
7.5 STANDARDS FOR MEASUREMENT OF WORK

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

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

Box No. 7.1

Government Employment Guarantee Programmes and Time Allocation of Women

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

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

7.6 GENDER GAPS IN LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND ECONOMY

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

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

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

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

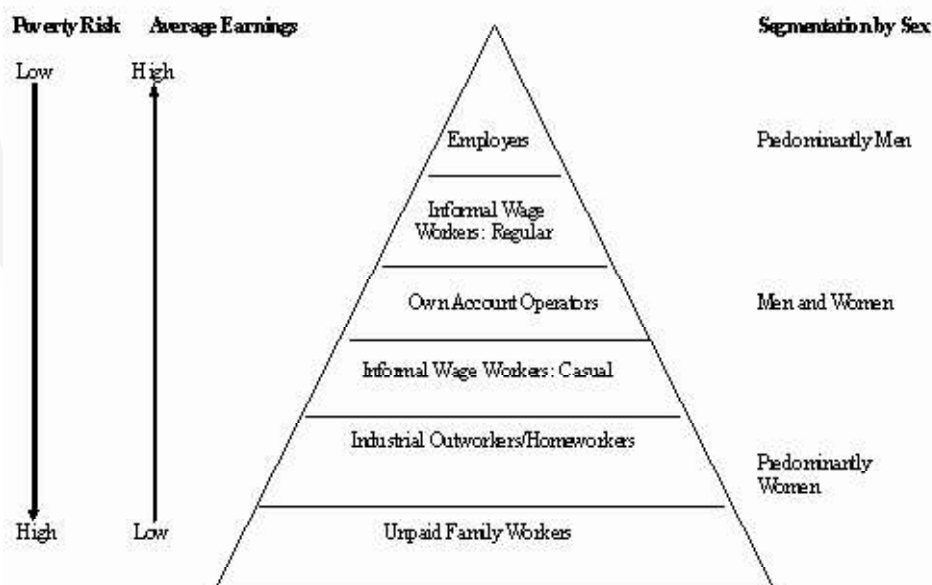


Figure 7.2 Segmentation of the Unorganized Sector Workers

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

7.7 GENDER DISCRIMINATION, VIOLENCE AND VULNERABILITY AT WORK

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

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

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

Box No. 7.2

Seizing Every Opportunity- Sizing Every Situation

Some of the issues faced by Women in Employment

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations

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

7.8 SUMMING UP

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

7.9 KEY WORDS

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

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7.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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