UNIT 10 BARRIERS TO ADVANCEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS-- REMEDIES FOR WORKPLACE INEQUALITY

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10.1 INTRODUCTION
The overall employment situation of women worldwide has not evolved significantly since 2001. The ILO’s *Global Employment Trends* (2003) reported that women continue to have lower labour market participation rates, higher unemployment rates and significant pay differences compared to men. Women represent over 40 per cent of the global labour force, approximately 70 per cent of women in developed countries and 60 per cent in developing countries. There has also been little change in their share of professional jobs in the last few years. By looking at these facts, this Unit describes the overall employment trends, interventionist strategies and the role of International and national organizations.

10.2 OBJECTIVES
After studying this Unit, you would be able to
- discuss overall trend in employment;
- explain the needed interventionist strategies; and
- examine the role of International Organizations like ILO;
- analyze the existing provisions to increase women employment.

10.3 OVERALL TREND IN EMPLOYMENT
There are considerable variations remain between women’s share in different types of professional jobs. Cultural and social attitudes towards what constitutes “male” or “female” jobs result in occupational segregation, although the extent of the problem varies from country to country, and from job to job. Women are mainly concentrated in the “feminized” professions such as nursing and teaching (horizontal occupational segregation), where at the same time they remain in lower job categories than men (vertical occupational segregation). However, women continue to make small inroads into non-traditional fields such as law, information and communication technology (ICT) and computer science, and engineering, and there is evidence that employers are beginning to promote women more systematically and to introduce family-friendly policies in order to retain them. However, women who choose non-traditional jobs can face special constraints in the workplace, not least of which are isolation, limited access to mentoring and female role models, and sexual harassment.

As far as women’s share of managerial positions is concerned, the rate of progress is slow and uneven. Men are in the majority among managers, top executives, and higher levels of professional workers whilst women are still concentrated in the lower categories of managerial positions. Both visible and invisible rules have been constructed around the “male” norm, which women sometimes find difficult to accommodate: male and female colleagues and customers do not automatically see women as equal with men, women tend to have to work much harder than men to prove themselves, and sometimes they have to adapt to “male” working styles and attitudes more than necessary. Furthermore, women tend to be excluded from the informal networks dominated by men at the workplace, which are vital for career development. The problem is compounded by employers’ assumption that women, unlike men, are not able to devote their full time and energy to paid work because of their family responsibilities. Consequently, women are not given as many opportunities as men to do the more demanding responsible jobs, which would advance their careers. However, there is evidence to show that once women attain the upper levels of management, attitudes towards them are not much different to those towards men.

Thus research has consistently shown that despite the fact that men and women work for the same reasons (that is make out a livelihood) workplace remains a decidedly unequal arena plagued by persistent sex segregation, wage inequality, sex discrimination and sexual harassment. These inequalities exaggerate and even create the differences we think we observe. One issue that we need to think is how the workplace can become a more equal arena, a place in which women and men can earn a living to support themselves and their families and experience the satisfaction of efficacy and competence?

One arena of change is the application of law such as Equal wages Act. One needs to recognize that a strategy of legally enforceable pay equity would be unlikely to make wages more equal, since as we have seen, wage inequality depends on sex segregation for its legitimacy (and its invisibility). Comparable worth programmes require that ‘dissimilar work of equivalent
value to the employer be paid the same wages”. Thus, comparable worth programmes require a systematic review of jobs, ordering them on criteria of complexity and skills required so that they can be compared and thus wages allocated on a more gender basis. Comparable worth and pay equity schemes are not, of course, without their problems. They might have remedial effect of evening out women’s and men’s wages at lower levels, but they would also preserve the gap between lower and higher levels management jobs, since both pay equity and comparable worth preserve the idea that some ‘jobs’ are worth more than the others. They also mute the effect of persistent gender stereotypes in the evaluations of positions, so that some men would be able to continue to resist gender equality by embedding it in performance evaluations.

**10.4 WORKPLACE EQUITY ALSO REQUIRES INTERVENTIONIST STRATEGIES IN HIRING AND PROMOTION**

Affirmative policies have been enormously effective in leveling the playing field a little bit. Another strategy could be the elimination of the ‘mommy track’- a new and subtle way that workplace gender inequality is reproduced. The mommy track refers to the ways in which discrimination transmutes itself into discrimination against those workers who happen to take time off to get pregnant, bear children and raise them. Though it is illegal to discriminate against women because of pregnancy, women are often forced off the fast track onto the mommy track because of what appear to be the demands of the positions they occupy. *A woman thus faces a double bind: to the extent that she is a good mother, she cannot rise in the corporate world; to the extent that she rises in the corporate world, she is seen as a bad mother.*

The most obvious set of remedies fall under the general heading of ‘family friendly workplace policies’- that collection of reforms including on-site child care, flexible working hours and parental leave, that allow parents some flexibility in balancing work and family life. In the end workplace equality will require significant structural change, both in the way we work and in the way we live especially at the level of ideology of gender and the division of labour between the sexes. Job segregation is just a part of the generally separate (and unequal) lives that women and men in our society lead, and unless the overall separateness is ended, the separateness within the occupational system is unlikely to end either.

**Strategies** to facilitate women’s progression to management and executive positions require high-level commitment to change the existing culture within a firm or organization. **Sensitization programmes** at all levels of the hierarchy should be geared to refuting the myths surrounding women’s capabilities and dedication to work, improving managers’ understanding of gender and family issues, and endorsing the valuable contribution women can make to an organization’s image and to its productivity. In order to compete on a par with men, it is also essential that women have access to management training and line experience, mentors and role
models at the highest levels, as well as admittance to formal and informal networks and channels of communication at work.

Integrated and sustained efforts also need to be made to ensure that components of equal employment opportunity policies (including recruitment, job assignment, career planning, grading, wages, transfer and promotion) are closely monitored and that the procedures are transparent, objective and fair.

More inventive elements can be added to ensure that women are not penalized financially for motherhood, such as the elimination of retirement plan forfeitures for career breaks, the provision of unpaid leave of absence with a guarantee of a job on return to work, and the promotion of women who work part-time.

One of the main characteristics of professional and managerial work is the extended working hours that are entailed to obtain. There are still significant earnings gaps between women and men, which plague not only managers and workers with the same qualifications but also the labour market in general. Women earn on average only two-thirds of men’s pay. Occupational segregation is the principal reason for these persistent pay gaps. Women are also likely to have shorter careers than men of the same age because they tend either to leave their jobs or work part-time in order to fulfill family responsibilities and return to full-time employment at a later stage. This leads to slower promotion and less pay.

Differences in fringe benefits and bonuses offered to men and women managers are also factors contributing to earnings gaps. At times it is difficult for both men and women to reconcile the long hours required of management employees with their family responsibilities. Therefore family-friendly policies (including flexible working hours, parental leave for men and women, child care facilities, etc.) should be important elements in any integrated package of measures supporting women at work.

Employers can work to improve the work environment of women in non-traditional jobs. Ensuring that anti-discrimination legislation is enforced at the workplace so that women have equal access to jobs; implementing no-nonsense sexual harassment policies whilst providing education about sexual harassment to create a climate of respect in the workplace and providing forums for women to address issues affecting them in non-traditional jobs.

More decisive measures are needed to harmonize remuneration structures for both male and female employees, such as making wage systems more transparent and employees’ eligibility for different components of remuneration more specific; ensuring that all employees’ conditions and benefits are equal and giving part-time workers the same entitlements, conditions and benefits as
full-time workers on a pro-rata basis; subjecting wages to review procedures, and regularly monitoring and evaluating pay systems.

However, their high level of education was not directly reflected in the positions they occupied in the labour market. The main reason for this is that women students’ study choice is often influenced by gender role socialization. They are also inclined to have weaker aspirations for career advancement than male students. Consequently they tend to choose study areas that do not give them the qualifications to enable them to follow more ambitious career paths and advance into higher professional and managerial positions. Women are also aware that employers tend to categorize jobs as being more “suitable” for women or men; for this reason women tend to adapt the subjects they study and their choice of profession accordingly, thus perpetuating occupational sex segregation.

10.5 STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE FEMALE STUDENTS TO WIDEN THEIR STUDY CHOICES

Strategies to encourage female students to widen their study choices include eliminating sex-stereotyped images of women and men and sexist language from school curricula (teaching materials and teaching methods) so that women’s equal participation in all areas of society is instilled into children’s consciousness from an early age; sensitization programmes for teachers, focusing on removing discriminatory practices and attitudes from teaching and vocational guidance, and awareness raising campaigns among students’ families and friends, and among the community at large.

Female mentors and role models on which students can shape their career aspirations are in short supply at the tertiary level because the teaching profession tends to be dominated by women in the more junior positions. Programmes are needed to improve their presence in the academic hierarchy, particularly in non-traditional subject areas. These programmes could take the form of affirmative action or quota systems to promote women teachers from within schools and universities, nominate them to selection committees, and provide them with high-profile professorial chairs.

The provision of on-campus child care facilities would not only give teachers the work flexibility they need but may also increase tertiary level enrolment of women with young children. Also, more women may be persuaded to enrol in scientific and technological fields if promotional materials on university courses in non-traditional subjects specifically targeted female students.
Lastly, in order to overcome the general discriminatory view of women with non-conventional qualifications, programmes need to be developed to help employers recognize the capabilities of women and the benefits they can bring to their businesses.

Progress in gender equality in the labour market is reflected in women’s share of professional jobs. Women work in a variety of professional services all over the world. They are predominantly found in traditionally female professions such as nursing, teaching and administration, although they have also been infiltrating many of the male-dominated fields, particularly the ICT sector and judicial systems around the world.

The statistics show that there has been little change in their share over the last three to five years with women continuing to occupy close to half or more of professional jobs in many countries. However, considerable variations remain between women’s share in the different professions. The reason some countries have a high proportion of women in professional jobs is due to long standing policies supporting working mothers.

The main factors contributing to occupational sex segregation are cultural and social attitudes towards what constitutes a “male” or “female” job and gender inequality in education and training, which have resulted in both sexes being streamed (or streaming themselves) into different professions. In many countries, occupational sex segregation in professional jobs is still prevalent, although the extent of the problem varies from country to country, and from job to job. Traditionally, engineering, physics, the judiciary, law and health service administration are considered “male” jobs and library work, nursing and teaching (especially in primary education) are considered “female” jobs. This phenomenon is called “horizontal occupational segregation”.

Even in jobs dominated by women, there is also “vertical occupational segregation” where men are more likely to hold the more senior and better-remunerated positions. For example, in the health sector men predominate as doctors and administrators. New areas where women are making headway in non-conventional jobs in some parts of the world include in the information and communications technology sector and the judiciary.

In spite of the slow but steady increase being seen in the share of professional women in the workplace, the nature of women’s career paths continues to block them from making progress in the organizational hierarchies in which they work. On recruitment, qualified women tend to be placed in jobs that have a lower value in terms of skill requirements and remuneration. They find themselves in what are considered “non-strategic” jobs, rather than in line and management jobs leading to higher positions. Thus, they effectively become support staff for their more strategically positioned male colleagues.

The reason for the slow increase in women working in male-dominated professions can to a certain extent be attributed to the different constraints they face compared to women who work
in traditionally female professions. Workplace discrimination, such as a lack of acceptance by male supervisors or colleagues, lack of proper training, isolation, and limited access to mentoring and female role models, is more likely to make them leave their jobs. Sexual harassment also tends to occur more frequently in non-traditional work environments. Women may be subjected to inappropriate language or unwelcome sexual conduct. Also, if male supervisors or colleagues resent the presence of women in their workplace, they may use sexually harassing behaviour to humiliate them.

Thus resistance to women’s progression to traditionally male-dominated professions is still prevalent. For instance, women lawyers in the United Kingdom find it difficult to progress in their careers because of the inflexibility of the profession’s working conditions. Many women leaving the profession did so for family-related reasons, and many were deterred from returning to work because of the difficulties of balancing their work and personal lives and because of the profession’s attitude to women returning to work. Women’s decision to drop out at a crucial point in their careers had resulted in the profession being dominated by men in the upper echelons. Women professionals are very aware of the negative career consequences of reducing working time, and they are reluctant to take advantage of flexible working hours even when they are offered.

Management positions represent only a small proportion of the total workforce, although this job category has grown over the last few decades due to the growth in the service sector. The expansion of this sector has often given more employment opportunities to women and, although they remain under-represented, their increased participation in the sector has exceeded increases in their labour force participation as a whole. Recent global statistics show that women continue to increase their share of managerial positions but the rate of progress is slow, uneven, and sometimes discouraging for women faced with barriers created by attitudinal prejudices in the workplace. Even in female-dominated sectors where there are more women managers, a disproportionate number of men rise to the more senior positions. The rule of thumb is still: the higher up an organization’s hierarchy, the fewer the women.

The data show that, in general, countries in North America, South America, and Eastern Europe have a higher share of women in managerial jobs than countries in East Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East. The continuing low global share of women in management jobs shows that some employers still have difficulty accepting that policies promoting women in the workplace make good business practice. The main reason for this is because women’s family responsibilities – maternity, child rearing and general household tasks – and paid work have as a rule been considered mutually exclusive. The standard and most cost-effective employee for companies has traditionally been male because men’s family or personal lives do not impinge on their work. Clearly, men generally find it easier than women to combine family and work because they rely heavily on women to shoulder family and domestic responsibilities. New policies and strategies
for coping with family responsibilities need to be inculcated into all levels of workplace, not only so that a more equitable use of men and women’s time becomes the norm but so that employers’ perceptions of men and women’s abilities and willingness to devote time and effort to work are more attuned.

However, there is evidence to show that some employers have started to recognize that family-friendly policies benefit not only male and female employees by encouraging a better balance between work and family or personal lives, but also benefit employers by improving overall business productivity. Furthermore, the personal characteristics of integrity, diligence and sincerity, traditionally attributed to women, are increasingly viewed as qualities that can enhance a company’s image in a world riddled with corporate misconduct. The philosophy of valuing both male and female employees is gradually permeating the workplace. Some organizations have introduced voluntary codes of conduct with built-in monitoring and verification systems aimed at creating a new “privatized” context in which workers’ rights are acknowledged. The codes, based on rights and labour standards set out in ILO and other UN conventions and declarations, have the advantage of extending and strengthening the application of labour standards including equal opportunity conventions across national boundaries, governmental jurisdictions, and international corporations. However, there are doubts about the value of voluntary codes of conduct and how to link global monitoring and verification systems (based on rights and standards articulated in ILO and UN conventions and declarations) to the private sector.

Organizations are also introducing diversity management programmes that go beyond equal employment opportunity legislation and affirmative action. Diversity management recognizes that employees are not all the same and that their very differences and potential represent a variety of benefits and productivity improvements. It aims to attract and retain employees and give them a sense of inclusion by maintaining a positive work environment with the introduction of fair practices in recruitment, selection, training, appraisals, etc. Equal opportunity is also an essential element to successful diversity management. All employees are provided with a package of benefits from which they choose those that best suit their situation. Benefits can include family-friendly options such as flexible working hours, tele-working, and job sharing. Diversity management provides all employees, regardless of race, creed and sex, with the opportunity to maximize their full potential, contribute to the achievement of an organization’s mission, and ensure all team members treat each other with dignity and respect.

Organizations were assessing the direct and indirect costs of work and family conflicts and realizing the benefits to be gained from introducing family-friendly practices that met the mutual needs of employees and employees to work together”. The management of the awarded companies reported that family-friendly practices, such as parental leave and flexible hours, had resulted in an increase in employees’ well-being and a reduction in work related stress.
Employees felt valued by their employers, and their morale and loyalty had also increased. Higher staff satisfaction had led to increased productivity and improved performance. The employee turnover rate was lower, and job applications from quality candidates had increased. Family-friendly practices had not only helped to boost the number of women in management positions but had also benefited men who wanted to have a more significant role in family life.

Many governments throughout the world have acted to promote gender equality in all sectors of society with varying degrees of success by introducing quota systems or “temporary corrective measures seeking to increase women’s representation in decision-making and policy making processes”. The quota system is an affirmative action tool intended to ensure that women constitute a critical minority of at least 30 to 40 per cent on decision-making bodies. The use of the quota system is controversial. Critics argue that it is discriminatory, interventionist and essentially undemocratic. Many countries (including Italy and the United Kingdom) have rejected quotas at the national level arguing that they are at odds with the principle of gender equality and discriminate against other under-represented groups. It is maintained that quotas are tokenistic, that individual ability and political commitment should be the basis for selection, and that they undermine women’s efforts to demonstrate their capacities. It is also argued that they could create a hierarchy whereby members of parliament (MPs) who are elected without the assistance of quotas are somehow superior to those who are helped by them. And, say critics, quotas reinforce women’s already disadvantaged place in public life. Another school of thought suggests the quotas should not be seen as being the solution to female under-representation in public life, but should be used in conjunction with other measures including encouraging more women to stand for election, placing more women in visible political positions, and introducing more family-friendly work practices in parliamentary systems. However, there is evidence to show that without quotas the number of women party candidates would be much lower.

Research has shown that established social or cultural attitudes and gender inequality in education, training and recruitment cause vertical and horizontal occupational sex segregation, and that this is the principal reason for the persistent gaps between men and women’s earnings. Institutional barriers and social attitudes towards women’s abilities also hamper the movement of professional women upward through occupational categories to increasingly responsible managerial jobs. High levels of vertical occupational segregation, where men and women work in the same job categories but men do the more skilled, responsible or better-paid work, are considered to be a reason for the earning gaps between equally qualified male and female employees. Women remain concentrated in the lower levels of the job hierarchy: in the employment market, the company, and job category.

However, these are not the only reasons women earn lower wages than men. Women are likely to have shorter careers than men of the same age because they do not necessarily work full-time throughout their working lives. Many tend either to leave their jobs or work part-time typically
between the ages of 25 and 35 to raise children and return to full-time employment at a later stage. This leads to slower promotion and less pay. In addition, managerial positions require longer working hours, a certain amount of travelling, or even relocation. Many women tend to avoid such jobs because of their family commitments. Earning the same base rate of pay for doing the same job is only part of the equation. Differences in fringe benefits and bonuses offered to men and women also contribute to earnings gaps. The concept of equal remuneration for equal work does not necessarily include the same “perks” that are given to male managers such as access to company cars, mobile telephones and expense accounts, as well as allowances for specific skills, work-related travel, working in difficult conditions and compensation for working in distant or unpopular locations. Also, payments based on performance, bonuses, commissions, profit sharing, and negotiated retirement benefits are not necessarily a standard part of women’s remuneration package although they may well be part of the terms of an overall package agreed by men during recruitment.

Some reasons presented for the earnings gaps were that: women continued to choose occupations and industries where there is more flexibility in order to balance the needs of work and family, which results in occupational segregation. Even when working as managers, the data showed that they were in positions that required less education and were lower paid. They tended to work in areas with fewer career development prospects. They were 50 per cent less likely to have a college degree than their male counterparts, particularly in the finance sector. Also, when they opted for part-time work they lost healthcare, retirement and social security benefits but continued paying for part-time child care.

One school of thought suggests that only a small proportion of the pay gap can be blamed on discriminatory practices in education and recruitment. According to recent studies in various countries, childbearing and child rearing, which interrupt women’s careers and permanently slow down their earning power, can now explain an increasingly large part of the gap. This suggests a lack of policies in the workplace - and in society as a whole - to support working mothers. Furthermore, mothers tend to earn less than other women. According to recent research in several industrialized countries, one child could lead to a “penalty” of 6 to 7 per cent of earnings, and two children a penalty of 13 per cent.

What motivates women to go it alone and establish their own businesses? There are two schools of thought on the factors fuelling the growth in the share of self-employed women. One view is that women have been attracted to it by a desire for more autonomy, flexibility, and escaping the obstacles posed by the glass ceiling in large organizations and corporations. Another view is that they have been pushed into self-employment by the erosion of jobs in the public and private sectors caused by restructuring and downsizing. There is evidence to suggest that both the “push” and “pull” factors are responsible.
It is likely that the companies supporting family-friendly policies would be more likely to retain professional women than companies that did not. However, before they could be effective, the general belief that women who took advantage of such policies were not serious candidates for promotion would need to be eliminated from corporate culture.

It was found that many businesses had not yet adopted policies to promote women to leadership jobs and that the barriers had not changed. The following reasons could be observed:

- Lack of management or line experience.
- Lack of mentoring and role models for women at the highest levels.
- Exclusion from informal networks and channels of communication where important information on organizational politics and decision making is shared.
- Stereotyping and preconceptions of women’s roles and abilities, commitment and leadership style.
- Lack of flexibility in work schedules.
- Lack of career and succession planning.
- Counterproductive behaviour of male co-workers including taking credit for women’s contributions.
- Sexual harassment.
- Attributing women’s successes to tokenism.
- Also perceptions about women’s ability to take on international responsibilities and their willingness to accept them were considered key obstacles to their being selected for international executive jobs.

Women also admitted that they had neither actively planned their career development nor sought promotion, and when they had been offered promotion they had hesitated before accepting or had turned it down when they thought it would conflict with their quality of life. Whilst they obviously appreciated the power inherent in the jobs, power as such was not the reason for accepting top executive positions but rather the perception that they could do something more worthwhile.

Family responsibilities had played a major role in whether or not the women had accepted the jobs. Some of them had delayed accepting them until their children were older; others had been able to accept them because their husbands had stayed at home.

Corporate culture is a fundamental reason for women’s absence from management leadership positions. The first of the reasons given above for not promoting women describes the "sticky floor" that women tend to encounter during their careers. In general, men are assigned to managerial tracks and women to clerical tracks, so that when recruited men have more responsible jobs and more possibility for promotion. Female graduates are employed almost exclusively to assist male colleagues with comparable qualifications. Once the women are
employed as support staff, the possibilities for upward mobility are very limited. Additionally, when women are in the same position as men in the same section, the men tend to be allocated more important customers or projects.

Another obstacle to women’s promotion to managerial positions is that they are more often found in “less strategic” departments than men, such as human resources and finance, and not in departments where there is a direct career track, such as in product development or planning. This obstructs women from obtaining business skills and experience in the middle- and long-term, and puts them at a disadvantage when competing with men for managerial positions. This practice is widespread and until there is a genuine will to change corporate culture and implement equal opportunity policies, increases in women’s share of management positions will continue to stall.

The second reason refer to women leaving their jobs prematurely reflects women’s disappointment in career development opportunities in their workplaces. The reasons given above for employers not promoting women are predicated on the conviction that family responsibilities and managerial jobs are incompatible.

10.6 PART TIME WORK

Part time work is the most rapidly expanding new form of employment. It has been presented as an important ingredient in the new ‘flexible’ work force and as a ‘solution’ for women combining family and paid employment responsibilities. It is a pivotal component in contemporary discussions of gender and work. Part time work needs to be recognized both as an expression of the impact of structure (limited, segregated employment opportunities) and agency (the struggle to create more manageable options) in women’s life.

While part time employment frees women to spend more time at home (relative to full time employee), it also may free women from the tedium and dependency of fulltime home making. While providing women, apparently, with more discretionary time, part-time employment may lock them into poorly paid and dead end jobs. These ‘bad-jobs’ may, however encourage greater equality in the home and a measure of economic independence. The paradoxical nature of part-time employment reflects both the diversity of part-time options (permanent, contract, casual, etc) and their evolution (the expansion of involuntary part-time work).

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. How female role models/mentors encourage them to enter in to labour market?
10.7 ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION
The ILO is committed to strengthening the capacities of its tripartite constituents—governments and employers’ and workers’ organizations—to take effective policy and institutional measures to mainstream gender in order to promote gender equality at national, sub-regional and regional levels. This action does not directly address the phenomenon of the glass ceiling (vertical occupational segregation) and glass walls (horizontal occupational segregation) encountered by women. It does tackle the fundamental problems hampering their access to jobs with managerial potential by promoting activities at the workplace to eliminate sex discrimination in recruitment, selection, training, appraisals, remuneration and promotion.

The organization helps to make positive changes to their policies, legislation, programmes or institutions aimed at bringing about significant improvements in equality between women and men in the world of work; and promoting the representation of women at decision-making levels to attain a balance in the participation of men and women including in ILO governance institutions, meetings and training activities.

ILO action to promote gender equality includes:

- Campaigning for the ratification of the fundamental Conventions dealing with equality at work by providing technical support to constituents in identifying national priority gender issues, awareness raising and capacity building, advisory services and technical cooperation projects, networking, and training and workshops on gender equality for governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations and NGOs;

- Measuring constituents’ progress in promoting the representation of women at decision-making levels by developing statistical indicators and tools to establish baseline data and by analyzing trends in participation rates.

10.8 INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS
International labour standard setting is a role unique to the ILO. Each ILO Convention is a legal instrument. Once a government has ratified a Convention and it has come into force, the Member State is obliged to bring its national law and practice into conformity with the provisions of the Convention, and to report periodically to the ILO on its application in both the law and in practice. The Conventions that aim to promote gender equality in the world of work form the basis of all other ILO activities promoting gender equality in employment.
The four key equality Conventions are the:

- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100),
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111),
- Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and

**Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No.100)**

It “calls for equal pay for men and women for work of equal value”\(^\text{116}\). The difficulty lies in deciding and comparing the “value” of work. This review has shown how women and men are usually concentrated in different occupations, both vertically and horizontally, across sectors and in the same workplace. Therefore, there is not always a comparable number of both sexes in the same occupation and it is not always possible to compare a female-dominated occupation with a male-dominated occupation.

**Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No.111)**

It “calls for a national policy to eliminate discrimination in access to employment, training and working conditions, on ground of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin and to promote equality of opportunity and treatment.” And “member States having ratified this Convention undertake to repeal any statutory provisions and modify any administrative instructions or practices which are inconsistent with this policy, and to enact legislation and promote educational programmes which favour its acceptance and implementation in co-operation with employers’ and workers’ organizations. This policy shall be pursued and observed in respect of employment under the direct control of a national authority, and of vocational guidance and training, and placement services under the direction of such an authority”

**Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)**

It applies to men and women workers with responsibilities for members of their immediate family where those responsibilities restrict their possibilities of preparing for, entering, participating in or advancing in economic activities” and

**Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)**

The ILO promotes the ratification of these Conventions by selecting countries for targeted promotional and advocacy work; undertaking policy-oriented studies on work and family issues; providing technical support and advice to constituents in the design and implementation of national plans of action and in the drawing up of national legislation; and by campaigning with
its partners to improve working conditions and extend maternity protection in the informal economy.

Raising awareness, capacity building could be one way to ensure gender equality. National State and International organizations seeking to bring about gender equality have to commit to promote positive changes in policies, legislation, programmes or institutions. This includes building the capacity of governments, employers’ organizations, and workers’ organizations to prepare seminars and workshops to raise awareness and conduct training on gender issues, so that organizations can plan and implement specific activities to promote gender equality and incorporate a gender perspective in all other activities (gender mainstreaming).

Sufficient education and vocational skills are necessary conditions for women’s attainment of professional and managerial jobs. Training organizations have to carrying out vocational training programmes that incorporate gender concerns. Some target women only whilst others target groups of men and women. The projects should aim to broaden the skill base of women workers to enable them to eventually obtain professional and managerial jobs, and to help them to break down the barriers causing vertical and horizontal occupational segregation by sex.

Parallel to this work, organizations such as ILO is undertaking women’s entrepreneurship development activities which include entrepreneurship skills training, training of trainers for staff of partner organizations, and policy and advocacy work. By improving women entrepreneurs’ business skills and access to resources, the ILO is also helping to expand their income opportunities.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2
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. Explain Equal Remuneration Convention 1951

10.9 SUMMING UP

Remuneration and balancing work and family responsibilities are important issues for all women in the world of work, and gender equality concerns now influence many social protection programmes. A key component of the ILO’s programme on wages and incomes is the promotion of equal pay for work of equal value to encourage policies that redress the gaps in men’s and women’s earnings. Work on maternity protection, reconciling work and family, and working hours has highlighted the specific requirements of women and men in the workforce and the
need to adopt appropriate measures with respect to work arrangements and schedules. Technical cooperation projects are underway to extend social insurance to cover maternity benefits to both insured working women and the wives of insured working men.

Gender Audits have also proved to be an innovative and effective approach to organizational learning on gender mainstreaming. Gender audits of selected headquarters work units and field offices have provided valuable information and have shown steady progress on gender mainstreaming in knowledge development and operational activities across the Organization.

10.10 GLOSSARY
Affirmative Action: It is policy or the practice of improving the educational and job opportunities of members of groups that have not been treated fairly in the past because of their race, sex, etc.

10.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE
Check Your Progress Exercise 1
1. Female mentors and role models on which students can shape their career aspirations are in short supply at the tertiary level because the teaching profession tends to be dominated by women in the more junior positions. Programmes are needed to improve their presence in the academic hierarchy, particularly in non-traditional subject areas. These programmes could take the form of affirmative action or quota systems to promote women teachers from within schools and universities, nominate them to selection committees, and provide them with high-profile professorial chairs.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2
1. It “calls for equal pay for men and women for work of equal value”116. The difficulty lies in deciding and comparing the “value” of work. This review has shown how women and men are usually concentrated in different occupations, both vertically and horizontally, across sectors and in the same workplace. Therefore, there is not always a comparable number of both sexes in the same occupation and it is not always possible to compare a female-dominated occupation with a male-dominated occupation.

10.12 REFERENCE
10.13 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1. Explain about International Labour Standards
2. What are the Interventionist strategies for work place equality?

\[i\] This unit has been drawn heavily from the report ‘Breaking through the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management’. 2004. International Labour Office, Geneva.