



**BLOCK 3**  
**GENDER AND WORK**

Pignou  
THE PEOPLE'S  
UNIVERSITY

---

## **BLOCK INTRODUCTION BLOCK 3**

---

### **Gender and Work**

Block 3 of the Course “Gender Sensitization: Society and Culture” titled as “Gender and Work” has two Units. Unit 7 of this Block is “Gendering Work”. This Unit starts with giving explanation about traditional and contemporary discourses on gendering work. Traditional discourses how societies and the roles of women and men have evolved over a period of time. Contemporary discourses have brought about women’s contribution in productive and reproductive activities. The unit stresses the importance of developing appropriate measures to value women’s work. It also discusses the gaps in measuring women’s contribution and lack of women’s participation in labour force and economy. The final Unit of this Block is “Gender issues in Work and Labour Market”. There are various issues women face in the market. These issues are discussed elaborately. The issues dealt in this Unit are enumeration of work, decent work, feminization of labour, marginalization, sexual harassment at workplace, sex work, informalisation and service, glass ceiling and double burden.

Smita M.Patil

Guma

---

## UNIT 7 GENDERING WORK

---

### Structure

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Objectives
- 7.3 Traditional Discourses
- 7.4 Contemporary Discourses
- 7.5 Standards for measurement of Work
- 7.6 Gender Gaps in Labour Force Participation and Economy
- 7.7 Gender Discrimination, Violence and Vulnerability at Work
- 7.8 Summing Up
- 7.9 Key words
- 7.10 References
- 7.11 Unit End Questions

---

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

---

The first Unit of this Block, you will read both traditional and contemporary discourses on work focussing on productive, reproductive and unpaid work carried out by women. After this, you will read about standards for measurement of work and the reasons for gender gaps in labour force participation. The Unit ends with a discussion on gender discrimination and its impact on women in workforce followed by conclusion.

Lets us now look at the objectives of the Unit.

---

### 7.2 OBJECTIVES

---

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- Define work;
- Discuss traditional and contemporary discourses of work;
- Describe international standards of measurement of work; and
- Analyse the reasons for gender gap in labour force participation and gender discrimination at workplace.

Let us begin reading traditional discourses in the real world of work.

---

### 7.3 TRADITIONAL DISCOURSES

---

We have read about early human societies which were egalitarian. Men hunted, fished and provided necessary raw materials for food and made necessary tools for these tasks. Women cared for the house, prepared food, clothing and looked after children. Women were the centre of communistic household, and she alone knew who were fathers of her children. Things changed when human communities moved from nomadic existence to living in a stable environment. The growing significance of production changed the nature of communistic society. With accumulation of wealth, the relationship between men and women changed; for

all wealth was a result of production which is a male activity. Production was more valued than household and household labour.

According to traditional economic theories, life is divided into economic realm and household realm. The economic realm focused on buyers, sellers, market whereas the household realm positioned itself on the range of unpaid work that is necessary for the functioning of life. Items that are sold in market are only counted as production and hence household realm was outside the purview of economic realm.

In economics, work is any activity or expenditure of energy that produces services and products of value to other people. Although, work can be performed without wages, salaries, or income, economically speaking, labor market work is strictly performed for pay. These terms are then tied to the term production. Work is productive if and only if profits are produced.

The capitalist system regarded women merely as a convenient source of cheap labour and part of the “reserve army of labour” to be drawn on when there is a shortage of labour in certain areas of production, and discarded again when the need disappears. We saw this in both world wars, when women were drafted into the factories to replace men who had been called up into the army and then sent back to the home when the war ended. Women were again encouraged to enter the workplaces during the period of capitalist upswing of the 1950s and 1960s, when their role was analogous to that of the immigrant workers—as a reservoir of cheap labour (Beneria et al, 1981).

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

Let us now read some of the contemporary discourses on women and work.

---

## **7.4 CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSES**

---

The assumptions of traditional economics had devastating consequences on women. Feminist economics grew in response to the restricted and inadequate view of “the economy” offered by mainstream economic thinking. In this context one of the key challenges for feminist economics was to make visible the so-called invisible or unpaid economy.

The tendency of highlighting the unpaid economic work has a long-standing history within the debates on gender and development. Danish economist Ester Boserup in her work *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970) has highlighted women's importance to the agricultural economy. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, was singled out as the great global area of "female farming systems" in which women using traditional hoe technology assumed a substantial responsibility for food production. Moreover, Boserup posited a positive correlation between the role women played in agricultural production and their status vis-à-vis men. Instead of **needy beneficiaries, her work represented women as productive members of society.**

One of the most pervasive themes of the present feminist movement is the emphasis placed on the role of reproduction. Women do globe's unpaid second and third shift work of households tasks. Unpaid work includes housework, such as preparing meals for the family, cleaning the house and gathering water and fuel, as well as work caring for children, older people and family members who are sick—over both the short and long term. Women in India do almost ten times the amount of unpaid care work that men do. Three-quarters of unpaid work is routine household chores exacerbated by poor access to basic services such as sanitation, clean water, and clean sources of cooking fuel. In China and Bangladesh—to consider two other Asian countries for comparative purposes—women do about three and four times, respectively, the amount of unpaid care work as men (MGI, 2015).



Fig 7.1

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/unwomenasiapacific/8578827881/in/set-72157633056053519/lightbox/>

Human Development Report (2015) states that women are estimated to contribute 52 percent of global work, men 48 percent. But even if women carry more than half the burden, they are disadvantaged in both realms of work— paid as well as unpaid work— in patterns that reinforce each other. In 2015, the global labour

force participation rate was 50 percent for women but 77 percent for men. Female participation in the labour force and employment rates are affected heavily by economic, social and cultural issues and care work distributions in the home. Of the 59 percent of work that is paid, mostly outside the home, men's share is nearly twice that of women—38 percent versus 21 percent. The picture is reversed for unpaid work, mostly within the home and encompassing a range of care responsibilities: of the 41 percent of work that is unpaid, women perform three times more than men— 31 percent versus 10 percent.

Hence the imbalance— men dominate the world of paid work, women that of unpaid work. Unpaid work in the home is indispensable to the functioning of society and human well-being: yet when it falls primarily to women, it limits their choices and opportunities for other activities that could be more fulfilling to them. Even when women are in paid work, they face disadvantages and discrimination. The evidence of the glass ceiling is just one of them. Women are underrepresented in senior business management globally: They hold only 22 percent of senior leadership positions, and 32 percent of businesses do not have any female senior managers, with regional variations. Occupational segregation has been pervasive over time and across levels of economic prosperity— in both advanced and developing countries men are over-represented in crafts, trades, plant and machine operations, and managerial and legislative occupations; and women in mid-skill occupations such as clerks, service workers and shop and sales workers. Even when doing similar work, women can earn less— with the wage gaps generally greatest for the highest paid professionals. Globally, women earn 24 percent less than men. Due to their disproportionate share of care work, women have less time than men for other activities, including paid work and education. In low human development countries men spend nearly 30 percent more time on social life and leisure than women. In very high human development countries the difference is 12 percent. Despite the importance for human development, care work often goes unrecognized. Among all countries attempting to measure the value of unpaid care work, estimates range from 20 percent to 60 percent of GDP. In India unpaid care is estimated at 39 percent of GDP, in South Africa 15 percent.

When women have no choice but to give priority to unpaid work and stay out of the labour force, they make large sacrifices, perhaps missing the chance to expand their capabilities in the workplace. They also lose opportunities for economic independence.

In order to understand dynamics of gender and work, the nature of sex discrimination, wages, participation in the development process, and implications for political action, analysts must examine the two areas of production and reproduction as well as the interaction between them.

A variety of recent studies on women in Third World countries have focused on the interaction between production and reproduction to analyze women's work. Maria Mies's (1981) study of Indian women lace makers in Narsapur, Andhra Pradesh, for example, shows how the seclusion of women has conditioned their participation in non-household production. Although lace making is a producing industry geared toward the international market, it is highly compatible with seclusion and domestic work. Women are engaged in lace making as much as six to eight hours a day, in addition to their household chores. Their average daily earnings amount to less than a third of the official minimum wage for female

agricultural laborers. This situation persists even though the industry has grown considerably since 1970 and represents a very high proportion of the foreign exchange earnings from handicrafts in the region. Many of the women are the actual breadwinners in their families. Mies argues that this highly exploitative system has in fact led to greater class differentiation within local communities as well as greater polarization between the sexes. The system is made possible by the ideology of seclusion that rigidly confines women to the home, eliminates their opportunities for outside work, and makes them willing to accept extremely low wages.

For lace makers, caste and gender work to transform beliefs about women’s unequal status and power in a private sphere into hierarchical ordering in which women’s work in production of lace is conceptualised as a ‘leisure activity’ with little pay and where the products and proceeds of this industry are controlled by men. Expansion of lace industry into the global market led not only to class differentiation within particular communities but also to the masculinization of all non-production jobs.

***Paid Care Work***

Globally an estimated 53 million people ages 15 and older are in paid domestic work. Of these, 83 percent are women—some, migrant workers (UNDP, 2015). And so a global care work chain has emerged where migrant domestic workers undertake housework and provide care to children and others in households abroad. But they often leave their own children and parents behind in their homeland; creating care gap often filled by grandparents, other relatives or hired local helpers. Despite the possible abuse in domestic work—low wages, poor working conditions, no access to medical care, and physical or sexual abuse—many workers feel obliged to remain with abusive employers because they need the work.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

1) Define what is understood by work.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

2) Who is reserved army of women? Why?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

3) What do you understand by productive and reproductive work?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

---

## 7.5 STANDARDS FOR MEASUREMENT OF WORK

---

Attempts were made to include subsistence production in the national accounts of some countries in the 1950s and 1960s, but it was the push by the women's movement in the 1970s which really focused on the importance of non-market production. **Esther Boserup's foundational 1970 work, Women's Role in Economic Development** clearly showed the key role of subsistence production in Third World economies and the pivotal role of women in those economies. Yet her case for counting many of these women's activities was that they were part of subsistence production, not that women's household labour was productive. However, this latter argument was taken up by the feminist movement. Ann Oakley's foundational work in the early 1970s was followed by a series of studies which clearly saw housework as work, as productive and as done mainly by women.

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

### Box No. 7.1

#### **Government Employment Guarantee Programmes and Time Allocation of Women**

Newly created employment opportunities can serve as a vehicle for transforming women's lives by reducing the unpaid work burden and, thus, altering the paid-unpaid gender division of labour. In some cases this will translate to prioritizing public investment in infrastructure that reduces unpaid work, such as rural water projects, feeder roads etc.

The importance of employment guarantee programs in our context is that, if well designed, they can reduce unpaid work while redistributing the cost of reproduction by creating jobs for both women and men instead of reinforcing the existing gender-based division of unpaid labour. If such projects are not gender-informed, the danger is that they may create a typical "double" day effect for women (Chakraborty, 2008).

---

## 7.6 GENDER GAPS IN LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND ECONOMY

---

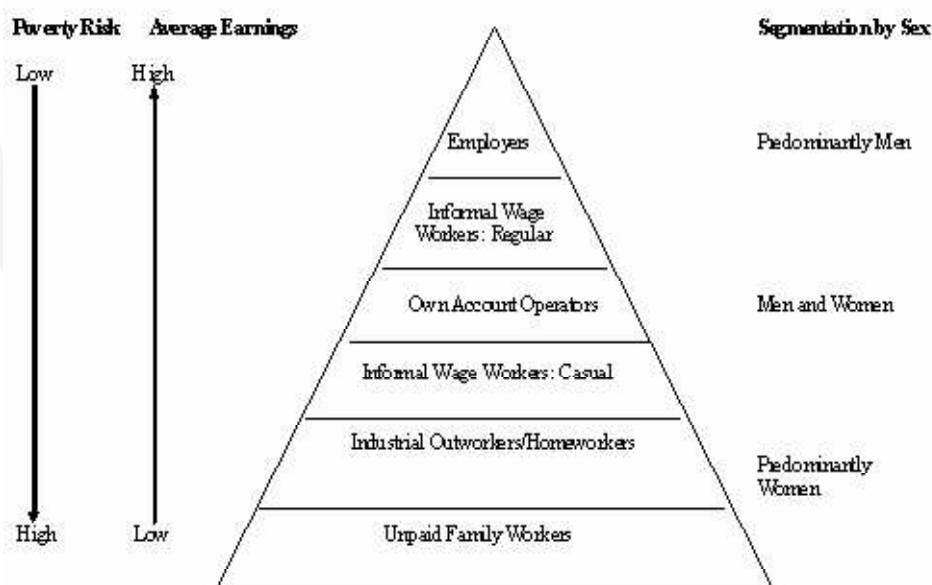
Gender inequality is a pressing human issue but also has huge ramifications for jobs, productivity, GDP growth, and inequality. The economic potential of India's women is not achievable without gender gaps in society being addressed. India has a lower share of women's contribution to GDP than the global average of 37 percent, and the lowest among all regions in the world. India's economy would have the highest relative boost among all regions of the world if its women participated in paid work in the market economy on a similar basis to men, erasing the current gaps in labour-force participation rates, hours worked, and representation within each sector (which affects their productivity). The barriers



hindering women from participating in the labour market on par with men are unlikely to be fully addressed within that time frame and because, ultimately, such participation is a matter of personal choice. The role of women in the workplace cannot be viewed in isolation from their role in society. (Pl, explain this text.) Achieving the economic potential of women requires gender gaps in both work and in society to be narrowed—equality in one goes hand-in-hand with equality in the other.

**Data from India's National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO) surveys** indicates that women's labour-force participation is significantly lower than that of men in both urban and rural areas. Based on data for the population aged 15 and over, India's female labour-force participation rate is just 21 percent in urban areas and 36 percent in rural areas compared with 76 percent and 81 percent, respectively, in the case of men (Chaudhary and Verick, 2014).

About 75 percent of female employment is in rural areas esp. agriculture compared with 59 percent for men. In the unorganized sector, men are more likely to be employers; women are more likely to be wage workers or unpaid family workers. Men are more likely to own large enterprises, women to own small ones. Women's work is generally manual and unskilled. A majority of self-employed women are home based workers – producing for the market in their own homes. There is a hierarchy of poverty risk associated with the segmentation of the labour force with women concentrated in forms of employment with high risks of poverty (Chen et.al, 2005).



**Figure 7.2 Segmentation of the Unorganized Sector Workers**

Source: Progress of the World's Women, United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) 2005.

<http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/women-2005.pdf>

The **Global Gender Gap Report (2014)** reveals a widespread perception that women are paid lower wages compared with men for the same work. Analysing 68<sup>th</sup> Round National Sample Survey's (NSSO) wage data by occupation for India appears to support this trend; irrespective of the professional level, women on average get paid 30 percent less than their male counterparts.

Drawing on NSSO data, MC Kinsey Global Institute (MGI, 2015) identified a gender gap in leadership among Indian women. Only 7 percent of tertiary-educated women have jobs as senior officials compared with 14 percent of men. Similarly, women account for only 38 percent of all professional technical jobs. Women constitute just 5% of the boards of companies in India. This means that at the 9,000 listed firms in the country, there are only 400 women board members. These figures may not present a complete picture as 200 of them belong to family-owned firms. So, the number of women who have actually climbed the ladder is just a sad fraction (Economic Times, 2010).



<http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/get-involved>

In 2014, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had directed the companies listed on National Stock Exchange to appoint at least one woman director on their boards by the month of October in the same year. The presence of a compulsory female member on the board would ensure the implementation of more women-oriented policies. However, more than 200 companies have failed to comply with the directive as of April 2015 resulting in imposition of fines. This shows the general attitude towards the potential of women work (Ruchira Singh, 2015).

Underlying social attitudes about the role of women are, arguably, some of the biggest barriers India's women face. MGI (2015) found a strong link between attitudes that limit women's potential and actual gender equality outcomes in a given region. For instance, the survey asked respondents, both men and women, whether they agreed with the following statements: "When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women" and "When a mother works for pay, the children suffer." MGI examined the responses against outcomes related to work equality and found strong correlations with both. Half or more of the respondents in India agreed with both statements—and India has some of the world's lowest rates of women's labour-force participation.

## 7.7 GENDER DISCRIMINATION, VIOLENCE AND VULNERABILITY AT WORK

Workplace or occupational violence—in the form of threats and physical or verbal and nonverbal abuse—is also a concern for many workers. Sexual harassment can be perpetrated by and directed at a range of people including employers, employees, contractors, and clients. It can be subtle or overt and could be deliberate or unintended. The types of harassment vary from the abuse of authority or position to relations among co-workers and affiliated personnel to inappropriate behavior towards consultants, clients, and members of public. In situations where there are a large number of young women and limited job opportunities, sexual harassment can be common during hiring and recruitment processes. Other particularly vulnerable populations of women include those working in educational and training institutions, domestic workers, migrant workers, workers with little job security, and workers in occupations where large numbers of women are supervised by small numbers of men.

**Human trafficking** is another form of violence against women and girls - which is the most lucrative illicit business worldwide. Between 2007 and 2010 trafficked victims of 136 nationalities were detected in 118 countries. Some 55–60 percent of the victims were women. Most were trafficked for sexual exploitation or for working as forced labour. Exploitation is common in paid domestic work, particularly for female migrant workers in developing countries. In people's homes exploitation often remains outside the scope of labour law. Employers use threats and coercion to pay low or even no wages. They can force domestic workers to work long hours— up to 18 hours a day without days off— limiting their movements and potential for social interaction. Working conditions are often poor, with little food and no access to medical care. Domestic workers may also be subject to physical or sexual abuse. Even so, many domestic workers feel obliged to remain with abusive employers because they need to work to support their own families.

In the following box is some reflection from work scenario of women.

### Box No. 7.2

#### **Seizing Every Opportunity- Sizing Every Situation**

##### **Some of the issues faced by Women in Employment**

Poverty and limited education push women into labour markets at an early age, but the sheer economic reason of getting better incomes pushes them out of other labour markets and into sex work. This was revealed by a path breaking pan India survey of sex workers conducted in 2009.

When men move for work, it is taken for granted that their wives would follow them, even at the cost of disrupting their own careers. Defying this age old norm is a small but increasing number of women.

From the field of journalism, we hear that some prominent women journalists have made their way into highest echelons of new television, where most women in the field face the glass ceiling and remain content with modest profiles performing drudge work.

For many construction workers in the metro cities is a choice between starvation in their villages and exploitation and unhealthy environment in the cities. There is no social protection for workers in the informal sector.

About a quarter of total workforce in the Indian BPO sector comprise women and they confine to lower echelons of this USD 40 billion industry. But the real life of women details severe health issues due to constantly tiring eye muscles, depression and digestive issues and moreover the fear of darkness due to the odd work timings (Philipose and Bishnoi, 2013)

### ***Recommendations***

In the present scenario, deep rooted social norms and practices underpinning gender inequalities leaves the women and girls with limited choices and opportunities. To overcome the situation, there is a need to close gender gaps in secondary and tertiary education in India's large states; lower barriers to job creation; expand skills training for women in key sectors; expand the reach of financial and digital services to enable women entrepreneurs; step up gender diversity policies and practices in organizations; strengthen legal provisions for women and the enforcement of laws; improve infrastructure and services to address the high burden of routine domestic work, childcare and elder care; reshape deep-rooted attitudes about the role of women in work and in society. Many societies are experiencing a generational shift, particularly in educated middle-class households, towards greater sharing of care work between men and women. Much remains to be done, and action needs to happen quickly to address deep gender inequalities in the realm of work.

---

## **7.8 SUMMING UP**

---

In this Unit we have read traditional and contemporary discourses on women and work. The learners are also introduced the concepts and detailed descriptions with appropriate statistical example of productive and reproductive work, paid and unpaid work. They have also introduced the existing studies related to gender and work. We have also discussed standards for measurement of work. Along with that, we have introduced the concept "United Nations System of National Account of 1993 (SNA). We have also discussed the violence related to work place, gender discrimination at work and women's vulnerability.

---

## **7.9 KEY WORDS**

---

United Nations: The United Nations is an interernational organization founded in 1945. It is currently made up of 193 members states.

---

## **7.10 REFERENCES**

---

Beneria, Lourdes and Gita Sen (1981) "Accumulation, Reproduction and "Women's Role in Economic Development":

Boserup Revisited", Signs, Vol. 7, No. 2, Development and the Sexual Division of Labor (Winter, 1981), pp.279-298

Chakraborty, Lekha. 2008. Public Investment and Unpaid Work in India: Selective Evidence from Time Use Data. Conference Paper, Levy Economics Institute, New York.

Chaudhary Ruchika and Verick Sher. 2014. Female Labour Force Participation in India and Beyond. Asia Pacific Working Paper Series. ILO.

Martha Chen et.al. 2005. Women Work and Poverty. Progress of World's Women. UNIFEM. New York.

The Economic Times. 2010. Powerful move fair deal for the fair sex, at last: Firms welcoming more women at the top.

Hirway, Indira. 2005. Measurements based on Time use Statistics, Conference Paper, Levy Economics Institute, New York.

Jayati. Women's Work in India in early 21<sup>st</sup> century. <http://www.sundarayya.org/sites/default/files/papers/jayati.pdf>

MCKinsey Global Institute. 2015. The Power of Parity- Advancing Women's Equality in India. MCKinsey & Company

Mies. 1981. Dynamics of Sexual Division of Labour and Capital Accumulation. Economic and Political Weekly. pp 487-500.

Philipose Pamela and Bishnoi Aditi. 2013. Women's Employment- Work in Progress. Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung. New Delhi.

Razvi. 2007. Political and Social Economy of Care in Development Context, Gender and Development.

Singh Ruchira, 2015. 247 NSE firms miss Sebi deadline for appointing women directors. <http://www.livemint.com/Companies/FJACH3O4hfWp47trh4CgN/Last-minute-dash-for-women-directors-as-India-enforces-deadl.html>

UNDP. 2015. Work for Human Development. Human Development Report 2015. United Nations Development Programme. New York.

World Economic Forum. 2014. The Global Gender Gap Report. World Economic Forum. Geneva.

---

## 7.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS

---

- 1) Explain contemporary discourses reflected to women and work with suitable examples.
- 2) Discuss the issues related to gender based violence at work.

---

## **UNIT 8 GENDER ISSUES IN WORK AND LABOUR MARKET**

---

### **Structure**

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Objectives
- 8.3 Enumeration of Work
- 8.4 What Constitutes a Women's Work?
- 8.5 Under Enumeration and Under Valuation of Women's Work
- 8.6 Decent Work
- 8.7 Globalisation and Women's Employment
- 8.8 Feminization of Employment and Labour Force
- 8.9 Marginalization and Informalization
- 8.10 Sexual Harassment at Workplace
- 8.11 Sex Work
- 8.12 Servicisation
- 8.13 Glass ceiling
- 8.14 Double Burden
- 8.15 Summing Up
- 8.16 Key Words
- 8.17 References
- 8.18 Questions for Reflection and Practice

---

### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

---

We read about the concepts related to employment, implications of gendered division of labour and current employment scenario in India in the previous Unit. Learners must have got clarity about the concepts of labour and employment. Along with understanding concepts related to labour and employment, we also need to discuss issues related to gender and employment. So, we will read about the issues related to gender and employment in this Unit namely, under-enumeration of women's work, norms of decent work, feminization, marginalization, informalization of women workforce, sexual harassment of women at workplace, glass ceiling and double burden shouldered by women workers. We have explained each of these issue to make the learners recognize the implications of these issues on the employment scenario.

---

### **8.2 OBJECTIVES**

---

After studying this Unit, you would be able to

- List the issues related to women's labour and employment;
- Describe the issues related to labour and employment of women; and
- Examine implications of gender on labour and employment of women.

---

### 8.3 ENUMERATION OF WORK

---

An enumeration is a collection of items. The collected items have to be listed completely in an order. The term is commonly used in mathematics, theoretical computer science and applied computer science. With regard to enumeration of work, the Government of India officially attempts to obtain an estimate of the total number of economically active population in the country for the past hundred years. This is done through Census of India by categorizing total population into those with income earning activities and those without. These attempts were further refined by the 1961 census. The concept of the worker was introduced first time in the 1961 census i.e. a person engaged in a socially productive activity, whether income yielding or not. Since 1950 the Indian National Sample Survey (NSS) has also been collecting similar information about participation in work or economic activity (whether gainful or not) through repeated sample surveys. Apart from other official data collection systems, the population census and the NSS continue to be important and regular sources of the information by sex, region and age for the Indian population.

In this process, the feminists have worked to develop frameworks to include contribution of women's work in the existing surveys by looking at the inadequacy in that. This process started by studying the existing conceptual frameworks and procedures adopted by the data collection agencies to collect information about the extent of women's contribution in economic activities. We have already read about the contribution of women's work by categories in Unit 1 of this Course. i.e. productive, reproductive and community works. Now we read about the issues related to non inclusion of women's contribution in the official statistical system.

Official Indian statistics indicate that women continue to lag behind men in all spheres of life – socio, political and economic life. The economic activities of women appear to be less important than that of men. In recent years, women's participation in the labour force has never been more than 28 percent of the total female population. However feminist authors argue that these figures do not reflect the full extent of Indian women's involvement in productive activities, both within the household and outside. This is because of the concepts, measures and techniques used by these data collection systems are not appropriate for Indian situation. We have also read about sexual division of labour in the Unit 1. The sexual division of labour place women in unfavorable situation. The existing perceptions in the society due to patriarchy value women's work less. This perception is also reflected in the design of data collection machinery. It fails to reflect the value and contribution of women's work.

After studying Indian data collection system, feminists raised questions in various national and international forums to the faults of the Indian data collection systems with regard to women's work repeatedly. Indian data collection system is slightly better than other developing country's data collection system. Socio, cultural practices restrict women to disclose their participation in productive work done both for household and for society in many developing countries. Efforts were put to restructure the existing data collection system to include women's work in both public and private spaces in all developing countries internationally.

---

## 8.4 WHAT CONSTITUTES A WOMEN'S WORK?

---

We need to analysis the pattern and conditions of women's and men's work to know the differences. A basic difference observes in the work style practiced by women and men are that, while women predominantly work in indoors, men spend the major time in outdoor work. In other words, women work is essentially restricted in the private sphere of "households". Men work outside the "household" boundary i.e public sphere. This is not to say that women do not perform any outdoor work or men do not perform any indoor work within the private sphere of household. But women spend considerable percentage of time in household works and men spend considerable percentage of time in outside activities. The choice of the domain of work for men and women are not based on their freewill. It is primarily the result of delegation of responsibilities by traditional norms and cultures. Traditional norms allocate house making or house keeping work (often termed "house work" or "domestic work") to women in almost all societies.

Moreover, all developed countries including India registered large percentage of agriculture and household based production units. In these agriculture and household based production units, family members work as non-wage employer. These non-wage employment activities are part of the subsistence or non market production. In these household economic units, work and income are divided between men and women according to some set patterns. While these patterns of divisions of labour between men and women are not identical in all regions within India. There is a general tendency to assign work for women combining with their house hold tasks. The household tasks are regarded as their primary responsibility for women. Therefore their productive task tends to be mainly confined to the private, indoor domain of the household. Also their participation in the household productive activities is likely to be intermittent, casual and often marginal. This is generally true. But, women are required to involve major part of the day in productive work along with or some sacrifice of their regular household tasks including care of children and the aged during busy agriculture seasons.

Let us examine the reasons for under-enumeration of women's work which is not duly valued.

---

## 8.5 UNDER ENUMERATION AND UNDER VALUATION OF WOMEN'S WORK

---

We have seen women's involvement in household as well as productive activities in section 8.4. Most of the time, the contribution of women's productive activities are not recognized. It is invisible most of the time. When the statistical enumerator approaches family members to note the contribution of work of the each family member, they tend contact male members of the family to take note of the family member's contribution. Due to the non recognition of women's contribution combined with socialization process, male members value less on women's work. So they fail to inform enumerators on women's contribution.



**Check Your Progress Exercise 1:**

- Note:** i) Use the space given below to answer the questions.  
ii) Compare your answer with the Course material of this unit.

1) What is 'Enumeration'?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2) What are the roles of NSSO and Census of India?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

---

**8.6 DECENT WORK**

---

The concept of 'decent work for all' was put forth by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to promote opportunities for both male and female, to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equality, security and human dignity. The four pillars decent work concept is:

- Employment and enterprise
- Rights at work
- Social protection and
- Dialogue

These pillars constitute an important point of reference that aims to make societies more just, sustainable and equitable, while focusing on empowerment of marginalized groups in society. Women's access to decent work is particularly affected by the burden of combining reproductive and productive work. This stress of double burden of work is not accounted for in traditional conceptualization of work which focuses on paid work and do not examine the implications of reproductive labour.

---

**8.7 GLOBALISATION AND WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT**

---

Globalization, the word coined by American management schools, is the phenomenon related to survival of companies that promptly and ruthlessly adjust to global completion for market and production. It means free-trade, unfettered markets and integration of economies of nation in the world. Globalisation is

driven by self-interest of trans-national and multinational corporations. Globalisation of products has led to feminization of labour force and feminisation of poverty. Economic activity of women has increased over the past three decades but they concentrated in low paid jobs, at the lowest rung of occupational hierarchy. Forces of globalisation in developing countries have enhanced the burden of poor and tribal women due to commercialization of natural resources thus depriving their options of sustainable livelihood. In agriculture sector, the international players have created price fluctuations resulting into distress among female farmers and cultivators. Thus, it can be seen that globalisation has changed labour market context for women in the economy.

In the following sections we will look into how globalisation has changed the face of women's employment.

---

## **8.8 FEMINIZATION OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR FORCE**

---

World over, more and more women are joining the workforce. Global employment has given rise to two new developments; first crowding of employment market by women and secondly, conditions for employment of women have become precarious and flexible. The United Nations termed these patterns of women's employment as 'feminization of employment'. Most of the women have a 'patchwork career' because of interruptions in employment as a result of child bearing, child/elderly care or unemployment/ occasional/ part time employment available to them. A life long full time employment with security has become exceptional in a globalised market driven economy across the world.

Trans-national companies have created new avenues of employment for women in their domestic units or through subcontracting. Cheap, flexible and unorganized female employment is regarded as the 'diving board' of the world's economy. Feminization of labour is used to describe in following ways:

- 1) Increase in Female Labour Participation Rate
- 2) Fall or stagnation in Male Labour Participation Rate
- 3) labour option of employment of women for work in informal/part time/ contractual/ home based work as needed by the employer.

Let us now read how women workers are marginalized through informalization of their labour.

---

## **8.9 MARGINALIZATION AND INFORMALIZATION**

---

Women's advantage as workers is because of their lower wages and their inability to oppose poor work conditions. In a globalised market this ensures the country remains attractive and competitive for foreign investments. Globalization has created new possibilities for exploitation of women workers through low wages, denial of rights to organize, migration to urban centres of production and restricted or poor living conditions for migrant workers. Thus, globalization has led to social and economic marginalization of women workforce. Women are found to be over represented in informal sector because of the flexibilities of work involved

in such occupations and activities. These are advantageous for women also, given their reproductive and care giving roles in the form of unpaid labour. These societal expectations from the women are exploited by the employers to maximize their profit. Thus, women workers form the backbone of informal economies in countries across the world.

---

## 8.10 SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE

---

Sexual harassment at the workplace is an important issue related to the safety and dignity of women at workplaces. It is an expression of male power over women due to patriarchy. It is often an extension of violence against women in everyday life, targeting and exploiting the vulnerability of women at the workplace.

The land mark *Vishaka* judgment by Supreme Court 1997 defined sexual harassment as “any unwelcome sexually determined behaviour such as physical contact, a demand or request for sexual favours, sexually-coloured remarks, showing pornography and any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.” The Supreme Court also noted that the sexual harassment is the violation of basic human rights of women. The judgment also provided guidelines for employers to redress and prevent sexual harassment at workplace. It also provided guidelines for the employers to make a discrimination-free working environment for women employees. The judgment said that it was the duty of the employer or other responsible persons in work places to provide women with a safe working atmosphere, to prevent sexual harassment as well as provide mechanisms for resolution of complaints through the establishment of complaints committees.

The court further directed that every workplace must constitute a committee for receiving and inquiring into complaints of sexual harassment. As per the directives of the court, every such committee should consist of members of whom at least 50% are women. A chairperson of the committee should be a woman. An external member from a social work / non-profit organization has to be appointed in the committee. Along with above said steps, the following preventive steps need to be taken by the employer. These are

- discussing the issue affirmatively in workers’ meetings and employer-employee meetings;
- prominent display of guidelines to create awareness of the right of women employees;
- prominent display of members of the complaints committee and their contact details;
- The employers are also responsible for formulating an anti-sexual harassment policy; and
- Constitution of a complaints committee to investigate, mediate, counsel and resolve cases of sexual harassment.

The following case study gives clarity about the sexual harassment at workplace.

### *Case of S.*

S is a post graduate in commerce. She joined in a multinational company as a trainee. She was appointed as a purchase officer within few years. After

confirmation on the job, S started reporting to G. G is a Senior Vice President. Initially G requested sexual favours from S. Upon her refusal, he demanded sexual favours from S. When S refused to succumb his pressure, she relieved from the position and given much lower position. She needs to do only filing and photocopying work in office. G telephoned S at her residence number late in the night. S registered a police complaint. She also put in a verbal complaint of harassment to one of the Directors of the company. The Director along with the Human Resource (HR) department investigated the complaint. The complaint was closed after giving a verbal warning to G. Following this action, reporting of S was changed. However, sexual harassment resumed when that particular Director resigned from the company. G was now the senior most in the company. During this period, S complained to the HR manager several times orally about severe harassment. However he did not take any action. S complained in writing to the Vice President (Human Resources) based at the head office. As result of her complaint to the head office there was escalation of harassment to S from G. S was isolated at workplace. S once again complained in writing about the sexual harassment and hostile working conditions to the HR department both at the local and head office. In response to the complaint, S was served with a suspension letter and a charge sheet for not performing her duty properly. The company terminated S from the job on the basis of findings of the department enquiry against her. In the meantime due to mounting pressure from the State Commission for Women and the High Court, two enquiries were carried out by the company to look into the complaint of sexual harassment i.e. one by the overseas management and other by a sexual harassment complaints committee. However the S was not informed about the findings of the enquiries. S continued to struggle both in the labour and the industrial court for reinstatement of employment.

Ref: [http://www.fes-india.org/media/GBV-SH/Paper\\_Anagha\\_Sarpotdar.pdf](http://www.fes-india.org/media/GBV-SH/Paper_Anagha_Sarpotdar.pdf) downloaded on 8th June, 2016.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

- Note:** i) Use the space given below to answer the questions.  
ii) Compare your answer with the Course material of this unit.

1) What is meant by “Decent Work”

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2) Write a note on informalization and feminization of women’s employment

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

---

## 8.11 SEX WORK

---

Ministry of Women and Child Development (2007) reported the presence of 2.8 million sex workers in India, with approximately 35% of them entering the trade before the age of 18.

Other sources, such as Human Rights Watch, put the figure at 15 million, with Mumbai alone having more than 100,000 sex workers. In addition to sex workers in brothels, devadasi, jogini and such other traditional systems force girls into prostitution, particularly those from lower castes and classes. (<http://www.womenwelfare.org/Forced%20to%20Entertain.html>) There are three approaches to sex work – legalization, decriminalization and sex work as a human right. Decriminalization refers to removing the application of criminal law on sex work. Legalization refers to an official recognition of sex work as a form of work (like all others) by the state, and issuing licenses and regulating conditions of work. The human rights approach, advanced by sex workers themselves, argues that sex workers are entitled to basic and fundamental human rights as every other woman is, in addition to the right to solicit for sex work. The most contentious debate around sex work is whether women can consent to engage in sex work or whether all sex work is the result of force, coercion, threat and duress.

---

## 8.12 SERVICISATION

---

The prominence of service sector in women's employment can not be ignored because of its growing importance in women's employment and their concentration in certain sections of service economy namely, education, health services and domestic work.

Service sector accounts for a large number of occupations and activities ranging from highly skilled and well paid jobs to unskilled and poorly paid activities. Within this sector community, social and personal services account for the largest chunk of women workers with an ever increasing concentration over the years. Though education and that too primary education accounts for the largest segment, the number of women engaged in services rendered under domestic work (cleaning, washing, cooking, child/elderly care services) shows a phenomenal increase. The sector of paid domestic work has become one of the most important sectors of women's work as unskilled workers in urban areas.

The discussion here reflects that women's employment is seen as a natural link to their care work and such engagements leave ample time with the woman worker to carry out her own domestic responsibilities namely, the unpaid care provided to the family.

---

## 8.13 GLASS CEILING

---

Women face two types of obstacles to enter into employment. Due to socialization process and patriarchy, society prefers women to choose traditional occupation. Women have to achieve work place equality in the chosen occupation. Secondly women face obstacles to move upward position in the chosen field. This is what is known as the 'glass-ceiling!'. Organizations prefer to hire women in lower position. The occupation of lower position in the organizations by women results

less control over their work environment. Due to this, women have less decision making powers. Organization discriminates women on the basis of sex for promotions. They prefer to keep women in lower wages. They get very less opportunities for promotion and upward mobility.

---

## 8.14 DOUBLE BURDEN

---

The entry of women into the labour market has not meant any lessening of domestic chores. Most women are still solely or mostly in charge of housework and child care. In order to fulfil all their responsibilities at the workplace and at home, women end up working longer hours. This phenomenon is called ‘double shift’ or ‘double burden’.

Let us read about more issues affecting women’s employment.

### *Migration*

Women constitute a growing population of the workers who migrate to urban centres or to other countries where their work is better paid. Most commonly they work as domestic helps, nursing personnel or in leisure industry.

There is a close relationship between informalization of employment and migration. Various reasons contribute for migration. We can list the reasons for migration as following:

- 1) Decline of primary sector economic activities contributes for rural urban migration.
- 2) Workers migrate from one nation to other on short and long term contracts in search of better opportunities.
- 3) Internal conflict and war contribute for international migration.

Migrant workers face lots of problems. Among migrant population, women and children are worst affected. The place of stay of migrant workers may be in bad conditions due to low capacity of the migrant to pay rent for accommodation. Migrant workers tend to join in informal employment. These workers face many of the same problems as other workers in similar segments of the informal economy, but they also have the additional problems associated with their ambiguous legal status. They generally fall outside the laws of their own countries but are not included in the laws of the receiving countries. As a result, they fall into the category of people who do not have ‘the right to have rights’ (Kabeer, 2007).

Like other migrant workers, women join in informal employment due low education and skill. These employments include domestic work, vending, caring of children and elders and others. Lack of awareness on rights of the migrant workers in the informal employment, they may get exploited. Children may find difficulties in joining in formal school. Women find difficulties in providing care to their own children due to long hours of work and low payment. Women and children may face sexual exploitation. Lack of infrastructure like sanitation and water, migrant workers faces severe health hazards. They may lack social security due to migration. Accessing health and education facilities by the migrant workers especially for women and children are challenge. Female migrant workers who often don’t possess legal papers are forced to work under worst conditions and are often victims of sexual violence.

### ***Social Protection***

Increasingly 'flexible' labour markets have reduced workers rights to unionize and thus has led to worker's weakened bargaining power. As a result of globalisation work has become more insecure as jobs have shifted from formal, legally regulated large firms to smaller and informal establishments and home based work. These jobs are often more accessible to women but lie outside of the protection of labour laws and social benefits. Part-time workers in the formal sector too face these insecurities.

The lack of support system for unpaid family care responsibilities aggravate problems and hit poor and vulnerable women the hardest. Women workers end up being 'time-poor' and 'money poor' which contributes their high morbidity and low well-being.

Social protection means interventions and initiatives that support individual, household and communities in their efforts to prevent and overcome social and economic risks like gender discrimination and exclusion, retirement, retrenchment, maternity benefits, old age death etc.

Gender related concerns and constraints not only limits women's access to labour market but also confine women workers to more poorly remunerated, more casual and insecure forms of waged and self- employments without access to social protection.

---

## **8.15 SUMMING UP**

---

We have read issues related to gender and employment so far in this Unit. Women face issues related to their employment before entering into work. The most and significant issues related to their work are non recognition of their work. This was discussed elaborately in the section enumeration of work. After entering into employment they face many issues like sexual harassment, double burden, informalization and glass ceiling. We have discussed elaborately in this Unit.

---

## **8.16 KEYWORDS**

---

**Human Resources:** Human Resources are the people who make up the workforce of an organization.

---

## **8.17 REFERENCES**

---

IGNOU. 2014. Gender Issues in Work. Unit 1. Block 1. MGSE 009 Pg. 12-13

IGNOU. .2014. Gender Issues in Work. Unit 13. Block 3. MGSE-009. pg. 76-77 and 81-82.

IGNOU 2015. Women in the Economy, MWG 011 Block 1, unit 1&2, Block 6 units123

IGNOU 2012. Gender and Power, MWG 002 , Block 4, unit 4

Kimmel Michael S .2008. The Gendered society 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

[http://www.fes-india.org/media/GBV-SH/Paper\\_Anagha\\_Sarpotdar.pdf](http://www.fes-india.org/media/GBV-SH/Paper_Anagha_Sarpotdar.pdf)

---

## **8.18 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE**

---

- 1) What are the reasons for not including the contribution of women's work in enumeration?
- 2) List the Visakha Judgment suggestions.
- 3) What are 'Glass Ceiling' and 'Double Burden'?



ignou  
THE PEOPLE'S  
UNIVERSITY