UNIT 8 GENDER DISTRIBUTION IN ORGANIZATIONS

Structure

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Objectives

8.3 Organizational Social Structure and Design

8.4 Theory of Gendered Organizations

8.5 History of feminist debate on Organizations

8.6 Feminist Analysis of Organizations

8.7 Organization as gendered processes

8.8 What does it mean when one refers to the fact the organizations are gendered?

8.9 Organizational Control, Gender and the body

8.10 How is this hierarchy maintained?

8.11 Inequality regimes

8.12 Gender as the base of inequality

8.13 Shape and degree of inequality

8.14 Organizing processes that produce inequality

8.15 The visibility of inequalities

8.16 Control and compliance

8.17 Globalization, restructuring and change in inequality regime

8.18 Summing Up: Caste, Race, Gender and Authority in the workplace

8.19 Glossary
8.1 INTRODUCTION

Work of the organizations is concrete forms of society’s systematic efforts to realize its various goals and objectives. Society fashions them in its own image, with the prototypical properties of its culture. Organizations, in other words, are like mini-cultures within a larger culture, although in the process of formation they acquire additional properties that are necessary to enable them to realize their objectives. They too have (a) physical artifacts in terms of structure and technology; (b) systems and procedures; (c) social and work relationships; (d) patterns of behaviour of employees; and (e) underlying all these, a set of values, beliefs and assumptions about how people organize themselves and relate with each other and perform their roles.

Sinha (1990) identifies the following components of organizational culture:

- Organizational mission, goals, objectives, and underlying philosophy of management.
- Organizational structure, systems, work forms, technology, financial resources and other physical artifacts.
- Role relations, power and authority structures, leadership and other aspects of work and social relationships.
- Employees’ work and non-work behavior inside the organization.
- Employees’ beliefs and values regarding work compared with other life roles (such as beliefs, and values regarding family, society, leisure, community and religion).

In this Unit, we will look into Organizational Social Structure and Design, Theory of Gendered Organizations, History of feminist debate on Organizations, Feminist Analysis of Organizations, Organization as gendered processes, What does it mean when one refers to the fact the organizations are gendered?, Organizational Control, Gender and the body, How is this hierarchy maintained?, Inequality regimes, Gender as the base of inequality, Shape and degree of
inequality, Organizing processes that produce inequality, The visibility of inequalities and Control and compliance.

8.2 OBJECTIVES
After studying this Unit, you would be able to

- discuss the theory of gendered organizations;
- analyze the feminists debate on gendered organizations;
- examine the feminist analysis of organizations; and
- explain the meaning of gendered organization.

8.3 ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND DESIGN
Organizational social structure is created by patterns of interaction and relationship through which the work of an organization is accomplished and its purpose realized. Organizations are structured by relationships that grow from interactions the repetition of which provide stability and help to ensure cooperation. In most general terms, organizational design concerns creating structures that maximize organizational performance in order to be efficient and effective in achieving organizational goals, while minimizing the need to use scarce resources. The basic idea most organizational designs use is that a structure is effective if it focuses the attention of employees on the activities for which they are responsible, and promotes communication of critical information across the organization. It is efficient if it minimizes the time, effort, capital and other resource inputs needed to meet goals while maximizing output.

Social structure defines the distribution of organizational power (e.g. the authority to assign tasks and determine reward and promotion opportunities), even the most rational intentions to design an effective and efficient organization are affected by the desire to control others and the anxiety of being controlled. Max Weber (1864-1920), believed that the main components of organization’s social structure include: hierarchy, division of labour and departmentalization. Feminists have long argued that one cannot perceive organizations as ‘neutral’ of power and authority but that it is a ‘gendered construct’.

8.4 THEORY OF GENDERED ORGANIZATIONS
Acker (1990) argues that unless one perceives the organization as a ‘gendered construct’ it is impossible to understand the nuances of gender hierarchies within organizations. Acker argues that organizational structure is, not gender neutral; on the contrary assumptions about gender underlie the documents and contracts used to construct organizations and to provide the commonsense ground for theorizing about them. Organizations structure themselves by obscuring the embodied nature of work. Abstract jobs and hierarchies, common concepts in organizational thinking, assume a disembodied and universal worker. This worker is usually a man, men’s bodies, sexuality, and relationships to procreation and paid work are subsumed in the image of the worker. Images of men’s bodies and masculinity pervade organizational processes, marginalizing women and contributing to the maintenance of gender segregation in organizations.

The positing of gender-neutral and disembodied organizational structures and work relations is part of the larger strategy of control in industrial capitalist societies, which are built upon a deeply embedded substructure of gender difference. Thus the presence of hierarchies within organizations necessitates building up of a systematic theory of gender and organizations. What would it do?

- Such a theory would help one to demystify the gender segregation of work, including divisions between paid and unpaid work, which is partly created through organizational practices.
- Organizational processes also create gender segregation related to status and income inequality between men and women. Theorization would help us best to understand these processes for unlocking systems of gender inequality.
- Organizations are spaces where cultural images of gender are invented, nurtured and reproduced. Theorization would help one to unravel the knowledge of cultural production, whereby it would be easy to understand gender construction within organizations.
- Identity creation is also part of organizational process, especially notion of masculinity. A gender nuanced theorization of organizations would facilitate comprehension about how dominant identities are created and legitimized.
Gender theorization of organizations would also help one to realize the feminist project of making large-scale organizations more democratic and more supportive of human goals.

### 8.5 History of Feminist Debate on Organizations

The early radical feminist critique of sexism denounced bureaucracy and hierarchy as male created and male-dominated structures of control that oppress women. Part of the feminist project was to create non-hierarchical, egalitarian organizations that would demonstrate possibilities of non-patriarchal ways of working. Although many feminist organizations survived, few retained this radical-democratic form. An analysis of the feminist efforts to create alternative work forms was not followed by debates about the feasibility of non-patriarchal non-hierarchical organization or the relationship of organizations and gender. Such a debate was very critical as it was recognized that women were failing to cooperate with each other, taking power and using it in oppressive ways, creating their own structures of status and reward, and thus were at odds with other images of women as nurturing and supportive.

It was recognized that critical perspectives on organizations, although focusing on control, power, exploitation, and how these relations might be changed, have ignored women and have been insensitive to implications of gender. Further, the available discourses conceptualize organizations as gender neutral. Popular approaches to organizations focus on the male, abstract intellectual domain and take as reality the world as seen from that standpoint. Since men in organizations take their behavior and perspectives to represent the human, the organizational structures and processes are theorized as gender neutral.

What occurs is a process whereby organization structure separates itself from its people. Thus when it is acknowledged that women and men are affected differently by organizations, it is argued that gendered attitudes and behavior are brought (and contaminate) essentially gender-neutral structures.

Sexuality is another discourse which is ignored by the existing theories of organizations; as they believe that gender neutral structure is also asexual. If sexuality is a core component of the production of gender identity, gender images and gender inequality, organizational theory that is blind to sexuality does not provide a framework to understand gender domination. Catherine Mackinnon’s (1982) compelling argument that sexual domination of women is embedded within legal organizations needs to be taken into account. One should be careful of perceiving
behaviours such as sexual harassment as deviations of gendered actors, but should view it as components of organizational structure.

8.6 FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONS

Rosabeth Kanter as early in 1977, in her book Men and Women of the Corporation argues that gender differences in organizational behavior are due to the structure rather than to characteristics of women and men as individuals. Further argues that the problems faced by women in large organizations are the result of their structural positions, crowded in dead-end-jobs at the bottom and exposed as tokens at the top. Gender enters the picture through organizational roles that ‘carry characteristic images of the kinds of people that should occupy them’.

Kanter recognizes the presence of gender in early models of organizations:

A ‘masculine ethic’ of rationality and reason can be identified in the early image of managers. This ‘masculine ethic’ elevates the traits assumed to belong to men with educational advantages to necessities for effective organizations: to tough-minded approach to problem; analytic abilities to abstract and plan; a capacity to set aside personal, emotional considerations in the interests of task-accomplishment; a cognitive superiority in problem-solving and decision making (1974, 43).

Kanter wanted to address the central problem of gender neutrality and thereby reiterates that while organizations were being defined as sex-neutral machines; masculine principles were dominating their authority structures. But Acker argues that despite such a path breaking analysis, it was the organizational structure, and not gender that was the focus of her analysis. Kanter posits gender as standing outside of structure, and does not address the issues of masculinity and organizations.

According to Acker theories with regard to gender and organizations have been trapped within the constraints of definitions of the theoretical domain that cast organizations as gender neutral and asexual. These theories take us only part of the way to understanding how deeply embedded gender is in organizations. Further one needs to recognize that this process of gender segregation is constantly occurring; that the gender identity of jobs and occupations is repeatedly reproduced, often in new forms. The reconstruction of gender segregation is an integral part of the dynamic of technological and organizational change. Individual men and particular groups of men do not
always win in these processes, but masculinity always seems to symbolize self-respect for men at the bottom and power for men at the top, while confirming for both their gender’s superiority. Theories that posit organizations and bureaucracy as gender neutral cannot adequately account for this continual gendered structuring.

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. Examine the feminist analysis of organization.

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8.7 ORGANIZATION AS GENDERED PROCESSES

The idea that social structure and social processes are gendered has slowly emerged in diverse areas of feminist discourse. Feminists have posited gender as an analytic category to explain and make sense of the persistence through histories, societies and cultures of the subordination of women. Two aspects of gender is critical to any analytical perception of it: one that gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between sexes and two it is a primary way of signifying relationships of power.

Approaches to the study of waged work, particularly studies of the labour process, perceive organizations as gendered and locate organizations are one intertwined with the production of gender and class relations (and I may add caste within the Indian context). Acker argues that the structure of the labour market, relations in the workplace, the control of the work process, and the underlying wage relation are always affected by symbols of gender, processes of gender identity, and material inequalities, between men and women. These processes are related to and powerfully support the reproduction of the class (and caste) structure.

8.8 WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN ONE REFERS TO THE FACT THE ORGANIZATIONS ARE GENDERED?

When it is referred that an organization is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine. Gender is an integral
part of the system and processes, and this gendering Scott (1986) argues occurs through five interacting processes:

- First is the construction of divisions on the lines of gender - divisions of labour, allowed behaviours, of locations in physical space, of power, including the institutionalized means of maintaining the divisions in the structures of labour markets, family, and the state. Although there are great variations in the variations in the patterns and extent of gender division, men are almost always in the highest positions of organizational power. Managers decisions often initiate gender divisions and organizational practices maintain them - although they take on new forms with changes in the technology and the labour process. Introduction of new technology was accompanied by reorganization of gendered division of labour that left the technology in men’s control and maintained the definition of skilled work as men’s work and unskilled work as women’s work.

- Second is the construction of symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce or sometimes oppose those divisions. These have many sources or forms in language, ideology, popular and high culture, dress, the press, television. For example the image of a top manager or a business leader is an image of an successful forceful masculinity, where men’s workers images of masculinity linked gender with their technical skills and strong authoritative personality.

- Interactions between men and women, women and women, men and men also produce gendered social structures, in terms of relations of dominance and subordination. Men are the actors, women the emotional support.

- Fourth these processes help to produce gendered components of individual identity, which may include consciousness of the existence of the other three aspects of gender, such as, in organizations, choice of appropriate work, language use, clothing and presentation of self as a gendered member of an organization.

- Finally gender is implicated in the fundamental, ongoing processes of creating and conceptualizing social structures. Gender is obviously a basic constitutive element in family and kinship, but, less obviously; it helps to frame the underlying relations of other structures, including complex organizations. Gender is a constitutive element in organizational logic, or the underlying assumptions and practices that construct the most contemporary organizations. One needs to be sensitive to the gendered substructures that
get produced and reproduced in practical work activities and sometimes even in the writings of organizational theorists who perceive organizations as gender neutral.

In order to analyse the gendered structure within organizations, one should focus on the organizational logic. This organizational logic has material forms such as written work rules, labour contracts, managerial directives and other documentary tools for running large organizations, including systems of job evaluations.

Job evaluation is a management tool used in every industrial country, capitalist and socialist, to rationalize the organizational hierarchy and to help in setting equitable wages (International Labour Office 1986). In such an evaluation, the content of jobs is described and jobs are compared on criteria of knowledge, skill, complexity, efforts and working conditions. One needs to recognize that rules of job evaluation, which help to determine pay differences between jobs, are not simply a compilation of manager’s values or sets of beliefs, but are the underlying logic or organization that provides at least part of the blueprint for its structure. Every time that job is used, that structure gets created or reinforced.

What is a job? The job is the basic unit in a work organization’s hierarchy, a description of a set of tasks, competencies and responsibilities represented as a position on an organizational chart. The rationale for evaluating jobs in theory is devoid of actual workers. What is argued is that job evaluation evaluates jobs, not their incumbents. The intent is to assess the characteristics of the job, not their incumbents. Further every job has a place in the hierarchy, another essential element in the organizational logic, which needs to be accepted as natural by the workers and the managers. Thus organizational logic assumes congruence between responsibility, job complexity and hierarchical position. For example a lower level position the level of most jobs filled predominantly by women, must have equally low levels of complexity and responsibility. Levels of skills, complexity and responsibility, all used in constructing hierarchy are conceptualized as existing independently of any concrete worker.

In organizational logic, both jobs and hierarchies are abstract categories that have no occupants, no human bodies, no gender. However, an abstract job can exist, can be transformed into a concrete, only if there is a worker. In the organizational logic, filling the abstract job is a disembodied worker who exists only for the work. The closest the disembodied worker doing abstract job comes to a real worker is the male worker whose life centers on his full-time, lifelong job, while his wife or another women takes care of his personal needs and his children.
What is interesting is that the woman worker assumed to have legitimate obligations other than those required by the job, did not fit with the abstract job. The concept of a ‘job’ is thus implicitly a gendered concept, even though organizational logic presents it as gender neutral. A ‘job’ already contains the gender-based division of labour and the separation between the public and the private sphere. The concept of ‘job’ assumes a particular gendered organization of domestic life and social production. Corresponding to this fact is the argument that therefore hierarchies are gendered because they also are constructed on these underlying assumptions. Those who are committed to paid employment are ‘naturally’ more suited to responsibility and authority; those who must divide their commitments are in the lower ranks. The gender neutral status of jobs and of organizational theories of which it is a part depend upon the assumption that the worker is abstract, disembodied, although in fact and actuality both the concept of a ‘job’ and real works are deeply gendered and ‘bodied’. The worker with ‘a job’ is the same universal ‘individual’ who in actual social reality is a man. The concept of a universal worker excludes and marginalizes women who cannot, almost by definition, achieve the qualities of a real worker because to do so is to become like a man.

8.9 ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL, GENDER AND THE BODY
The abstract, bodiless worker, who occupies the abstract, gender-neutral job has no sexuality, no emotions and does not procreate. The absence of sexuality, emotionality and procreation in organizational logic and organizational theory is an additional element that both obscures and helps to reproduce the underlying gender relations. Foucault (1979) suggests that silence on sexuality within organizations has its roots in the development of large all-male organizations that are primary locations of societal power.

In a review of historical evidence on sexuality in early modern organizations, Burrell (1984, 98) suggests that ‘the suppression of sexuality is one of the first tasks of the bureaucracy sets itself.’ Long before the emergence of the very large factory of the nineteenth century, other large organizations such as armies and monasteries, which had allowed certain kind of limited participation of women, were more and more excluding women and attempting to banish sexuality in the interests of control of the members and the organizations activities. The attempts to banish sexuality from the workplace were part of the wider process that differentiated the home, the location of legitimate sexual activity, from the place of capitalist production. *The concept of the disembodied job symbolizes this separation of work and sexuality.*
Sexuality, procreation and emotions all intrude upon and disrupt the ideal functioning of the organization, which tries to control such interferences. As the abstract worker is actually a man, and it is the man’s body, its sexuality, minimal responsibility in procreation, and conventional control of emotions that pervades work and organizational processes. Women’s bodies – female sexuality, their ability to procreate and their pregnancy, breast-feeding, child care, menstruation, and mythic ‘emotionality’ – are suspect, stigmatized and used as grounds for control and exclusion.

One could effectively argue that the ranking of women’s jobs as inferior and low is often justified on the basis of women’s identification with childbearing and domestic life. They are devalued because of the assumption that they would be unable to conform to the demands of the abstract job. Gender segregation at work is also sometimes openly justified by the necessity to control sexuality and women may be barred from types of work, such as skilled blue-collar work or top management, where most workers are men, on grounds that potentially sexual liaisons should be avoided. On the other hand, the gendered definition of some jobs ‘includes sexualization of the woman worker as part of the job; where these jobs often serve men such as secretaries, or a largely male public.

8.10 HOW IS THIS HIERARCHY MAINTAINED?

The maintenance of gendered hierarchy is achieved partly through tactic controls based on arguments about women’s reproduction, emotionality and sexuality, helping to legitimize the organizational structures created through abstract, intellectualized techniques. More overt controls, such as sexual harassment, relegating child bearing women to lower-level mobility tracks, and penalizing (or rewarding) their emotional management, also conform to and reinforce hierarchy.

Further what is critical is that while women’s bodies are ruled out of order, or sexualized and objectified, in work organizations, men’s bodies are not. Indeed, male sexual imagery pervades organizational metaphors and language. For example the military and the male world of sports are considered as valuable training for organizational success and provide images for team building, team work, campaigns and tough competition. The symbolic expression of male sexuality may be used as a means of control over male workers, too, allowed even encouraged within the bounds of the work situation to create cohesion or alleviate stress. Casual talk about
sexual exploits or sports are symbolic expressions of male dominance, which act as significant controls over women in work organizations because they are per se excluded from the informal bonding men produce with the ‘body talk’ of sex and sports. Symbolically a certain kind of male heterosexuality plays an important part in legitimating organizational power. Connell (1987) calls this hegemonic masculinity – emphasizing that it is formed round dominance over women and in opposition to other masculinities, although its exact content changes as historical conditions change. Currently, hegemonic masculinity is typified by the image of the strong, technically competent, authoritative leader who is sexually potent and attractive, has a family and his emotions under control.

Gender processes including the manipulation and management of women’s and men’s sexuality, procreation, and emotion are part of the control processes of organizations, maintaining not only gender stratification but contributing also to maintaining class, race, ethnic and caste relations. They are thus reflections of the presence of ‘inequality regimes’.

### 8.11 INEQUALITY REGIMES

Acker (2006) proposes the idea of ‘inequality regimes’ as an analytic approach to understanding the creation of inequalities in work organizations. Inequality regimes are the interlocked practices and processes that result in continuing inequalities in all work organizations. What are inequality regimes? Inequality regimes are the interlocked practices and processes that result in continuing inequalities in all work organizations. Women deal and negotiate their lives within matrixes of domination- caste, class, race/ethnicity and other differences and therefore theory and research on inequality, dominance and oppression must pay attention to the intersections of the above.

Acker (2006) argues that all organizations have inequality regimes defined loosely as interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, caste and racial inequalities within the particular organizations. The ubiquity of inequality is obvious: managers, executives, leaders, and department heads have much more power and higher pay than secretaries, production workers, students and even professors. Even organizations that have explicit egalitarian goals develop inequality regimes over time, as considerable research on egalitarian feminist organizations.

Acker (2006) defines inequality in organizations as systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources and outcomes; workplace decisions such as how to
organize work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards and respect; and pleasures in work and work relations. Organizations vary in the degree to which these disparities are present and how severe they are. Inequality regimes are dynamic and are related to society’s changing politics, history and culture.

8.12 GENDER AS THE BASE OF INEQUALITY

Gender as socially constructed differences between men and women and the beliefs and identities that support difference and inequality, is also present in all organizations. Gender was in the not so distant past completely integrated with class in many organizations; that is managers were almost always men; the lower-level white-collar workers were always women. Class relations in the workplace, such as supervisory practices or wage setting processes, were shaped by gendered and sexualized attitudes and assumptions. The managerial ranks now contain women in many organizations, but secretaries, clerks, servers and care providers are still primarily women. In recent times women are beginning to be distributed in organizational class structures in ways that are similar to the distribution of men. Gender and class are no longer perfectly integrated, but gendered and sexualized assumptions still shape the class situations of women and men in different ways.

In India caste relations also is an important base for structuring of inequality within organizations. The managerial positions are more often than not occupied by upper caste men, while the lower managerial ranks are filled with members of the so called ‘lower castes’. The upper caste members perceive of the high ranking positions within the organizations as their prerogative. So when they see lower caste members as occupying higher status positions they humiliate them and ridicule them that they are using their caste identity to get access to jobs that they are not qualified through policy of reservations. Such an attitude is also reflected in the argument that ‘private sector’ companies in India should not be subjected to reservation policy and that ‘merit’ should be the criteria. Such an argument is dangerous as it equates ‘merit’ with upper caste. Sexuality is also another base for inequality. Heterosexuality is assumed in many organizing processes and in the interactions necessary to these processes. The secretary is or was the ‘office wife’. Homosexuality is disruptive of organizing processes because it flouts the assumptions of heterosexuality.
8.13 SHAPE AND DEGREE OF INEQUALITY

The steepness of hierarchy is one dimension of variations in the shape and degree of inequality. The steepest hierarchies are found in traditional bureaucracies in contrast to the idealized flat organizations with team structures, in which most, or at least some of the responsibilities and decision-making authority are distributed among participants. Between these polar types are organizations with varying degrees of hierarchy and shared decision-making especially at the top. Hierarchies are usually gendered, racialized and casuist especially at the top. While flat team structures provide professional women more equality and opportunity than hierarchical bureaucracies, but only if the women function like men. Women in small firms were expected to put in the same long hours as their male colleagues and to put their work first, before family responsibilities. Masculine-stereotyped patterns of job-behaviour in team-organized work may mean that women must make adaptations to expectations that interface with family responsibilities and with which they are comfortable.

For example in a study of high-level professional women in a computer development firm, Joanne Martin and Debra Meyerson (1998) found that women saw the culture of their work group as highly masculine, aggressive, competitive and self-promoting. The women had invented ways to cope with this work culture, but they felt that they were partly outsiders who did not belong. Other research (Barker 1993) suggests that team-organized work may not reduce gender inequality, on the other hand may sustain racial inequality; in case of India may be ‘caste inequality’. While the organization of teams may reduce the roles of the supervisors, power of higher managerial levels is usually not changed.

Further one should also make a distinction between ‘jobs’ and occupations: an occupation is a type of work; a job is a particular cluster of tasks in a particular work organization. For example emergency room nurse is an occupation; an emergency room nurse at Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai is a job. One finds that sex segregation at the job level is more extensive than sex segregation at the occupation level. Jobs and occupations are also internally segregated by gender, race and caste. Additionally what appears to be a reduction in segregation may also be a form of reconfiguration. Differentiation and reconfiguration have occurred as women have entered previously male dominated occupations. For example women doctors are likely to specialize in pediatrics than surgery which is a male dominated specialization.
The severity of power differences varies. Power differences are fundamental to class, of course, and are linked to hierarchy. Labour unions and professional associations can act to reduce power differences across class hierarchies. Women managers and professionals often face gendered contradictions when they attempt to use organizational power in actions similar to those of men. Women enacting power violate conventions of relative subordination to men, risking the label of ‘witches’ or ‘bitches’.

8.14 ORGANIZING PROCESSES THAT PRODUCE INEQUALITY

Organizations vary in practices and processes that are used to achieve their goals: these practices and also produce class, gender, racial and caste inequalities. These practices are often guided by textual materials supplied by consultants or developed by managers influenced by information and/or demands from outside. Some of the practices include:

- **Organizing the general requirements of work**: In general work is organized on the image of a white man who is totally dedicated to the work and who has no responsibilities for children or family demands other than earning a living. Eight hours of continuous work away from living space, arrival on time, total attention and long hours if requested are all expectations that incorporate the image of the unencumbered worker. Flexibility to bend these expectations is more available to high level managers, predominantly men than to the lower level managers. Some work is organized as part-time, which may help women to combine work and family obligations, but such work, usually has no benefits such as health care and often has lower pay and security. Because women have more obligations outside of work than do men, this gendered organization of work is important in maintaining gender inequality in organizations and thus, the unequal distribution of women and men in organizational class hierarchies. Thus gender, race, class and caste inequalities are simultaneously created in the fundamental construction of the working day and of work obligations.

- **Organizing class hierarchies**: Techniques also vary for organizing class hierarchies inside work organizations. Bureaucratic, textual techniques for ordering positions and people are constructed to reproduce existing class, gender, racial and caste inequalities. The issue is of structuring certain kinds of work as skilled and unskilled and then assigning them value of lower ranking. Thus evaluation of work as skilled and unskilled
is then the base of wage inequality. The issue that concerns us here is that inevitably across cultures women form the majority among the unskilled workers. The women’s jobs were grouped under categories at the bottom ranking assigned the lowest wage ranges. In many cases women’s wages were in general lower than that of men, women’s skilled jobs were paid much less than men’s skilled jobs. Class hierarchies in organizations, with their embedded gender, racial and caste patterns, are constantly created and renewed through organizing practices. Gender and sometimes race and caste in the form of restricted opportunities and particular expectations for behavior, are reproduced as different degrees of organizational class hierarchy and are also reproduced in everyday interactions and bureaucratic decision making.

-Recruitment and hiring: Recruitment and hiring is a process of finding the worker most suited for a particular position. From the perspectives of employers the gender, caste and race of existing job holders at least partially define who is suitable, although prospective coworkers may also do the defining. Images of appropriate gendered, casteist and racialized, bodies influence perceptions and hiring. White bodies are often preferred, as a great deal of research and that female bodies are appropriate for some jobs; male bodies for other jobs. In certain jobs, the ideal worker are not men, but is a women particularly a women who, employers believe is compliant, who will accept orders and low wages and sometimes this is often a woman of colour, immigrant women. This refers to jobs in SEZs (Special Economic Zones).

Further hiring through social networks is one of the ways in which gender and racial inequalities are maintained in organizations. Affirmative action programs have altered hiring practices in many organizations, requiring open advertising for positions and selection based on gender- and race- neutral criteria of competence, rather than selection based on old boy (white) network. These changes in hiring practices contributed to the increasing proportions of white women and people of colour in a variety of occupations. However criteria of competence does not automatically translate into gender-caste and race neutral selection decisions; as ‘competence’ involves judgment. The race, caste and gender of both the applicant and the decision makers can affect their judgment, resulting in decisions that white males are the more competent, more suited to the job than are others. Thus, gender, caste and race as a basis for hiring or a basis for
exclusion have not been eliminated in many organizations, as continuing patterns of segregation attest.

**Wage setting and supervisory practices:** Wage setting and supervision are class practices. They determine the division of surplus between workers and management and control the work process and workers. Gender, caste and race affect assumptions about skill, responsibility and a fair wage for jobs and workers, helping to produce wage differences. Differential gender-based evaluations may be embedded in even the most in even the most egalitarian-appearing systems. The gender gap in wage structure was increasing because there is a strong belief that men are bread winners, so need more support in terms of wages.

Supervisory practices also vary across organizations. The supervisory relations may be affected by the gender, caste and race of both the supervisor and the subordinate, where one could be preserving and/or reproducing gender, caste and race inequalities. Supervisors shape their behaviours with subordinates in terms of race, caste and gender in many work situations, influencing in subtle ways the existing patterns of inequality.

**Informal interactions while ‘doing the work’:** the informal interactions and practices in which class, race, caste and gender inequalities are created in mutually reinforcing processes. The interaction practices that re-create gender inequalities are often subtle and unspoken, thus difficult to document. White men may devalue and exclude white women and people of colour, by not listening to them in meetings, by not inviting them to join for group meetings, by trivializing their comments and by not seeking their opinion for workplace problems.

Other practices such as sexual harassment, are open and obvious to the victims, but not so obvious to others. In some organizations, such as those in the travel and hospitality industry assumptions about good job performance may be sexualized; women employees may be expected to behave and dress as sexually attractive women, particularly with male customers.

8.15 THE VISIBILITY OF INEQUALITIES
Visibility of inequality defined as the degree of awareness of inequalities, varies in different organizations. Visibility varies with the position of the beholder; as it is argued that one privilege of the privileged is not to see their privilege. Men tend not to see their gender privilege; white tend not see their race privilege, upper caste ignore their caste privilege and ruling class members tend not see their class privilege. People generally see inequality as existing somewhere else, not where they are. Gender and gender inequality tend to disappear in organizations or are considered as minor, it is also hidden by the talk of the management, leadership and managers. Workers may be conscious of inequalities but might not identify it as related to gender, class, caste or race. Another basis of inequality is sexuality, which is almost invisible to the majority who are heterosexual, as heterosexuality is simply assumed not questioned.

8.16 CONTROL AND COMPLIANCE
Organizational controls are, in the first instance are class controls, directed at the maintaining of power of managers, ensuring that employees act to further the organizational’s goals, and getting workers to accept the system of inequality. Gendered, racialized and casteist assumptions and expectations are embedded in the form and content of controls and in the ways in which they are implemented. Controls are made possible by hierarchical organizational power, but they also draw on power derived from hierarchical gender, caste and race relations. They are diverse and complex, and they impede changes in inequality regimes. Mechanisms for exerting control and achieving compliance with inequality vary. Organizational theorists have identified many types of control, including direct controls, unobtrusive or indirect controls, and internalized controls.

- Direct controls include bureaucratic rules and various punishments for breaking the rules. Rewards are also direct controls. Wages, because they are essential for survival in completely monetized economies, are a powerful form of social control. Coercion and physical and verbal violence are also direct form of controls used in organizations.
- Unobtrusive and indirect controls include control through technologies such as monitoring telephone calls or time spent online or restricting information flows. Selective recruitment of relatively powerless workers can also be a form of indirect control. Recruitment of illegal immigrants who are vulnerable to discovery and deportation and recruitment of women of colour/low caste who have few employment opportunities and
thus will accept low wages are examples of this kind of control, which preserves inequality.

Internalized controls include belief in the legitimacy of bureaucratic structures and rules as well as beliefs in the legitimacy of male and white privilege. Organizing relations, such as those between a manager and subordinates, may be legitimate, taken for granted as the way things naturally and normally are. Similarly, a belief that there is no point in challenging the fundamental gender, race, class nature of things is a form of control. These are internalized, often invisible controls. Pleasure in the work is another internalized control, as are fear and self-interest. Interests can be categorized as economic, status and identity interests, all of which may be produced as organizing takes place. Identities constituted through gendered, casteist and racialized images and experiences are mutually reproduced along with differences in status and economic advantage.

As to the question whether inequality regimes can be challenged and changed, the answer is that it could be changes but it is difficult but not impossible. First change efforts that target a limited set of inequality-producing mechanisms seem to be the most successful. In addition, successful efforts appear to have combined social movement and legislative support outside the organization with active support from insiders. In addition, successful efforts often involve coercion or threat of loss such as affirmative action and pay equity campaigns. In both of these types of efforts, the mobilization of civil rights, women’s movement groups and Dalit movement was essential to success. Family friendly policies provide only temporary relief for some people from the male model of organizing. The use of family-friendly policies, primarily by women when they have young children or the use of part-time work, again primarily involving women, may increase gender inequalities in organizations. Such measures may reinforce, not undermine, the male model of organizing by defining those who conform to it as serious, committed workers and those who do not as rather peripheral and probably unworthy of promotions and pay increases.

Diversity programmes and policies seem to be often aimed at some of the more subtle discriminatory processes dividing organizational participants along lines of race, caste, ethnicity and gender through education and consciousness raising. But there is a possibility that diversity training will not alter basically assumptions and actions that are rooted in the legitimation of
systems of organizational power and reward that favour whites, upper caste, especially white or upper caste men. The legitimacy of inequality, fear of retaliation and cynicism limit the support for change.

In many organizations there exists a culture of organizing practices that rewarded stereotypical ‘heroic’ male problem-solving behaviours, tended to denigrate women who attempted to be heroes, failed to reward mundane organization building most often done by women.

8.17 GLOBALIZATION, RESTRUCTURING AND CHANGE IN INEQUALITY REGIME

Restructuring, new technology, and the globalization of production contribute to the rising competitive pressures in private sector organizations and budget woes in public-sector organizations. The shape and degree of inequality seem to have become more varied. Old traditional bureaucracies with career ladders still exist. Relatively new organizations such as Wal-Mart, also have hierarchical structures. White working and middle class men, upper caste men and women and people of all caste, have been affected by restructuring and downsizing. But a substantial wage gap still seem to exist between men and women.

One could see a growth of inequalities within organizations, with the dominance of global corporations and their free-market ideology, the decline in size and influence of labour unions, and the increase in job insecurity as downsizing and reorganization continue. The increase in the contingent and temporary workers who have less participation in decisions and less security than regular workers also increases power inequality.

Organizing processes that create and recreate inequalities may have become more subtle, bit in some cases, they have become more difficult to challenge. For example, the unencumbered male worker as the model for the organization of daily work and the model of the excellent employee seems to have been strengthened. Professionals and managers, in particular, work long hours and often are evaluated on their ‘face time’, at work and their willingness to put work and the organization before family and friends. New technology makes it possible to do some jobs anywhere and to be in touch with colleagues and managers at all hours of day and night. Other workers lower in organizational hierarchies are expected to work as the employer demands, overtime or at odd hours. The employers can no longer legally exclude people based on gender,
race and caste considerations. But informal exclusion and unspoken denigration are still widespread and difficult to document and to confront.

The visibility of inequality to those in positions of power does not seem to have changed. However, the legitimacy of inequality in the eyes of those with money and power does seem to have changed. Inequality is more legitimate. In a culture that glorifies individual material success and applauds extreme competitive behavior in pursuit of success, inequality becomes a sign of success for those who win.

Controls that ensure compliance with inequality regimes have also become more effective and perhaps more various. With threats of downsizing and off-shoring, decreasing availability of well-paying jobs for clerical, service, and manual workers, and undermining of union strength and welfare state supports, protection against the loss of living wage are eroded and employees become more vulnerable to the control of the wage system itself. That is fear of loss of livelihood controls those who might challenge inequality.

8.18 SUMMING UP: CASTE, RACE, GENDER AND AUTHORITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Job authority is an important dimension of socioeconomic status that remains a coveted workplace resource. Research shows that despite significant advancements in the overall socioeconomic status of minorities, low caste and working women, race, caste, and gender remain important impediments to their attainment of authority. This pattern, is sustained was a result of the incumbent’s human capital investments and structural location within and between several economic units. One can argue that the persistence of race, caste and gender disparities in authority concern the racial, casteist and gender demography of the workplace and the tendency on the part of the authority elites to reproduce themselves through both exclusionary and inclusionary processes.

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. How gendered hierarchy is maintained in an organization?
8.19 GLOSSARY

**Special Economic Zone:** The Special Economic Zone (SEZ) policy in India first came into inception on April 1, 2000. The prime objective was to enhance foreign investment and provide an internationally competitive and hassle free environment for exports. The idea was to promote exports from the country and realizing the need that level playing field must be made available to the domestic enterprises and manufacturers to be competitive globally.

Legislation has been passed permitting SEZs to offer tax breaks to foreign investors. Over half a decade has passed since its inception, but the SEZ Bill has certain drawbacks due to the omission of key provisions that would have relaxed rigid labour rules. This has lessened India's chance of emulating the success of the Chinese SEZ model, through foreign direct investment (FDI) in export-oriented manufacturing.

8.20 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

**Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

1. Rosabeth Kanter as early in 1977, in her book *Men and Women of the Corporation* argues that gender differences in organizational behavior are due to the structure rather than to characteristics of women and men as individuals. Further argues that the problems faced by women in large organizations are the result of their structural positions, crowded in dead-end-jobs at the bottom and exposed as tokens at the top. Gender enters the picture through organizational roles that ‘carry characteristic images of the kinds of people that should occupy them’.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

1. The maintenance of gendered hierarchy is achieved partly through tactic controls based on arguments about women’s reproduction, emotionality and sexuality, helping to legitimize the organizational structures created through abstract, intellectualized techniques. More overt controls, such as sexual harassment, relegating child bearing women to lower-level mobility tracks, and penalizing (or rewarding) their emotional management, also conform to and reinforce hierarchy. Further what is critical is that while women’s bodies are ruled out of order, or sexualized and objectified, in work organizations, men’s bodies are not.
Indeed, male sexual imagery pervades organizational metaphors and language. For example, the military and the male world of sports are considered as valuable training for organizational success and provide images for team building, team work, campaigns, and tough competition. The symbolic expression of male sexuality may be used as a means of control over male workers, too, allowed even encouraged within the bounds of the work situation to create cohesion or alleviate stress. Casual talk about sexual exploits or sports are symbolic expressions of male dominance, which act as significant controls over women in work organizations because they are per se excluded from the informal bonding men produce with the ‘body talk’ of sex and sports. Symbolically, a certain kind of male heterosexuality plays an important part in legitimating organizational power. Connell (1987) calls this hegemonic masculinity – emphasizing that it is formed round dominance over women and in opposition to other masculinities, although its exact content changes as historical conditions change. Currently, hegemonic masculinity is typified by the image of the strong, technically competent, authoritative leader who is sexually potent and attractive, has a family and his emotions under control. Gender processes including the manipulation and management of women’s and men’s sexuality, procreation, and emotion are part of the control processes of organizations, maintaining not only gender stratification but contributing also to maintaining class, race, ethnic, and caste relations. They are thus reflections of the presence of ‘inequality regimes’.

8.21 REFERENCES


Catharine A. MacKinnon, Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory


Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Men and women of the corporation, basic books, 1977

8.22 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1. “Organization process produce inequality” discuss