
UNIT 4 GENDER AND WORK*

*(Adopted from Unit 1, Block 1, MGSE-009)

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study of gender issues in work is complex and complicated because of a variety of reasons. When one looks at work from a gender perspective, defining what constitutes work becomes a contested area. Moreover, it is now widely accepted that work is not a gender-neutral space where qualifications, skills and performance determine an individual's entry and progress in any occupation/profession. In the real world, gender plays a crucial and critical role in the options available, choices made, wages earned, and opportunities for advancement available. The situation also dramatically varies across different parts of the world, different regions, economic classes, and sectors.

Gender issues in work gain significance, mainly as global economic restructuring due to rapid-paced technological progress, internationalism of products and trade, and growing informalization of work have seen an increase in women's participation in the labour force. In contrast, men's participation has decreased slightly.

Labour force participation is often seen as the prime indicator (and cause) of changes in women's status as employment determines their access to resources and their ability to make independent decisions. Work plays an essential part in determining women's and men's relative wealth, power and prestige, and health. It has, however, been segregated by gender, which has, in turn, generated gender inequalities in the distribution of resources, benefits and responsibilities. Generally speaking, work has been divided into 'men's work' and 'women's work'. This segregation of work by gender has been practised and accepted through the centuries in all cultures.

Within the labour market, gender segregation is highly complex and is reflected at all levels. However, much of women's work remains unrecognised, uncounted and unpaid, thus invisible: work in the home, in agriculture, food production and the marketing of home-made products, for example. This whole arena of unpaid work is often neglected because, first of all, until recently, most of it was not considered work; and secondly, because it is much more challenging to quantify in terms of time and value. Since women are doing a considerable percentage of all unpaid work, this has led to a severe undervaluation of women's contributions to the society and economy.

This unit tries to bring to the fore the world of work when viewed from a gender perspective.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, You would be able to:

- Analyze the origin and implications of gender segregation of work;
- Discuss types of gender discrimination at the workplace;
- Explain the importance of redefining work from a gender perspective; and
- Discuss the importance of unpaid work.

4.3 THE CHANGING GENDER COMPOSITION OF THE WORK FORCE

Examining work through a gendered lens becomes vital with the advent of a new world of trans-bordered work and has seen a change in the composition of the labour force. Perhaps it could say that the most significant change in the relationship of gender and work is numerical—the enormous shift in the gender composition of the labour force. Women comprise an increasing share of the labour force in almost all regions of the world. During the last few decades, the proportion of economically active women has also increased in unprecedented numbers within the global workforce, while men's participation rate has decreased slightly.

Table 1: Labour force participation rates (percentage)

	Year	Men (%)	Women (%)
World Total	1980	87.5	57.4
	1995	86.0	60.1
	2000	85.5	60.7
	2010	84.6	61.5
	2021		

Source: *The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics*. United Nations

It can be observed from the table above that women's participation in the labour force has been steadily increasing from 57.4% in 1980 to 60.7% in 2000 while there has been a marginal decrease in men's participation rates during the same years. In what manner this decrease in participation has affected men's life is an important research area that requires attention as this trend is projected in 2010.

Women have entered every area of the workforce, and in unprecedented numbers at every level through all the major professions. The impact has been enormous and has altered women's labour market status in recent years. According to World Bank estimates, from 1960 to 1997, women have increased their numbers in the global labour force by 126% [1].

The United Nations statistics surveys indicate that wage and salaried work is the predominant form of employment for women and men in most regions except in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia [2]. India is one such country where women's participation in the workforce remains relatively low, both in absolute and relative terms. As per the recent estimates, 28.7 per cent of women, as against 54.7 per cent of men, participated in the workforce in 2004-05.

Table 2: Women Workforce Participation Rates in India, 1971-2005

Census		NSSO	
Year	%	Year	%
1971	13.9	1972-73	28.2
1981	19.8	1983	21.6
1991	22.3	1993-94	28.6
2001	25.7	2004-05	28.7

Sources: Visaria 1998, p. 24 for Census figures up to 1981, www.Censusindia.net for 2001 provisional figure and NSSO 2006, p. 76 for various years.

The table suggests that a little more than one-fourth of women (28.7 per cent) in India participate in the workforce. This is only marginally higher than the Women Workforce Participation Rates (WWPR) of 28.2 per cent in 1972-73

[3]. As a consequence of this low participation, Indian women continue to form a majority of the Indian poor.

Today, women make up about 42% of the estimated global working population, making them indispensable contributors to national and global economies. However, they are disproportionately engaged in non-standard forms, such as temporary and casual employment, part-time jobs, home-based work, self-employment and working in micro-enterprises.

The main factors leading to the rise in women's participation in the labour force have been: the availability of a wider choice for women; an increased pressure on them to contribute. However, there are many differences between the industrialized and the family income, and often survival; the need for economies for a type of labour that women are industrializing regions, especially in the reasons women work, and the reward they gain from it.

In most industrialized countries, opportunities for women, in general, were restricted until the Second World War and the two decades of rapid economic growth that followed. The expansion of both in services and part-time employment matched women's needs and experience, thereby encouraging their participation. The pattern of working life has seen a tremendous change: before the 1950s, most women workers were young and unmarried or were much older with grown-up children. In later years, economic activity became more continuous—that is, with fewer, and shorter, breaks for raising a family—and it is no longer unusual (or illegal) for married women to be employed [4].

In developing countries, industrialization tends to coexist with agriculture and family businesses. Except for some rapidly industrializing Asian countries, the change has been like women's work, rather than in the number of women working. There has been a significant movement of women from subsistence farming or other unpaid activity to labour in formal and informal sectors. For most women in developing countries, working life has always been longer and more continuous. Women, especially in rural areas, continuously work until the end of their lives, hardly taking a break from their work routine even to have a baby.

At the same time, pressure has increased on women everywhere to make up or provide the family wage. Women have been at the receiving end of the consequences of debt, inflation, economic stagnation and unemployment. Across the globe, as prices rise and incomes fall, women increase their working hours and diversify their activities to ensure the family's survival. There has been an undeniable 'feminization of poverty' more and more women are poor, and more are women. It is estimated that women make up at least 60 per cent of the world's working poor, and as long as there are inequalities in labour markets, women will find it harder than men to escape poverty.

4.4 GENDERED SEGREGATION OF WORK

In all cultures, society has traditionally divided work roles for women and men, and even though, in the last few decades, gender work demarcations have, to a marginal extent, changed, women and men commonly perform different tasks and work in different sectors.

Gender division of labour occurs because a precedent sanctioned by society exists where women are allotted one set of gender roles and men. Gender roles exist because communities and societies have created social norms of behaviour, values, and attitudes that are considered appropriate for women and men and their relations and are perceptions of sex differences. For example, childbearing is a female sex role because men cannot bear children. Although both men and women can rear children, these duties are socially assigned.

On the whole, research evidence on the validity of gender stereotypes suggests that they are often poor representations of individual men or women. For example,

male-female differences in most cognitive abilities and in most basic personality traits (except for traits such as masculinity vs. femininity, which are directly linked to sex and gender) are generally small, in comparison with the variability within genders. In areas where there are relatively large male-female differences (e.g., likelihood of working in child-care settings), it is likely that stereotypes and socially constructed definitions of what men and women should do are themselves significant causes of these differences. Although male-female differences in many areas are relatively small, reliance on stereotypes can lead people to exaggerate these differences and to perceive men's and women's behaviour quite differently, even if the behaviour itself is quite similar across gender lines [5].

There are numerous theories on why sex differences exist. Those who support biological factors argue that people behave as they do primarily because they are biologically male or female. But, especially within work, sex-role behaviour follows no logical pattern based on biological differences. For example, men are less likely than women to change diapers, even though they possess the necessary skills.

Similarly, it is difficult to explain away the hours that fully employed women spend cooking and washing dishes at home as a biological imperative. Gender segregation is a form of social segregation that biology cannot explain.

Gender segregation is the process in which women and men end up in different occupation types so that two different types of labour markets may be said to exist, female and male. This segregation has evolved from the

concept of Gender marking, which occurs by a process in which the qualifications and characteristics of occupation become associated with gender. This gives us an idea of which gender a person should have for a particular job. Gender marking becomes apparent when occupations become female or male. In theory, gender segregation may be seen as a result of gender marking of qualifications, characteristics, occupations and work functions.

Gender segregation is highly complex and is reflected at all levels—horizontal, vertical and internal. Internal gender segregation is when women and men are employed in the same occupation (and in some cases by the same employers) but carry out different work functions. This means that even a gender-integrated occupation may be highly gender-segregated in practice [6].

Horizontal Segregation: Horizontal segregation is when women work in certain occupations and industries and men in others. For example, a large number of women work in services, especially the personal and caring services. In contrast, women's participation in the industrial sector is generally much lower than men's and concentrated in a relatively narrow range of labour-intensive light industries. This matches with the gender roles assigned to men and women by society.

Vertical Segregation: Within the same occupation, men occupy higher managerial positions and women comparatively lower positions; this hierarchical division is referred to as vertical segregation. Even where an occupation is mixed, women are usually in less responsible, less secure and less well-paid jobs. On the other hand, even in occupation numerically dominated by women, men are still often found in management positions, for example, the principal of a primary school.

Worldwide, the proportion of women in managerial and decision making positions is low, the rule being the higher you go up, the fewer the women. In 1994, Susan Bullock wrote that —Women make up less than 5 per cent of the world's heads of state, heads of major corporations and top executives in international organizations; of the top 1,000 corporations in the United States, women head two. Women represent, on average, under 10 per cent of parliament members and 20 per cent of middle-level managers [7]. This trend is pretty much the same today.

Gender segregation is the chief obstacle facing women who seek to enter the labour force. This is a form of discrimination that has led to gender inequality. Reflected in work as an unequal gender division of labour, it encompasses situations in which there is an unequal division of the rewards of labour by sex. The most noticeable pattern in such a division of labour is that women are mostly confined to unpaid domestic work and unpaid food production. In contrast, men dominate in cash crop production and wage employment.

Women are more likely to work in the informal sector within paid work, for example, in domestic work, street vending, and home-based work.

The Informal Sector

The informal sector is often spoken of as a female sector. The extent to which this holds varies across regions and over time. In most countries, women's possibilities for entering the formal sector remain even more limited than men's and the informal sector may be their only option. However, some women opt for or continue in the informal sector not necessarily because of a lack of choice, but because of the flexibility of working arrangements (especially in work timings) and a wider range of opportunities.

Women in self-employment rely on the skills and experience they already have, for example, in food processing and trading, sewing, domestic tasks etc. It is always a crucial balancing act for women where they cannot be abandoned their domestic responsibilities. This leads them to turn their homes into a workplace or their workplace into a home: small children may spend the whole day at a construction site where their mother is working.

It is important to note that gendered division of labour also exists within the informal sector. Women are especially numerous in the lowest-paid and most exploited categories of work: in small enterprises where they may work in sweatshop conditions or as outworkers; in the simplest types of self-employment, with minimal capital, tools, and raw materials; as unpaid family workers; in domestic work; and in commercial sex work. The range of jobs women perform is as limited in the informal sector as it is everywhere.

—It is not that women lack initiative or business ability; on the contrary, the way women can scrape an income together based on almost no inputs, but their labour and ingenuity inspire admiration and respect. But when the margins are too tight, it is almost impossible to turn survival activities into growth [8].

For many years certain assumptions existed, like women either could not do a job or did not need to do it. The consequence of this kind of thinking has been that sex segregation has affected women's and men's concentration in different occupations, industries and levels in workplace hierarchies. This has led to sex discrimination and has perpetuated gender inequality within the world of 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. Women's participation in the labour force has been steadily increasing. Discuss.

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2. What do we mean by gendered segregation of work?

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3. What is Gender marking? What do we mean by horizontal, vertical and internal segregation of work?

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4.5 GENDER DISCRIMINATION AT THE WORKPLACE

Gender discrimination includes behaviours occurring in the workplace that limit the target person’s ability to enter, remain in, succeed in, or progress in a job and that are primarily the result of the target person’s gender [9].

4.5.1 Wage Gap: Income Discrimination

One of the direct consequences of gender segregation in paid work is wage differentials. Gender in pay is a definitive sign of inequality at the workplace. In most countries, equal pay based difference legislation exists; however, the gender segregation of work allows the easy application of different remuneration rates to ‘men’s work’ and ‘women’s work’.

Women tend to be in jobs that are poorly paid and lack a career structure; even in mixed workforce jobs, women are more likely to be at lower responsibility levels. Further, there is a high percentage of women who work on a part-time or temporary basis. Some other factors that contribute to women’s lower wages include the constraints on women that do not allow them to do overtime, night shifts, interruption due to pregnancy that affects seniority, etc. Trade Unions have usually failed to take up these concerns because they have been male-dominated. These issues have not yet entered the mainstream of their plan.

Women's access to paid work is crucial to their efforts for economic equality and their sense of self and well being. But women's paid work is generally valued as less important than men's. Women still earn considerably less than men and often find themselves in low-status jobs with few benefits. Male-dominated professions tend to have higher wages; female-dominated professions tend to have lower wages.

It is only a matter of observing what happens to a particular occupation that faces a change in its gender composition to study the impact of gender segregation on wages. For example, clerical work was once a practically all-male labour force that paid reasonably well as it was considered a highly skilled occupation. Today the gender distribution has changed in many countries and, most clerical workers are female. As a result, clerical work was re-evaluated as less demanding of skill and less valuable to an organization; thus, workers' wages fell[10].

The exact opposite process may be observed with relations to the occupation of the computer programmer. When this occupation was in its nascent stage, women were hired as keypunch operators because the job seemed to resemble clerical work. After programming was recognized as —intellectually demanding, requiring complex skills in abstract logic, and mathematics etc., all of which, sociologist Katharine Donato observed, women used to perform in their work, it became attractive to men, who began to enter the field and thus drove wages up considerably[11].

4.5.2 GLASS CEILING

More women are hired at the lower rungs of an organization. The low status of this work means women exert less control over their work environment and have lower decision making powers. There is persistent discrimination against women in promotion which keeps women in low wage positions with little opportunities for upward mobility. Women thus face a double obstacle in attempting to achieve workplace equality. The first is that of centuries-old gender ideologies that bar them from entering well-paying occupations to be pushed into less-paying sectors of the economy. The second obstacle arises — ‘when they enter those well-paying fields, they are prevented from moving up. This is what is known as the glass-ceiling’[12].

Men sometimes resent assertive, unemotional women and perceive them to be acting like men. Yet, men also judge women who are passive and emotional as unsuitable for management. (Kanter 1977a). Women often have to walk a fine line and work towards being perceived as demanding and yet ‘feminine’ to be accepted as a ‘good manager’. It has been seen in several cases when men and women who started on a career path together find themselves in very different levels after ten years. In most cases, men will be at a more senior level than women.

Why are women underrepresented in management? Some reasons for women are under- representation in senior positions:

- Women themselves: Lack of education and training; lack of a continuous

career due to breaks for child-rearing, and a preference for part-time working; lack of the confidence or drive to succeed.

- Personnel policies and organizational career structures that are shaped by the traditions of a male career: lack of provision for career breaks and re-entry; lack of appropriate provision for women's management development; and lack of provision for flexible contracts at higher levels.
- Organizational climate and the attitudes of senior management: lack awareness of the pervasiveness of masculine assumptions; lack of interest in the need for strategic change to increase the utilization of female resources; and lack of support for the few women who do succeed. (Adapted from *The Journal of General Management*)

4.5.3 Sexual Harassment

According to the EEOC, sexual harassment is defined as follows[13]

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. (EEOC, 1980, p. 33).

While there are instances of female harassers, sexual harassment cases predominantly involve male harassers and female victims. Victims of sexual harassment may experience several negative consequences such as lowered productivity, lowered self-esteem, absenteeism, depression etc.

In India, the Supreme Court judgment of 1997, popularly known as the Vishakha Guidelines, was the landmark judgment. The court ruled that sexual harassment at the workplace is a human rights issue and not merely a criminal one. The judgement clearly states that sexual harassment includes physical contact, sexually coloured remarks, unwelcome verbal or non-verbal communications of a sexual nature, and so on. It also defined the workplace in a broader sense, rather than limiting it to a particular geographical area. However, even today, cases of sexual harassment essentially go unreported as women do not want to be seen as —trouble makers‖ or attract unnecessary attention. This is accentuated by the fact that the organisation rarely takes strict action, or in fact, any action against the perpetrator. Many times, women prefer to leave a job rather than register a complaint of sexual harassment.

4.5.4 Double Burden

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

Even though children are tomorrow’s workers and citizens, they are seen today as the private and personal responsibility of their families. The fact that child care has been made widely available under certain circumstances shows that its provision is primarily a matter of employment policy and political will or lack of it. During the Second World War, for example, facilities became available as increasing numbers of women were needed to work in factories and essential services[14].

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. State some consequences of Gender segregation in paid work.

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2. Discuss the issue of income discrimination briefly.

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3. Why are women underrepresented in management?

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4.6 WOMEN AND WORK IN RURAL AREAS

Roughly 3 out of 4 women worldwide live in rural areas, the majority of them working in agriculture or related activities. Women grow crops and pick fruit and tea; look after cattle and poultry; weave, spin, and make pottery; and sell goods. This is usually unpaid workers on family farms or enterprises; in most cases where they are engaged in paid labour, it is casual, temporary or seasonal. Though women's waged employment has been increasing in many Asian countries, their wages remain much lower than those earned by men.

“Women directly produce about half the world's food, and they process and prepare almost all of it” [15]. The problem of balancing multiple tasks is accentuated in rural women, most of them being involved in food production for family consumption and sale or exchange. Many work on others' farms for wages. They also trade or make handicrafts, and of course, there is no respite from the daily domestic chores.

Rural women also bear the brunt of several other factors such as very early marriages, more children and poorer health. Both infant and maternal mortality are higher in rural areas. School enrolment is lower; In India, for example, the chances of a rural girl child being enrolled in a school and continuing education beyond class 8 are much lower than those of her urban counterpart. Rural women have more inadequate wages, more insecure employment, and longer hours of work. Customs and traditional practices often have a tighter hold—in some cases, directly threatening women's health, social status and freedom.

- Official statistics on the participation of women in food and agricultural production are still not available with the required amount of detail. This means that food and agricultural policies and rural development programmes are gender-neutral and do not adequately address the concerns and needs of women. Planners tend to underestimate or ignore. The nature and scope of women's separate and autonomous operations;
- the extent of the reliance of men on women's labour and inputs; and
- the uneven distribution of income and resources within the household [16].

4.7 REDEFINING WORK

In our discussion of work-related statistics, we must first of all define what constitutes work. Is work really only that which is done outside the home and that is paid for? What about those many tasks that women do in and near their homes? In rural areas, women and girls walk long distances to fetch water; but because this does not fall in the purview of 'economic activity,' it was not previously categorised as work.

Women, do both productive and reproductive work, and these categories often merge into each other. In fact their reproductive work contributes to production. The work that women put in subsidizes the production and

maintenance of the work-force. Because women 'labour for love', society in general and employers in particular are saved the expense of the upkeep of the workforce, either in terms of providing communal services— canteens, child care, laundries – or in terms of paying wages high enough to cover the real costs. Their 'non-productive' work in fact makes an enormous economic contribution[17].

It has now been acknowledged that by not recognising women's multiple activities, gender inequality is being institutionalized and perpetuated. It is important to recognize and value not only the economic contributions of women, but also their social contributions-child care, looking after the elderly and sick, and the numerous other tasks they perform on a daily basis for their family and community.

There is now a much wider acknowledgement of the scope and significance of women's work, and the need for rigorous gender analysis. The absence of sex disaggregated statistics for employment and unemployment; the use of occupational categories that overlook many of women's activities, skills and contributions; and broadening the definition of what constitutes economic activity (including cultural, regional and seasonal variations)—these issues have entered the mainstream consciousness of policy makers and planners, and are beginning to be addressed.

The undercounting of female economic activity and lack of mechanisms for measuring unpaid work has received deserved attention. Some of the steps that have been taken in this direction include: an International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention on labour statistic (1985); revising to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO); and efforts by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to change the guidelines for the World Programme of Agricultural Censuses [18].

In India, in censuses prior to 2001, women's economic pursuits were not recorded/ reported adequately, resulting in low Female Work Participation Rate (FWPR). In the 2001 Census, several measures were taken to address the shortcomings by taking measures for gender sensitization of both the collectors of data and the people in general.

What defines valuable work?

Judgments about what is valuable, good, and important in a society usually reflect the preferences, biases, experiences, and values of the groups in society that have the most power and influence.... It should come as no surprise that the activities which are most valuable or seen as most important in the workplace (e.g., leading others, exercising authority, controlling resources, dealing with things rather than people) are all consistent with the male stereotype, whereas activities that are seen as less valuable (e.g., dealing with children, helping others) are often consistent with the female stereotype. The workplace has historically been the domain of males, and widely accepted definitions of the types of work that are more or less valuable are

value judgments that reflect the preferences, experiences, and biases of males.

Judgments about the value of different types of work are essentially subjective, and as societies change and evolve, these judgments may also change. There often is little about the work itself that determines its

value... Whether –women’s work will be perceived as more valuable in the future remains to be seen [19].

Since a lot of the work that women do is unpaid, it is important to understand what unpaid work is, and how it can be measured.

4.8 UNPAID WORK

All work is not paid for. All people who perform work, paid or unpaid are economically active, but this is only a recent understanding. A satisfactory definition for unpaid work is yet to emerge because much of what it comprises is not reflected in labour statistics and therefore is invisible.

The concern for developing an inclusive understanding of what comprised unpaid work is now reflected in the System of National Accounts (SNA) production boundary as follows:

Unpaid work includes unpaid activities such as:

- **Work done in a family enterprise or agricultural holding on an unpaid basis**
- **Primary production of goods primarily for own-household consumption including subsistence farming**— example: preparing the soil, sowing, planting, and harvesting crops; gathering fruit, wild fruit, medicinal and other plants; tending, feeding or hunting animals mainly to obtain meat, milk, hair, skin or other products in or around a household compound; gathering firewood and fetching water; breeding or catching fish and cultivating or gathering other forms of aquatic life; and storing and carrying out some basic processing of products.
- Production of services for income and other production of goods that are not related to formal employment. Examples include: work done on a contractual basis on residential premises, as a pieceworker or outworker and assisting a family member or relative with such work; building shelters and making simple tools, clothes and utensils for household use;

What is still left out is:

- **Meal preparation, laundry and clothes care, household maintenance, management and shopping for own household**
- **Care of children, the sick, elderly and disabled for own household**
- **Volunteer community services and help to other households or people**, which are provided on a ‘voluntary basis’ either directly or

4.8.1 Measuring Unpaid Work

An attempt has to be made to add value to all work that has been left out of labour statistics. But we lack universally accepted ways to measure and value unpaid work, without which governments continue to use incomplete information when making fiscal and policy decisions. Since unpaid work is mostly invisible, it is often excluded from money transactions. According to calculations by the World Bank, \$11 trillion –earned by women and \$5 trillion –earned by men are missing from the global economy each year, representing the value of unpaid work as well as the underpayment and undervaluing of women’s work[21].

Measuring and valuing unpaid work in national statistics was one of the main issues at the fourth world conference on women at Beijing in 1995. It became clear improving data on the full contribution of women and men to the economy required new accounting and the implementation of time- use data—that is measuring work by time allocation. Time- use data provide detailed information on how individuals spend their time, on a daily or weekly basis. They reveal the details of an individual’s life with a combination of specificity and comprehensiveness not achieved in any other type of social survey. Hirway[22] cited the key contributions of time-use data in fostering a better understanding of the economy and society. Time-use statistics can be useful because they move away from the vexed questions of economic contribution and occupational categories, and look at what people actually do: they measure time spent on all activities, productive and reproductive, and the classifications used are not based on occupational groupings.

A major breakthrough occurred when Canada’s 1996 Census became the first to collect data on unpaid work. It divided unpaid work into three categories: housework, care of children, and care and assistance to seniors but left out volunteer work with community or charity organizations. However, it was an important first step in measuring and recognizing women's unpaid work. One of the interesting findings of this census was that unpaid work is perhaps the biggest contribution that women make to the economy as most of it is performed by women.

A significant number of countries have chosen to adopt *time-use surveys* to measure unpaid work. Japan, Australia, Mali, Morocco, South Africa, Indonesia, India, Philippines, Palestine, Cuba, Ecuador, and many European countries have designed or undertaken surveys, while many other countries have expressed interest.

Efforts are now being made to improve the methodology: it has been recognized that it lacks precision in breaking down different activities, and that underestimation persists both of time spent and of the range of tasks undertaken.

4.8.2 Gender segregation of Labour in unpaid work

Gender division of labour is as evident within the household as it is within paid employment. It is true that not all women undertake paid work, but few can escape household labour. Irrespective of the biological or the patriarchal explanation for the gendered distribution of unpaid labour, the bulk of unpaid work is undertaken by women. (See table 3) and therefore has affected the well being of women more than men.

Unpaid work, such as domestic work or work based in homes, entails no protective legislation, no social security, and is assigned low social status. This lack of income seriously affects women's ability to improve their lives.

The lack of value assigned to unpaid work has serious implications both for policy and for quality of life, affecting the persistent gender wage gap, high poverty rates among single mothers and their children, the decreasing time parents spend with their own children, the decline in home-cooking and its health consequences, and the growing time stress that comes from the struggle to juggle job and household responsibilities.

Table 3 More women workers than men workers are unpaid: percentage of labour force who are contributing family worker (a), 1990/ 1997

	Women	Men
Africa		
Northern Africa	25	7
Southern Africa	27	14
Rest of sub-Saharan Africa (b)	35	18
Latin America and the Caribbean		
Caribbean	2	2
Central America	7	6
South America	7	3
Asia		
Eastern Asia	8	1
Southeastern Asia	25	9
Southern Asia	40	11
Western Asia (b)	34	7
Developed regions		
Eastern Europe	6	4
Western Europe	4	1
Other developed regions	3	1

Source: Prepared by the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat from ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (Geneva, 1999 table 3.)

a) Sometimes referred to as -unpaid family workers

b) Sparse data for this sub region: average should be interpreted with caution.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

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. What is Unpaid labour?

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2. How can we measure unpaid work?

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3. Discuss gender segregation in unpaid work.

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4.9 LET US SUM UP

Society's perception of gender roles can influence the actual disparities in paid and unpaid work like the sharing or balancing of time allocation and rewards of labour between women and men. These perceptions impact the lives of men and women.

4.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the valuation women's work.
2. Define Work.
3. What is unpaid work?
4. What is paid work?
5. Discuss about the impact of Glass ceiling on women's work briefly.

4.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. Examining work through a gendered lens becomes important with the advent of a new world of work that is trans-bordered and has seen a change in the composition of the labour force. Perhaps it could be said that the most significant change in the relationship of gender and work is numerical—the enormous shift in the gender composition of the labour force. Women comprise an increasing share of the labour force in almost all regions of the world. During the last few decades the proportion of economically active women has also increased in unparalleled numbers within the global workforce, while men's participation rate has been decreasing slightly.

It can be observed that women's participation in the labour force has been steadily increasing from 57.4% in 1980 to 60.7% in 2000 while there has been a marginal decrease in men's participation rates during the same years. In what manner this decrease in participation has affected men's life is an important research area that requires attention as this trend is projected in 2010 as well.

Women have entered every area of the work force, and in unprecedented numbers at every level through all the major professions. The impact has been enormous and has altered women's labour market status in recent years. According to World Bank estimates, from 1960 to 1997, women have increased their numbers in the global labour force by 126%.¹

The United Nations statistics surveys indicate that wage and salaried work is the predominant form of employment for both women and men in most regions except in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia.² India is one such country where women's participation in the workforce

continues to remain quite low, both in absolute and relative terms. As per the recent estimates, 28.7 percent of women as against 54.7 percent of men participated in workforce in 2004-05.

Today, women make up about 42% of the estimated global working population, making them indispensable as contributors to national and global economies. However, they are disproportionately engaged in non-standard forms of work, such as temporary and casual employment, part-time jobs, home-based work, self employment and working in micro-enterprises. The main factors leading to the rise in women's participation in the labour force have been: the availability of a wider choice for women; an increased pressure on them to contribute to the family income, and often survival; the need of economies for a type of labour that women can provide. However, there are many differences between the industrialized and industrializing regions, especially in the reasons why women work, and the reward they gain from it.

In most industrialized countries, opportunities for women in general were restricted until the Second World War and the two decades of rapid economic growth that followed. The expansion both in services and in part-time employment matched women's needs and experience, thereby encouraging their participation. The pattern of working life has seen a tremendous change: before the 1950s, most women workers were young and unmarried, or were much older with grown up children. In later years, economic activity became more continuous—that is, with fewer, and shorter, breaks for raising a family—and it is no longer unusual (or illegal) for married women to be employed.⁴

In developing countries, industrialization tends to coexist with agriculture, and family businesses. With the exception of some rapidly industrializing Asian countries, the change has been in the nature of women's work, rather than in the number of women working. There has been a significant movement of women from subsistence farming or other unpaid activity to labour in both the formal and informal sectors. For most women in developing countries, a working life has always been longer, and more continuous. Women, especially in rural areas, continuously work until the end of their lives, hardly taking a break from their work routine even to have a baby.

At the same time, pressure has increased on women everywhere to make up or provide the family wage. Women have been at the receiving end of the consequences of debt, inflation, economic stagnation and unemployment. Across the globe, as prices rise and incomes fall, women increase their working hours and diversify their activities to ensure the family's survival. There has been an undeniable 'feminization of poverty'; more and more women are poor, and more of the poor are women. It is estimated that women make up at least 60 per cent of the world's working poor and as long as there are inequalities in labour

markets, women will find it harder than men to escape poverty.

2. Gender segregation is the process in which women and men end up in different types of occupation, so that two different types of labour markets may be said to exist, female and male. This segregation has evolved from the concept of Gender marking which takes place by a process in which the qualifications and characteristics of an occupation become associated with gender. This gives us an idea of which gender a person should have for a particular job. Gender marking becomes apparent when occupations become female or male. In theory, gender segregation may be seen as a result of gender marking of qualifications, characteristics, occupations and work functions.
3. This segregation has evolved from the concept of Gender marking which takes place by a process in which the qualifications and characteristics of an occupation become associated with gender. This gives us an idea of which gender a person should have for a particular job. Gender marking becomes apparent when occupations become female or male. In theory, gender segregation may be seen as a result of gender marking of qualifications, characteristics, occupations and work functions. Gender segregation is highly complex and is reflected at all levels— horizontal, vertical and internal. Internal gender segregation is when women and men are employed in the same occupation (and in some cases by the same employers) but carry out different work functions. This means that even an apparently gender-integrated occupation may actually be highly gender- segregated in practice.⁶

Horizontal Segregation: Horizontal segregation is when women work in certain occupations and industries and men in others. For example, a large number of women work in services, especially the personal and caring services, while women's participation in the industrial sector is generally much lower than men's, and concentrated in a relatively narrow range of labour- intensive light industries. This matches with the gender roles assigned to men and women by society.

Vertical Segregation: Within the same occupation, men tend to occupy the higher managerial positions and women comparatively lower positions; this hierarchical division is referred to as vertical segregation. Even where an occupation is to some extent mixed, women are usually in the less responsible, less secure and less well- paid jobs. On the other hand, even in occupation numerically dominated by women, men are still often found in the management positions; for example, the principal of a primary school.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. Wage Gap, Double burden, Glass Ceiling and Sexual Harassment
2. One of the direct consequences of gender segregation in paid work is

wage differentials. Gender based difference in pay is a definitive sign of inequality at the workplace. In most countries, equal pay legislation exists; however, the gender segregation of work makes allows the easy application of different remuneration rates to men's work' and women's work'. Women tend to be in jobs that are poorly paid and lack a career structure; even in mixed workforce jobs, women are more likely to be at the levels of lower responsibility. Further, there are a high percentage of women who work on a part-time or temporary basis. Some other factors that contribute to women's lower wages include the constraints on women that do not allow them to do overtime, night shifts etc., the interruption due to pregnancy that affects accumulation of seniority etc. Trade Unions have usually failed to take up these concerns because they have been male-dominated, and these issues have not yet entered the mainstream of their agenda.

3. The entry of women onto 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'. Due to this women are underrepresented.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1. Unpaid work, such as domestic work or work based in homes, entails no protective legislation, no social security, and is assigned low social status. This lack of income seriously affects women's ability to improve their lives.
2. A major breakthrough occurred when Canada's 1996 Census became the first to collect data on unpaid work. It divided unpaid work into three categories: housework, care of children, and care and assistance to seniors but left out volunteer work with community or charity organizations. However, it was an important first step in measuring and recognizing women's unpaid work. One of the interesting findings of this census was that unpaid work is perhaps the biggest contribution that women make to the economy as most of it is performed by women. A significant number of countries have chosen to adopt *time-use surveys* to measure unpaid work. Japan, Australia, Mali, Morocco, South Africa, Indonesia, India, Philippines, Palestine, Cuba, Ecuador, and many European countries have designed or undertaken surveys. while many other countries have expressed interest. Efforts are now being made to improve the methodology: it has been recognized that it lacks precision in breaking down different activities, and that underestimation persists both of time spent and of the range of tasks undertaken.
3. Gender division of labour is as evident within the household as it is within paid employment. It is true that not all women undertake paid work, but few can escape household labour. Irrespective of the biological or the patriarchal explanation for the gendered distribution of unpaid

labour, the bulk of unpaid work is undertaken by women. (See table 3) and therefore has affected the well being of women more than men.

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