thus creating a space for themselves in family, society and workplace (Parikh, 2001). Such participation of women in the industrial development sustains not only their family livelihood but also contributes to socio-economic progress. In the industrial and service sector, there is an increasing number of highly educated women occupying decision-making positions. The creativity and talents of these women are an invaluable resource, which can and should be developed both for their own self-realization and for the benefit of society as a whole. The status of employment in different activities is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.3 Women in Public and Private Sectors by Industrial Activity, 2004**

Sl. No	Industrial activity	Women Employment (in '000)		
		Public	Private	Total
1	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	47.7	411.0	458.7
2	Mining and quarrying	66.0	7.3	73.3
3	Manufacturing	81.5	867.9	949.4
4	Electricity, gas and water	49.7	2.4	52.1
5	Construction	62.6	3.4	66
6	Wholesale and Retail Trade, Hotels and Restaurants	14.0	32.0	46
7	Transport, Storage and Communication	179.0	10.4	189.4
8	Financing, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	206.0	81.2	287.2
9	Community, social and personal services	2183.6	628.8	2812.4
	<b>All Sectors (Total)</b>	2890.0 (59 %)	2044.4 (41 %)	4934.5 (100 %)

Source: *Statistics on Women in India 2010*, National Institute of Public cooperation and Child Development, New Delhi, p.212

Between the two public and private sectors (Table 3), the private sector provided more employment to women especially in agriculture and manufacturing activities. However, the public sector provided higher employment avenues in activities like financing, insurance, real estate and business services and community, social and personal services. Among the nine industrial activities, the community, social and personal services provided more than 50 per cent of the employment for women. Thus, women play a significant role not only in agricultural and industrial sectors but also in service sector.

Besides, women are developing entrepreneurial skills and it is estimated that women entrepreneurs currently constitute about 13-14 per cent of the total number of entrepreneurs in India and the percentage is growing every year (Joshi, 2013).

### **3.5 WOMEN'S ROLE AND ACTIVITIES IN OTHER FIELDS**

Gender inequality is seen in various sectors and it is more pronounced in politics. Women represent merely 22 per cent of lower houses in parliament around the world and in India this number is less than half at 10.8 per cent in the outgoing Lok Sabha (Shamika Ravi, 2014).

Women play significant role in politics, social reforms and local administrations. The participation of women in politics is not a new concept in India. However, the political role of women as a subject for research is only of recent origin in India (Kalpana, 1976). The roles they

played during Independence struggle were admirable. As early as 1917, there was women representation demanding political participation. Women in India got the right to vote in 1930. Their representation in the parliament, political parties and other decision making bodies remained low even after independence (Kaushik, 1996). The percentage of women in legislature remains still low, commensurate with their numerical strength. Thus, there is a gap between the formal ideas of women's participation and their meaningful use of power. The quest for greater political representation of women is, therefore, still relevant (Mehta et al: 2001)

The implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women at the grass root level has opened up new horizons for entry of women into local administration. Participation of women in Panchayat has been considered essential for enabling them to participate effectively and independently at grass root level. Women have come to positions in the local bodies as provisions have been made in the constitution (Palanithurai, 2001). Henceforth the representation of women in Panchayat Raj Institutions is gradually increasing. But the role played by women is still weak since they depend on patronage of male. However, women's independent role becomes pivotal in the process of change in rural areas. Fostering enough confidence in participation and decision making will help in community upliftment and achieving women empowerment and thus bringing them in main stream of national development.

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

- Note:** i. Use this space given below to answer the question.  
ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit

1. Major roles and activities played by women

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2. Among the various industrial activities, which provided the largest employment for women?

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### **3.6 GENDER ANALYSIS AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

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Gender analysis is a tool to diagnose the differences between women and men in regard to their specific activities, conditions, needs, access to and control over resources, and ability to receive development benefits and participate in decision-making. Gender analysis provides a disaggregated data by sex. Such analysis helps in measuring impacts on programs when designed for both men and women. It also helps in understanding of the social construction of gender roles, how labor is divided and valued. The analytical process would also help in measuring the various development benefits and indicate that whether resources are effectively and equitably targeted. It identifies the varied roles played by women and men in the household, community, workplace, political system and economy. Besides, gender analysis could foresee and prevent negative impacts, if any, through development interventions targeting women or on gender relations. Through gender analysis, gender-sensitive planning for promoting gender equality could be possible.

Thus, gender analysis provides information about different perspectives, roles, needs and interests of both women and men and the status prevailing pertaining to the access and control over the resources. While implementing development programs, the impact of such programs or interventions on women and men could also be assessed and thus pave ways and means for reducing gender inequalities and promoting more equal relations between women and men. Thus gender analysis is the first step in promoting gender equality

Women in Development (WID) and Gender in Development (GAD) are also used in Gender Analysis. The Women in Development approach was developed during 1970s with the aim of designing many actions and policies to integrate women fully into development activities. Subsequently, the Gender in Development approach was developed in 1980s with the objective of removing gender disparities in social, economic and political equality between women and men as a pre-condition for achieving any people-centered development in the country.

Various constitutional provisions to protect the interest and rights of women and children (Item i) and also Laws related to women (Item ii) are listed below

### **1. Constitutional Provisions for Women and Children**

Article 15 – The State shall not discriminate against any citizen .... Nothing in this article prevents the State from making any special provision for women and children.

Article 15 (1) – prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc

Article 15 (3) – special provision enabling the State to make affirmative discriminations in favour of women

Article 21A - the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age 6-14 years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.

Article 24 – no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.

Article 39 (a) – the State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens men and women, equally, the right to means of livelihood.

Article 39 (d) – equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

Article 39 (e) - enjoins the State to ensure that the health and strength of workers, men and women and the tender age of children are not abused and that the citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength.

Article 39 (f) - enjoins the State to ensure that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that the childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

Article 42– the State to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

Article 45 -the State shall endeavor to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.

Article 51 (A) (e) – to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Article 243 G - read with Schedule 11- provides for institutionalization of child care by seeking to entrust programs of women and child development to Panchayat (item 25 of Schedule 11), apart from education (item 17), family welfare (item 25), health and sanitation (item 23) and other items with a bearing on the welfare of children.

## **2. Laws related to women**

- Legal Practitioners (Women) Act, 1923
- Maternity Benefit Act, 1961
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994 (PNDT) amended in year 2003
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006
- Crimes identified under IPC
- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

(Source: Annual Report 2012-13, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, p.169 and 170)

Another aspect in understanding gender roles is gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that women and men have equal access to and control over resources, development benefits and decision-making, at all stages of development process, projects, programs or policy. Gender mainstreaming was established as an intergovernmental mandate in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 followed by Economic and Social Council (ESCOSOC) Agreed Conclusions in 1997. The mandate for gender mainstreaming was further strengthened in the outcome of the General Assembly special session to follow-up the Beijing Conference during June, 2000. Gender mainstreaming is not being imposed on governments by the United Nations. Member states have been involved in the intergovernmental discussions on gender mainstreaming since the mid 1990s and have, in consensus, adopted mainstreaming as an important global strategy for promoting gender equality. (United Nations, 2002)

Women specific projects are essential for gender equality. Targeted initiatives focusing specifically on women or the promotion of gender equality are important for reducing existing disparities, serving as a catalyst for promotion of gender equality and creating a constituency for changing the mainstream. It is important to understand that two strategies namely gender

mainstreaming and women's empowerment are not competing with each other but only complementary in the sense that gender mainstreaming must be carried out in a manner empowering women.

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### **3.7 GENDER DEVELOPMENT INDEX**

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To measure gender inequality requires a proper knowledge of the sources and the depth of such discriminations (Jütting and Morrisson, 2005). Such measures and any indicator that could capture various aspects of gender inequality are essential to frame policies. For instance Human Development Index focuses on life expectancy, educational attainment and income. There are also certain indicators that tend to focus on gender disparities related to access to education, health care, political representation, income etc. The aggregate indices that have received attention are Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) developed by UNDP. The Gender Development Index is an unweighted average of three indices that measure gender differences in terms of life expectancy at birth, gross enrolment and literacy rates and earned income. The Gender Empowerment Measure is also an unweighted average of variables reflecting the importance of women in society. They include the percentage of women in parliament, the male/female ratio among the administrators, managers and professional and technical workers, and the female/male GDP per capita ratio calculated from female and male shares of earned income. Both of these indices measure the results of gender discrimination. But equally important is to understand its underlying causes. Another limitation of such index is that it does not measure the institutional frameworks that govern the behavior of people and hence the treatment of women.

The various other types of the indices along with scale used to measure such indices are shown in Table 4. Such indices would help to measure the other dimensions of the roles that the women play and the limitations faced by these women in performing their roles. However, more detailed analysis would be required to understand the underlying causes for such inactiveness.

**Table 3.4 Gender Development and Empowerment Index**

<b>Index and their measurement scale</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Personal Autonomy Index (Generally, Occasionally, Never)	Visiting respondents' parental home, Visiting Hospital, Visiting village market, Helping a relative with money, Setting money aside for own use
Family Decision Making Index (Wife Alone, Joint Decision, Husband Alone)	Children's education in school, Family planning, Family day-to-day expenditures, Going outside of home, Medical treatment, Entertaining guests, Buying respondent's traditionally favorite things
Economic Domestic Consultation Index (Generally, Occasionally, Never)	Buying household furniture and utensils, Purchase of land, Education/expense of children, Purchasing Medical treatment of family, Purchasing women's clothes, Purchasing children's clothes, Purchasing daily food
Political Autonomy index (Generally, Occasionally, Never)	Voting according to own decision, Awareness of any political issue, Participating in any public protest, Campaigning politically, Contesting for elections

*Note: Adapted from F. Handy and M. Kassam, ISTR conference, 2004, Canada.*

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### **3.8 SUMMING UP**

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It is not an exaggeration to conclude that women play major roles and hence are instrumental in development of the household, as a member of the family and for society and nation with their strength. At home, in order to alleviate the hidden hunger, women's access to productive resources such as land, credit and appropriate technologies has to be ensured. Capacity building for rural women to improve their participation at grassroots level, mobilization of funds, action programs and networking would further bring required awareness and impacts. Besides researchers and extension workers have to be sensitized on gender issues so that technologies appropriate to rural women are developed and effectively promoted. More information about women's economic role and quantification women's contribution in terms of the national income provides a guide for investments in rural development, and serves as a useful reference in monitoring and impact analysis and overall improvement in the roles and the activities.

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### **3.9 GLOSSARY**

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**Gender:** A concept that deals with roles and activities and indicates the relationship between men and women.

**Gender analysis:** It is a tool to diagnose the differences between women and men in regard to their specific activities, conditions, needs, access to and control over resources, and ability to receive development benefits and participate in decision-making.

**Gender Development Index:** It is an unweighted average of three indices that measure gender differences in terms of life expectancy at birth, gross enrolment and literacy rates and earned income.

**Gender Empowerment Measure:** It is also an unweighted average of variables reflecting the importance of women in society. They include the percentage of women in parliament, the male/female ratio among the administrators, managers and professional and technical workers, and the female/male GDP per capita ratio calculated from female and male shares of earned income.

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### 3.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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#### Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. Women play major roles and activities related to three major sectors namely Agriculture, Industry and Service Sectors
2. Among the various industrial activities, Community, social and personal services provided major employment to women.

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### **3.12 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE**

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1. Explain in detail the various roles played by women
2. What you understand by gender analysis? Why and how it should be performed?
3. Explain in detail about Gender Mainstreaming
4. Discuss the various constitutional provisions and laws made to protect the interest of the women and children. Comment on its coverage and the implementation of such provisions.
5. Discuss the various indices developed to understand the roles and activities, empowerment of women.
6. What is your opinion about the current status of women and the roles they play in the economic development? If the existing provision is inadequate, suggest few measures to improve their role in the nation.