CHAPTER - II

WOMEN IN THE WORLD OF WORK: A SURVEY
2. INTRODUCTION:

One of the major changes that have occurred in the world of work over the last decade is the increase in the number of women in paid employment. Nowadays women expect and need to work for a substantial part of their life and their share in the total labour force has been constantly rising. They have entered certain sectors and occupations which were hitherto considered the domain of men, and more women are now found in highly skilled, technical, managerial and decision making positions.

From time immemorial women have been working everywhere – at home, in fields, factories and many other workplaces. But still a great majority of them are not, either in the past or in the present, recognised as workers in the economic sense of the term. History has handed down terms like ‘Das’ and ‘Dasi’ clearly indicating the existence of slave workers. In the past, manual labourers were slaves and they consisted of both male and female workers. The word ‘Dasi’, therefore, connotes the presence of female manual labour who generally worked in the houses of socio-economically and politically powerful classes.

However, women as a distinct segment of workers emerged, and got recognition only with the emergence of industrial production. Economic activities stemming from unprecedented growth of industry, forced a large number of men and women to seek employment in the factories and workshop in the ever expanding urban areas. In the early period, women were generally engaged in home based activities and in small scale operations.
With gradual urbanization and technological innovation they were, however, catapulted from home based activity to factory work. But this transition, from one state to another, was neither swift nor slow. It was gradual and the process was typically male ordained.

In pre-industrial manufacture, where goods were produced within the family unit, women performed the more elementary function. These included a wide range of products for local rural exchange or domestic use, such as pottery, weaving, etc. We can take two examples of commercial production to identify the level of gender-based functional divisions. Amongst the kumhar caste of potters, differentiation existed between the basic work with clay and work with fire. Women kneaded clay and shaped vessels manually, while men worked on primitive wheel and fired the Kiln.

Gender-based division of labour in the family production unit led to gender-based division of labour in production units outside. The historical process of gendered division began in production relations and property ownership pattern which existed in the past.

Today, the pattern of production still revolves around such relational matrix. with the advent of monetary system, the process has been skewed against women as compared to men. Men, give the historical process of social development, by design and sometimes accidentally, happened to grab socio-economic power, thereby to establish their control over family unit. The first object and subject of their control was women. This has led to gendered segregation at all levels of socio-economic, political, educational and cul-
tural lives. The present problems of women's status are reflection of both past prejudices and present struggle for maintaining status by men in position. Historical evidence and present instances demonstrate this reality of discrimination against women.

Despite the growing awareness among women of their rights, they are still held back by socio-economic and cultural constraints. Virtually in all cases women continue to bear the double burden of family responsibilities and work, in addition to the difficulties of daily life which many face; this places them in a position of inferiority and marginalisation in their occupational life and in a continuous state of overwork. Women tend to suffer relatively more than men from current economic pressures, technological innovations, structural adjustments and changes in the labour market, and are assigned more easily than men to precarious employment such as part-time, temporary, occasional or subcontracted jobs.

Today women perform an estimated two-thirds of the world's work but own only 1 percent of the world's land and earn just ten percent of the world's income and own less than one-hundredth of its property. The majority of women earn on average about three fourths of the pay of males for the same work outside the agricultural sector in both developed and developing countries. In Cyprus, Japan and the Republic of Korea, wom-

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Women's wages are lowest, about half of those for men, among the countries for which data are available. Even in Canada, where women have made inroads into traditionally male dominated high paying jobs, their earnings are still only 71 percent of men's.\(^3\)

Women work longer hours than men in almost all countries. They put in 12 percent more time than men in market activities, and household work taken together. But their work is never recognised.\(^4\) It is estimated that 70 percent of the world's 1.3 billion poor are women.\(^5\) Further, of one-third billion people living in absolute poverty in the world today, over 70 percent are women. It is a matter of utmost surprise that more than two-third of world's 960 million illiterate adults are women. In Africa, about 75 percent of agricultural work is done by women. In Asia and Europe half the agricultural labour force is composed of women. In some industrialised market economy countries, women farmers work as long as 70 hours a week in addition to several hours of house work. But much of women's agricultural labour is overlooked because it is unpaid or because tradition goes against women being required to engage in farming or other economic activity.\(^6\)

The majority of women workers are still concentrated in a limited range of occupations and professions, performing work that require low skills and is poorly paid. Many women continue to receive a lower payment than male

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5. Supra Note 2, P.1.
6. Supra Note 1, P.41.
colleagues performing the same job. In many industrialized and developing countries, women are more affected by unemployment and by the severe economic recession of the last few years which is eroding many of women's hard won gains. Increasing poverty is a threat to women worldwide. Equality in treatment and opportunity in employment and occupation is still not within reach. The concept of equality in employment does not mean that men and women are identical; equality does not mean 'sameness'. It is recognised that there are differences between men and women and that they have different roles in society and therefore different needs. These different needs to be taken into account in order to promote equality effectively. In the early 1970s, social scientists started focusing on the sexual division of labour and the differential impact of development and modernization strategies on women and men respectively; the term 'Women in Development' (WID) came into use in this period. In general ‘Women in Development’ stands for concern with the unequal or disadvantaged position of women as compared to men and the development strategies aimed at minimising disadvantages of women and ending discrimination against them. There have been a gradual shift in the way women are perceived within development thinking from that of victims and passive objects to independent actors.7

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7. There are five different policy approaches which have emerged over time since the 1950s. These are: i) The welfare approach ii) the equity approach iii) The anti-poverty approach iv) The efficiency or instrumental approach v) The empowerment approach. i) The welfare approach: In the early phases of development during 1950s and 1960s women were seen as purely passive beneficiaries in the development process, with the emphasis on their reproductive roles as mothers and homemakers. This approach is based on the western stereotype of the nuclear family in which women are economically dependent on the male breadwinners.
2.1. DEFINITION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY:

Economic activity is neither a measure of the work women do, nor it is a measure of the economic contribution of women. Data for economic activity reflect several definitions adopted by the international community during the last 30 years. We all understand the term ‘work’ and yet this common word often means different things to different people. To some it means

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ii) The equity approach: This is the first ‘Women in Development’ approach, which emerged during the UN Decade of women as a reaction to the failure of modernization policies. The philosophy underlying the equity approach is that women are lagging behind in society and that the gap between men and women can be bridged by taking remedial measures without existing structures. Women are seen as active participants in the development process.

iii) The antipoverty approach: The second ‘Women in Development’ approach links the economic inequality of women and men not to subordination but to poverty, looking for ways to increase income generating opportunities for poor women. This approach is related to the basic needs and general development strategy of the late 1970s in which the key objective was to meet basic needs such as food, clothes, housing, fuel, and education. The anti-poverty approach emphasizes the productive role of women and works to increase their employment and income generating opportunities. Women’s reproductive roles are not addressed by this approach and social and cultural constraints are not identified.

iv) The efficiency or instrumental approach: The basic view underlying this approach is that integration of women in the development process is essential in order to fully utilize all human resources and ensure that development will become more efficient and effective. Women are seen as having under-utilized development potential which should be put to better use.

v) The empowerment approach: The above four approaches have in common that they take little account of the historical inequalities of power between men and women in their societies. The empowerment approach emerged in the mid 1970s among third world women and their organizations and it is based on their experiences. It recognizes that feminism is not simply a recent western, urban, middle class import but that it has an independent history. Third world feminism has its roots in women’s participation in nationalist struggles, working class agitations and peasant rebellions and has been an important force for change. The empowerment approach aims at strengthening and broadening the powerbase of women in order to achieve greater self-reliance. It defines women’s inequality not only as a problem in relation to men but also in relation to their race, class, colonial history and current position in the international economic order.
only wage-earning activities. To others it means all the activities whereby economic goods and services are produced and sold.

The majority of women in the world work, but a minority are recognized as 'workers' with the corollary rights of safe working environment, equal wages, paid vacation, and sick leave. The majority of working women are not paid for their work because they are not recognized as workers. The main shortcoming of all global economic statistics from women's point of view is, without doubt the invisibility of the unpaid labour in households and the informal and agricultural sectors, a major part of which, in all countries, is performed by women. This vast gap between working women and women workers hinders recognition of the basic rights of women as workers: only a small minority of working women are formally employed. Consequently, most are invisible, unprotected under paid or unpaid, and more often than not exploited.

Efforts to document the nature and scope of women's work have not yet brought about the formal recognition of women's work. This is not a question of formalities but of the recognition of basic rights; the right to work is included among fundamental human rights. To be recognized as a

9. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD recently called for the creation of a legal framework that would guarantee equal rights for women, and especially for the removal of 'legal restrictions on the full economic and political participation of women'. (Development Co-operation, 1991 Report, OECD, Paris, 1991, P.56.)
10. The International Bill of Human Rights recognises inter alia the right to work and the free choice of employment, to fair wages, to form and join unions, to social security and to adequate standards of living conditions for the people. Articles 8 and 22 of the ICCPR, and Articles 6, 7, 8, 9 of the ICESCR deal with all these rights.
'worker' it is not enough to work — the law everywhere insists on a contractual relationship between the employer and the employee. Most women do not have contracts with their husbands or fathers; most women producing food have no contracts whatsoever, neither protecting their labour nor giving them a title to its product. Thus, in so far as economic statistics and labour legislations are concerned, they do not work. In the worst case scenario, such women are considered a burden on society. Devalued as a child, denied equal access to education and often devoid of skills, she carries into her womanhood all the accumulated burdens of her past. The challenge facing programmes, policy and law is to offer the working girls the opportunity to grow, to change and to be free. The lack of recognition of women's contribution to the economy is due to the prevalence of a middle class bias in development planning as well as an under-representation of women "in strategic positions in local and middle level decision making institutions".

The official classification of what constitutes work either paid or unpaid - is dependent on the perceptions of planners and statisticians. Not


uncommonly, most decision makers in this field are men. Often, a lack of information on male-female roles in rural areas leads to the exclusion of certain categories of workers. Nor can the role of prejudice be ruled out.14 Worldwide estimates show that at least one-fourth of women are neither housewives nor in paid employment. A substantial number were 'invisible' because they were working at home in a sporadic and informal manner in unpaid jobs. They went unnoticed by the census enumerations because they were not involved in any other economic activities.

Governments want to know what work is done, to see how their country's human resources are being used, and how goods and services are being produced for people to satisfy their needs. They define work in terms of making money, and exclude work such as fetching water, cooking meals and raising children which is usually done without monetary compensation.

The Censuses only count work which is part of the 'economy', which leaves out much hard labour. Even work which is part of the economy may not properly be reported. Most work which produces goods or services used within the household falls outside the census definition, because it is not paid unless the worker is a servant. The demanding physical and mental work of running the household and looking after young children may take many hours each day and be very intense. This hard, physical work, requiring considerable skill, is usually the responsibility of women and girls. They

work long hours to fulfil the needs of the family, and are not at leisure or unemployed. All able-bodied women work, but definitionally they are not all workers though they work. Many of their works do not bring direct monetary remuneration. As a result most of their activities are termed as non-economic. This leads to gross underestimation of women's labour and under-enumeration of women's participation in economic activity. The problem is global, though some international agencies are constantly trying to improve the situation. It is, therefore, imperative for the international community to provide a common definition for the types of work encompassed within the concept of economic activity.

During its Fourteenth Session, in October 1966, the Statistics Commission of the United Nations adopted resolutions defining the scope and nature of statistics for economic activity. To be classified as economically active, a person must "... furnish the supply of labour for the production of economic goods and services during the time-reference period chosen for the investigation...".

Statistics for economic activity may reflect "current activity" for which the time-reference period is generally no longer than one week and which is usually referred to as "labour force activity", or it may reflect the much longer time frame of "usual activity".

Where it is considered that classification on the basis of current activity over this brief period of time does not reflect year-round activities, particularly where there is a highly seasonal pattern of employment and regular
periodic sample surveys are not held during the year, supplementary information on "usual" economic characteristics over a longer period may be collected.

Data for economic activity do not differentiate among several factors, which are important for the advancement of women, particularly with regard to the progress of women towards economic independence and self-reliance. As the definition implies, 'economic activity' combines the employed with the unemployed populations. It combines seasonal activities for some countries with current or usual activity for others. It combines full-time with part-time activity. It combines the activity of a worker who is paid for one hour's work with the activity of an unpaid family worker who must work one-third time. Economic activity encompasses a wide range of possibilities for work and remuneration, which have important implications for measuring women's activity.

The limitation which received the most attention during the United Nations Decade for Women is the undercounting of female economic activity. Current research highlights this limitation. It is widely accepted, for example, that women in secluded societies have low levels of economic activity. Data from middle and western South Asian and northern African countries substantiate this belief. Studies of secluded women in Muslim areas of Nigeria, however, reveal new information about female economic activity. Though classified as economically inactive, these secluded women are engaged in work appropriately classified as economic activity.
It is generally believed that women in Latin American countries also have low levels of economic activity. Data from national sources support this belief. Current research, however, brings into question these official data. An examination of women in agriculture in three regions of Colombia and Peru, for example, suggests a gross underestimation of female unpaid family workers.

The criticism of underestimations extend to the continent of Africa where many national reports show low levels of economic activity for African women while current research suggests much higher levels: "... studies by anthropologists, sociologists and extension workers show that women contribute two-thirds of all hours spent in traditional African agriculture, and three-fifths of hours spent in marketing".14a

Much of this activity is carried out by unpaid family workers. The exclusion of their work from statistics on economic activity received a great deal of attention during the last ten years. Unpaid family workers are found in all economic sectors in many countries but play a particularly important role in the agricultural sector of the developing countries'. In fact, the undercounting of the activities of unpaid family workers in agriculture has been a major thrust of criticism during the entire Decade.

Women's work is especially under enumerated in agriculture. This is so despite the fact that in many developing countries, notably in Africa, south

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of the Sahara, women constitute the predominant labour force in this sector. The paucity of statistical data on women's participation in agriculture is striking in view of the availability of qualitative data based on in-depth micro studies of women's roles in agriculture in several developing countries. These studies point out that the number of women working in agriculture may be double the number registered. Women contribute as much as 80 per cent of the agricultural labour in such countries. Data also vary arbitrarily from country to country with regard to the inclusion of many subsistence activities among economic activities.

Increasing attention is being directed at the informal sector as a source of economic activity for which statistics are not available or are difficult to collect. It is in this sector that major segments of both the male and female population in many countries conduct the activities, which provide the resources for their survival and that of their families.

Women workers are underestimated in official statistics, largely because their work tends to be confined to sectors that escape registration, such as the informal labour sector.

However, the current debate on the measurement of unpaid "economic activity" of women is basically centred around three issues: (a) the extent to which unpaid household work should be considered as "economic activity"; (b) how this "economic activity" should be identified and measured in surveys and censuses; and (c) what monetary value should be attached to the measurement of economic activity for statistical and other assessments.
Limitations of data are not only attributable to the design of census, labour force and household surveys. They may also be traced to the process of data collection. Since both industrialised and developing countries experience seasonal variations in labour force participation, the time of year when the data are collected is an important factor. Studies suggest that most data collection occurs when seasonal participation is low, since respondents are more likely to be available and willing to take the time to answer questions. As a result, labour force participation of women is often underestimated. In many countries women are predominately seasonal workers, particularly in agriculture. Also important are variations in the minimum number of hours of work necessary for classification as economically active.

Countries such as Turkey and Thailand count almost all farm women as unpaid family helpers, resulting in an enumerated agricultural labour force that is half female. But if unpaid workers are excluded, women are reported as only 5 per cent of Turkish farm labour and about 20 per cent in Thailand. Other countries apply the definition of economic activity selectively so that female (but not male) unpaid family labourers are excluded.

These examples demonstrate the importance of efforts on the part of governments to revise the methods of data collection to assess more accurately the work women do as economic activity. As the definition implies, these data measure only a portion of the work women do. At best, they provide conservative estimate of female economic activity. At worst, they provide gross underestimates.
2.2. Attitudes Towards Working Women:

One of the most immediate effects of the historical attitudes toward the place of paid work in women's lives has been the lack of preparation of women for full, life-time careers outside the home. In the nineteenth and for much of the twentieth century, a woman's primary roles were those of mother and wife, girls were socialized and trained for those jobs and not for paid work. They were encouraged to develop both "feminine" psychological traits and occupational skills appropriate and necessary for getting and keeping a husband, for raising a family, and for maintaining a home.

Young women were not encouraged and at times were even prevented from acquiring the education necessary to enter well-paying occupations and professions. The gradual expansion of academic opportunities for women did little to change this situation. Most women in high school and even many in college took courses in home economics or domestic science under the assumption that these programmes were the best preparation for their future occupations as wives and mothers. Even those who specialised in other areas chose or were channeled into fields like teaching, nursing, and later, clerical or business-type courses and social work. All of these were considered compatible with a woman's personality and inherent abilities. Nursing and teaching in particular drew on "female" traits and could be practiced temporarily before marriage or later in life if widowed.

During the post-World War II era when increasing numbers of women worked and did so for longer periods of their adult lives, cultural attitudes
and the absence of laws preventing discrimination in educational programmes meant that the preparation of women for full, lifetime employment continued to lag seriously behind men. Because most young women did not plan on having a permanent, lifelong career, both their educational aspirations and achievements were lower than young men's. Few women undertook the lengthy, rigorous educational programmes that would have been necessary to enter prestigious professions. Occupational stereotypes about what women should and/or could do also discouraged young women from considering careers in these fields. For both these reasons, even those women who undertook training to prepare themselves for a job tended to concentrate their course work in traditional female fields—nursing, teaching, etc. at the college level and clerical, business courses and home economics in high school vocational programmes.

Surveys and studies of young women in the 1970s continue to show the strong influence of gender stereotypes. More specifically, females are still more likely to estimate they will fail at a new task—especially if that task is one traditionally labeled as "masculine". Even female achievers tend to underestimate their abilities more so than successful males. Women often attribute their success to luck, while men trace their achievements to their intelligence or to other abilities. Women's underestimation of their own abilities and worth may directly contribute to their lower lifetime earnings, expectations as well as to the salaries they ask for and get when they interview for a job.
In general, the more traditional a girl, the more likely she is to “fear success” in any area, especially in “male” jobs. Young women who cling to stereotypes have lower educational aspirations and achievements. Even if they obtain a higher education, they are more likely to prepare for careers in “female fields”. Lower levels of educational and psychological preparation, moreover, are not limited to only the traditionally minded female. The persistence of the view that it is a woman’s duty alone to care for young children, tends to hinder preparation for a full, life-time career even among those who consider themselves “liberated”.

There are, however, several positive signs on the horizon. Many of the conditions most conducive to greater independence, higher achievement motivations, and sex-atypical careers for women are becoming more common. Among the more important of these factors are working mothers who enjoy their jobs, and supportive males who have abandoned traditional sex roles and are, willing to accept, date, and marry successful career-oriented women.

The portrayal of women in the media and in school textbooks have especially restrictive or limiting influences on career goals of young girls. Surveys of television shows, for example, reveal that few women are shown in career situations. Similarly, until recently, elementary school textbooks regularly portrayed women in only ‘mother’ or traditional employment roles. Textbooks and television, however, are not the only sources of stereotypes about career options. Many high school, college, and even career advisors
regularly, however unintentionally, track women toward "feminine" occupations.

Studies of both vocational and college programmes show that young girls tend to shy away from disciplines where there are few women either in teaching or administrative positions. No women or only a few in a particular area convey to other women that woman either is not welcomed or that several roadblocks stand in their way. Particularly with younger women, their knowledge of the potential for discrimination often creates a vicious circle: many young girls and/or women, facing the prospect of jobs with little challenge for future, either decide they do not want to work and/or undertake less training, assuming they will be hired for only "women's jobs" anyway.

Even if women are able to overcome traditional attitudes and become prepared to take an equal role with men, their equality is not assured. Two important groups can be expected to resist further change: employers who gain economically from the low wages paid for "women's jobs" and male workers who feel threatened prospect of competition for traditionally male jobs.

Quoting data on the position of women in ASEAN countries, Aline Wong felt that rather than bring about economic independence, employment in certain spheres led to the exploitation of cheap female labour. With the existing structure of unsophisticated labour-intensive industries, women worked long hours in textiles, garment and electronic concerns. Further,
women provided a pool of cheap labour, working mainly as operatives and semi-skilled employee.\textsuperscript{15}

However, it is true that a woman's participation in the paid labour force has far greater impact on the family and on the market place. While the trend since the Industrial Revolution has been towards a growing acceptance of working women, there have been several periods in the last two centuries when relatively positive attitude about the employment of women have been followed by periods of more negative and restrictive views.

Here, it can be mentioned that the notion of economic independence has validity only for those categories of women who have control over their earnings and are free to take decisions on how this money is to be spent. For the large bulk of the world's female working force, poverty decides how the family income is to be spent.\textsuperscript{16}

2.3. WOMEN AND WORK - THE GLOBAL SCENARIO:

The problem of poverty remains one of the main challenges which will continue to confront human kind during the 21st century. This holds true for both developed and developing countries, although the extent, severity and characteristics may vary greatly within and across regions and as they affect different social groups.

\textsuperscript{15} Aline Wong, "The Changing Roles and Status of Women in ASEAN," Contemporary South East Asia, 1979, pp.183-5.

\textsuperscript{16} Malavika Karlekar (1982), 'Poverty and Women's work — A study of sweeper women in Delhi,' pp.8-9.
But even with this wide diversity, gender remains a dividing line, a key determinant of vulnerability to poverty almost everywhere. This persists as a major source of concern within the context of advancement of human rights and promotion of social justice. It also implies that optimum utilization of human resources for effective social and economic development is undermined.

The poverty of women is very much linked to the pattern of their employment and to their disadvantaged position in the labour market. The high proportion of women among the poor is explained by the fact that women workers in developing countries are concentrated in jobs and economic activities which bring low earnings, are irregular and insecure, and are beyond the effective reach of labour and social protection laws. These major factors channel women into low-income, low-productive and often casual or temporary employment.

Women's reproductive and domestic responsibilities are generally perceived to be their primary function. The perception reinforces structural barriers to women's access to education, training, land and productive assets; restricts women's time and mobility for productive work; and limits their choice of income-earning activities.

Women are perceived to be mere secondary income-earners. Men are considered primary income-earners, thus having priority over women in the allocation of opportunities for productive work and remunerated employment. Yet, women are responsible for part of household food provisioning in many societies and tend to be the major income-earner among poorer households.
Women face unequal access to productive resources and services although they are largely dependent on self-employment for which land, capital, technology and labour are critical. In conditions of impoverishment, women's entitlements to household resources are usually the first to go. Women's work tends to be undervalued. Occupations and sectors, once these are dominated by women workers ("feminized") tend to be perceived as work that is of low importance, low skill and, hence, low economic value.

Women's share of the labour force in developing countries is rising, although still smaller than that of women in the industrialized market economies (31 per cent versus 60 percent in OECD countries in 1990). Between 1970 and 1990, the labour force participation rates of women rose in North Africa, West Asia, East Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, but declined slightly in the other regions. East Asia posted the lightest rate of economic activity for women (59 per cent); Sub-Saharan Africa and South-east Asia showed high average rates ranging from 45 to 50 per cent.

**Women's economic activity rates, 1970-1990**

![Graph showing women's economic activity rates from 1970 to 1990](source: International Labour Office, Geneva)
The gaps between women’s recorded participation rates and men’s remain wide however. They are widest in North Africa (16 per cent vs 80 per cent), West and South Asia (21-24 per cent vs 83-85 per cent), and Latin America and the Caribbean (32 per cent vs 80 per cent).

Labour force participation figures highly undercount women’s economic activities in the informal sector or in agriculture where large numbers of women are found. For example, in India, the use of a wider definition of the term “economic activity” resulted in an upward revision of the estimated 13 per cent of economically active women to 88 per cent! Some of the highest (unofficial) participation rates for women are in Africa where women make up 80 per cent of food producers in some countries.

But women’s contributions to the economy are masked not only by inadequacies in current statistical systems but by the very nature of a large part of women’s productive work. Most are carried out within the household subsistence production system and therefore often regarded as extension of women’s household duties; the produce from this work is largely consumed directly by the household and thus never assigned a monetary value and, in fact, has been undervalued in a market-oriented economy.

Even home-based work which may be destined for the market is hidden from public view and accounting because they do not take the formal character of either wage employment or an independent enterprise. Women’s subsistence and intermittent activities, though generating income, have no social status of a “real job”.

Although women are entering the labour market in increasing numbers, their employment is concentrated in a relatively small number of "female" areas and occupations which tend to attract lower rewards and prestige. In developing countries, the majority is engaged in agriculture, sales or service jobs. Nearly 80 per cent of economically active women in sub-Saharan Africa and at least half in Asia, except West Asia, are in agriculture. The services sector accounts for about 70 per cent of economically active women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 40 per cent in Asia and the Pacific.

The newly industrialized and industrializing countries of Southeast Asia are an exception in that the industrialization process has been female-led and a significant and growing number of women are employed in industry. Women provide up to 80 per cent of the work force of export processing zones in Southeast Asia. Women have also made a steady progress in manufacturing in Latin America and the Caribbean. In Africa, with little exception of Mauritius and Egypt the share of manufacturing in total employment, and therefore the proportion of women in this sector relative to agriculture and services, has remained relatively low.

The pursuit among others of flexible low-cost labour has encouraged industrial enterprises to resort to subcontracting with concomitant extension of homework and other forms of outwork. In both developed and developing countries women have been more affected by this trend than men. In the vast majority of cases, homeworkers are women—often with small chil-
dren -who are forced into these activities as much because of their family responsibilities as because of the lack of other income-earning opportunities. Being largely invisible and difficult to organize, homeworkers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and are often excluded from the protection and benefits afforded by labour legislations.

The growth in women’s employment has not been matched by the quality of the majority of the jobs they have access to. The trend towards flexible working patterns and practices in response to competitive pressures on the global markets has resulted in the growth of “atypical” or “non-standard” forms of work.

“Atypical” forms of work over flexible work hours, part-time work, homework whether in traditional activities or in more advanced technologies, and casual, temporary employment arrangements, they fall outside of labour legislations, social security systems and collective agreements which were formulated to regulate formal employee-employer relationship.

Although some advances have been made towards wage equity, women still earn around 50 to 80 per cent of men’s wages. In part, this gap is due to the crowding of women in low-skilled, low-status jobs, the segmentation of the labour market into feminine or masculine occupations, women’s shorter working hours and their unavailability for overtime, night work and shift work because of legal barriers and family responsibilities.

However, there is a residual difference in earning which cannot be explained by job differences and can probably be attributed to direct forms of
wage discrimination. There is evidence that direct wage discrimination is greater in the developing countries and in the newly industrialized or industrializing countries which have not ratified the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100). Disparity in earnings also extends to piece work done at home and to such agricultural wage work where women are found mainly in the low-skilled and casual jobs.

2.3.1. Women in the informal sector:

In Africa, although there are numerically fewer women than men in the informal sector, a higher proportion of the female than male labour force tends to be concentrated in small-scale, under-capitalized, low-productivity market trade and personal service activities. In West Africa, women constitute 60-80 per cent of the urban workforce in trading and dominate the open market and petty trading. In sub-Saharan Africa, some women leave occupations such as teaching and nursing to engage in potentially more lucrative informal sector activities. More commonly, women, like men, keep their jobs in the public sector but engage simultaneously in informal sector activities. Those in rural areas combine informal sector work with farming. Since 1985, women have faced increased competition from men who have been entering the informal sector in greater numbers especially in trading.

In Latin America, older women and especially female heads of households are more likely to be in the informal sector than younger women. In Ecuador, female participation in the informal sector rose from 40 per cent in 1978 to 52 per cent in 1988. In Jamaica, female self-employment rose
by 25 per cent as compared to 15 per cent in male self-employment between 1980-87. In the Dominican Republic, the share of the economically active population, both male and female, in the informal sector has been growing, with 70 per cent of the women in the sector earning incomes below the poverty line. In Mexico, 77 per cent of the workers in the informal sector were female in 1981; in 1992, the ratio was 59 per cent. There has been a rise in the number of small units in trading, manufacturing and service activities and a growing incidence of part-time employment especially among women.

In Asia, women commonly dominate in hawking and trading activities. More recently, there has been an increase in their involvement in micro and small-scale production activities and home-based activities, as self-employed or piece-rate workers. ILO flexibility surveys in the Philippines and Malaysia have shown that the greater the degree of labour casualization, the higher the proportion of women in overall employment and the more vulnerable these women are to exploitative conditions. In Pakistan, women displaced from large-scale manufacturing have been pushed increasingly into informal sector especially in clothing manufacture, unpaid family work and very poorly paid domestic service. In Indonesia, more than a fifth of all women in the workforce are in trading although this is the least lucrative of the self-employment activities.17

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2.3.2. The Formal Sector – New Opportunities, New Problems:

Since the early days of the Industrial Revolution in the Western world and now the world over, women have tended to find work in the formal sector only in low-wage, low-status jobs, whether in manufacturing or services. According to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), women in industry in the mid 1990s find themselves in a world very different from that of the previous decade. The globalization of industrial production, the structural adjustment programmes in many developing countries, and the transformation of centrally planned economies have also had fundamental effects on the industrialization process. Production has shifted from labour-intensive, assembly line oriented systems to become skill-and technology-intensive, and from import-substitution to export-led growth and trade.

The competitive advantage enjoyed by developing countries, often based on plentiful and cheap labour, is gradually being eroded by increasing technological innovations and competition from other labour markets. The introduction of computerized technologies and automation has reduced the importance of labour-intensive production significantly, rendering predominantly “typically female” occupations redundant, i.e., low-skilled assembly jobs in industrialized as well as industrializing countries.

Within this context women have borne the brunt of technological redundancy and unemployment brought about by industrial restructuring, technological changes and relocation patterns. Insofar as one can speak of global
cultural biases as pertain to gender, this is a remaining vestige: women tend to have less technological training than men. Women at all levels are losing ground, because technologies are playing an increasing role in all services. Women in management also need to acquire new skills in order to maintain their positions. Women entrepreneurs and managers need to adjust to new structures, which require a combination of skills in technology, reading markets, product design and adaptation, quality control, pricing, marketing, personnel management, leadership.

The increasing flexibility of today's markets—changes in regulations, contracts, and practices that make it easier both to hire and fire workers—has also opened new pathways for women to enter the formal sector. Part-time work is increasingly a female phenomenon; in almost all developed economies, the majority of those employed part-time are women. While many labour leaders fear that this trend may undermine hard-won rights, reduce career prospects and weaken both job protection and social security, women's groups since the 1960s have argued that greater flexibility in working hours as well as part-time arrangements can benefit workers and their families.

By contrast, others feel that this kind of employment for women may represent a trade-off of quantity for quality and may eventually lead to paring down benefits such as health care, maternity leave and unemployment insurance.
2.3.3. Women as Business Owners and Managers:

Women are increasingly tuned to self-employment and establishing their own enterprises. In the United States and Canada, women own 30 per cent of all business. In the US, Women are forming small businesses at almost twice the rate of men and employ one worker out of every ten -more people than all the Fortune 500 companies combined. In Latin America, women represent 15 to 20 per cent of all employers, concentrated largely in the commercial and service sectors. Women go into business for themselves for all sorts of reasons, ranging from limited opportunities elsewhere to entrepreneurial drive.

2.3.4. Women and the land:

The women of Africa with very poor technology have managed to feed that continent. They are empowering those Governments that would have collapsed had there been a food crisis. And the women of Asia are empowering their Governments by their informal activities that now compose the breakthrough in Asian trade balances.¹⁸

Subsistence agriculture still dominates the working lives of more than half the world's women. The true value of their labour, says the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), is difficult to measure.

¹⁸ Gertrude Mongella - Secretary-General of the 4th World Conference on Women, Informal Remarks, 8 March, 1994.
In Asia alone, some 375 million landless female labourers — more than Western Europe's entire population — perform exhausting menial chores like weeding, hoeing and milling, while living with the concern that the increasing mechanization of agriculture will deprive them of the seasonal work to which they still have access.

In Africa, women produce 78 per cent of the continent’s food as well as staple grains-on subsistence plots to which the vast majority holds no title. They receive only 2 to 13 per cent of the technical assistance and training provided by extension service. Lack of ownership often bars them from loans that could improve their small and often marginal lands.

Although statistics for Latin America are sparse in large measure because women are seen primarily as housewives, it is estimated that almost half of family income in the overcrowded and poor small-farm sector is generated by women and that on many such holdings, women are replacing men as the mainstay of farm labour.

2.3.5. Women in the Micro-enterprises:

Women today own and operate approximately half of the world’s micro-enterprises according to UN estimates. At a time when the formal job market is failing to provide employment for the 43 million job seekers who now enter the workforce each year, these micro-enterprises furnish between 40 and 66 per cent of urban employment.
Many are extensions of agricultural activities, such as the processing and marketing of home-grown produce and fishing catches. Others comprise cottage crafts such as basketry, weaving, the crafting of clay utensils for cooking and storing food and other handmade products; still others are flourishing services such as trading used goods, dressmaking operations and curbside beauty salons.

The ease of entry to such work makes it a natural option for women who face obstacles in the formal labour market. According to the ILO, the other major characteristics of these informal enterprises are:

- Reliance on local resources;
- Family ownership;
- Small-scale operations;
- Labour-intensive work, using low-cost technology;
- The use of skills acquired outside schooling;
- An irregular and competitive market.

Such micro-businesses have been hailed as evidence of women's resourcefulness and entrepreneurial skill, vital counterparts to failed efforts at industrialization or rural development.

2.3.6. Home working:

A contemporary form of the piecework system in which pay is based on the units produced and which has faded in most affluent societies, "homeworking" provides income -usually at a pittance -to millions of women.
throughout the developing world who are tied to domestic chores, especially child care, throughout the working day.

It includes, for example, the production of lace work and embroidery and the rolling of "beedis", etc. Often, it is the last stage in a sub-contracting chain that assembles or produces goods for Western markets: toys, garments, shoes, lamp shades - and components for high-tech industries.

2.3.7. Child Labour:

To secure family survival, many parents throughout the developing world indenture their children, particularly their daughters, as domestics and slave-like semi-skilled labour in underground enterprises that evade regulations of minimum wages and maximum hours.

In India's match factories, girls below the age of 15 work for up to 10 hours a day. In Peru alone, 1.5 million girls are live-in maids, whose education is often neglected and they are frequently subject to sexual abuse.

2.3.8. Migrant Labour:

While not strictly a characteristic of the informal sector, migrant work often fits in this category. In their search for livelihoods, women are moving not only from the countryside to cities, but from one country to another.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, women's migration has reached the same levels as men's. It is women who give up hearth and family for
work overseas, mainly as housemaids, entertainers (including prostitutes), nurses and helpers in retail shops and restaurants. Many Asian countries have come to rely increasingly on 'the comparative advantage of women's disadvantages.

Because of their relative lack of information and security, women are far more likely than men:

- To be charged exorbitant fees for finding work abroad;
- To find that these jobs involve prostitution or domestic service;
- To be promised wages that are never paid

Another reason why female migrant workers tend to be more vulnerable is that they go into individualized situations, such as domestics in households, where there is greater isolation and lower likelihood of establishing networks of information and support compared to men working in groups, such as on construction sites.
Table 2.1: Economically active population in agriculture and the share of women by major regions, 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/Country</th>
<th>Economically active population in agriculture (in thousands)</th>
<th>Female share (in percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>1,29,210</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near East</td>
<td>33657</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>40,504</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far East</td>
<td>3,24916</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Centrally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Countries</td>
<td>4,63,341</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Developed Countries</td>
<td>1,448</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Countries</td>
<td>9,93,069</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>10,53,002</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4. Women And Work - The Indian Scenario:

Contemporary traditional India is still predominantly a society based on the norms of patriarchy: a society ruled by an ideology of female subordination with the economic controls firming in male hands. What is considered to be appropriate - whether it is in the form of marriage, female demeanour, or the nature of women's work - is closely linked with the family's position in the social-status hierarchy. The family's caste ranking, and a community's ethnic ranking constrain women for more than men by the status-hierarchy of work, confining them to certain areas or kinds of work and excluding them from certain others. It is a fact that "age-long traditions and work-out customs still block their (women's) way" which prevents women from rising to the full stature of "being fully human".

In India the term 'career girl' is often used in a derogatory sense and a 'career women' is viewed as an aggressive and unfeminine creature who adopts a profession as a compensation for emotional unfulfilment or because she is compelled by the harsh economic realities of life. Besides, society and people are prejudiced against the employment of a mother with young children. It is argued that the long absence of mother from home

19. According to Manu: "A woman is not entitled to independence; her father protects her in her maidenhood, her husband in her youth, and her son in her old age". Manu Smriti IX.3.
hampers the development of child's personality. Another source of tension arises out of contradictory sex-roles-contradictory expectations from a working women while she is at work and at home. The attainment of the goal of marriage for a woman in India requires self-negation and cooperation, while the achievement of the goal of being a successful working women, requires self-enhancement and competition. To be successful in a job a women has to be assertive whereas, to be successful in marriage the women has still to be submissive.\textsuperscript{23}

Until recently, in India as in many other developing countries, the role of women in the economic activity of the nation was practically ignored. The recommendations of the United Nations World Conference (Mexico, 1975) to declare 1975-85 as the International Women's Decade and to initiate plans for raising the status of women and for ensuring their full involvement and integration in the process of development at all levels, helped at last to focus attention on the problems specific to women such as the steadily declining trend of their participation in the work-force in India. Detailed analysis of available data on employment in India points to the fact that in the recent decades there has been a reduction in the number of women workers as well as in their work participation rates. One obvious hypothesis is that the Indian economic scene featured by growing unemployment and sluggish growth of income per head had failed to provide

\textsuperscript{23} Promilla Kapoor, "The changing status of the working woman in India", 1990, pp.119-20.
sufficient opportunity or incentive to attract many of the potential workers, most of them female, into the work-force.24

Today, economic independence is considered to be the prime basis for improving the status of women in India. It is generally agreed that women's participation in economic activities would result in reducing their dependency, enhancing their social and economic status, as well as empowering them to assert more in the household decisions.

In India, the major data sources on work participation are the Decennial Population Censuses and the quinquennial surveys of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). Among other sources, the Employment Market Information (EMI) programme of the Ministry of Labour provides data on levels of employment of women in the organised sector of the economy. As women are mainly concentrated in the unorganised sector, women's work participation even in urban areas is grossly under-estimated. Though the decennial population census has a more complete enumeration, however, it has been conducted at a point of time using a single concept. It also has the problem of changing reference period for the identification of 'worker', and their placement in different categories has been varying, and 1991 census had no definitional problem but because of extra emphasis to capture the female work participation through various means including gender

sensitisation among the enumerators and the respondents, the change has turned out to be quite revealing during 1981-91.

The census of India defines 'work' as participation in any economically productive activity. It is measured in terms of time of the labour free concept, and people are classified as workers or non-workers since 1961. The concept was further refined to distinguish between 'main activity' and 'secondary activity' in the 1971 census. These were termed 'main' and 'marginal' work in the 1981 census and the distinctions continue. Since a lot of work done by women and children were unpaid work on farms or in family enterprises, the 1991 census included special questions to ascertain this and bring them into the National System of Accounts. There seems to be a social reluctance to recognize the work done by women. This renders women as well as their contribution to the economy through their work, invisible.
Table 2.2 : Profile of working population as per 1991 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Population</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population (million)</td>
<td>838.6</td>
<td>435.2</td>
<td>403.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers (million)</td>
<td>314.1</td>
<td>224.4</td>
<td>89.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of workers to population (Work Participation Rate)</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of male and female workers to total workers</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers in rural areas (million)</td>
<td>249.0</td>
<td>168.6</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of workers in rural areas to total workers</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>89.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers in urban areas (million)</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of workers in urban areas to total workers</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main workers (million)*</td>
<td>285.9</td>
<td>221.6</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Main workers to total workers</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of male and female workers to total main workers</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal workers (million)**</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Marginal workers to total workers</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of male and female workers to total marginal workers</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : Census 1991

* Workers getting work for 183 or more days in a year.

** Workers getting work for less than 183 in a year.

The rates of work participation of women through the last two decadal Census periods have, however, been rising. The rise has been quite significant and substantial. The work participation rates of men on the other hand have been quite sluggish and even retrogressive. In fact, it is the significantly increasing work participation of women which has contributed to the rise in the overall work participation rates. Data are presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Work Participation Rates, 1971-1991, India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workers</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971 (main &amp; secondary)</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981 (main &amp; marginal)</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991 (main &amp; marginal)</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4.2. Employment in the organised and unorganised sectors:

The General Trend

Unorganised sector of employment is expanding with a labour force growth at 1.5 per cent and the organised sector with a growth of less than 1 per cent. This has been primarily due to a sharp reduction in employment growth rate in the public sector. Growth of private sector jobs has accelerated after 1994 and has been much higher than public sector in the recent year.

2.4.3 Women in the Organised Sector:

A large majority of workers, of course, is in the unorganised sector. Out of 368.7 million workers (1998) in the workforce, 28.2 million accounting for 7.6% are in the organised sector and 340.5 million accounting for 92.4% are in the unorganised sector. Only 4.8 million women workers (forming 16.9% of the workforce in the organised sector) are in the organised sector employed in various industry divisions as shown in Table 2.4. It is, however, significant that women's share of work in the organised sector increased from 11% in 1971 to 16.9% in 1998 and further to 17.4% in 2000. (Table 2.5).

2.4.4. Workers in Census 2001:

As per the Census 2001, the total number of workers has 402.51 million, consisting of 313.17 million main workers and 89.24 million marginal
workers whereas in Census 1991, the corresponding number were 314.13 million, 285.93 million and 28.20 million, respectively, giving an annual growth of 2.51 per cent (total), 0.91 per cent (main) and 12.22 per cent (marginal).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Main</th>
<th>Marginal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>12.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>29.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>7.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>11.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>29.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>7.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>19.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>28.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>11.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4
Intercensus (1991-2001)
Growth Rate of Workers
Table 2.5

Percentage of Women in the Organised Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>12.20</td>
<td>1410</td>
<td>15.40</td>
<td>15.80</td>
<td>16.40</td>
<td>16.90</td>
<td>17.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Manpower Profile India, Year Book, 2000.*

The comparative picture of employment of women in the organised sector between 1971 and 1998 brings out the following factors:

- Total employment in the organised sector rose from 1.87 million to 4.77 million;

- The sharp rise was in the public sector which rose from 0.86 million to 2.76 million;

- The rise of employment in the private sector was proportionately lesser, increasing from 1.06 million to 2.01 million;

- The highest increase of employment of women was in the community, personal and social services division in the public sector;

- The increase of employment in the private sector was in manufacturing, which has doubled from 0.4 million to 0.8 million;

- The sector of employment that emerged in a big way was Financial, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services with larger employment in the public sector than in the private sector;
Increase in the Proportion of Women in the Organised Sector (Public and Private)

Since 1991, employment growth rate in public and private sectors has been going down. From 1.52% in 1991 it has come down to “nil” in 1999 in the public sector. During this period, the decline in the private sector was from 1.24% to 0.11%. In the organised sector as a whole the decline was from 1.44% to 0.04%.

Table 2.6

Growth Rates of Employment in Organised Sector (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Public Sector</th>
<th>Private Sector</th>
<th>Total Organised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>(-)0.19</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>(-)0.09</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Central Government, State Governments, quasi-governmental institutions and local bodies continue to be the major source of organised sector employment for women. The State Governments have the largest share of the public sector employment followed by local bodies. Large establishments in the Private Sector employ larger number of women than smaller establishments, but the share of women’s employment is higher in the latter. Details are furnished in Table 2.7 below:

Table 2.7
Distribution of women Employed in the Organised Sector (in lakhs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>Variation of women employees 1999/1971 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLIC SECTOR</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Government</td>
<td>27.60</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Governments</td>
<td>41.50</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>8.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quasi-Central and State</td>
<td>19.23</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local bodies</td>
<td>18.78</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>18.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>107.10</td>
<td>8.61</td>
<td>8.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRIVATE SECTOR</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large establishments</td>
<td>67.40</td>
<td>10.63</td>
<td>15.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small establishments</td>
<td>9.28</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>29.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>67.40</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>15.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>174.50</td>
<td>19.24</td>
<td>11.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Directorate General of Employment and Training.

*Figures were not separately maintained for large and small establishments in 1971, hence percentage variation has been worked out in respect of total private sector employment of 1999 in relation to "maintained" data of 1971.
Table 2.8
Employment of Women in Organised Sector, Public and Private by Selected States

(in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Public Sector</th>
<th>Private Sector</th>
<th>Higher growth rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1971 1999</td>
<td>1971 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>55.4 216.4</td>
<td>99.1 182.9</td>
<td>Public Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>14.3 79.3</td>
<td>184.0 308.6</td>
<td>Public Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>56.9 151.7</td>
<td>40.3 78.5</td>
<td>Public Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>52.7 232.5</td>
<td>56.8 310.0</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>61.1 191.4</td>
<td>150.0 281.0</td>
<td>Public Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>59.9 160.9</td>
<td>24.7 27.7</td>
<td>Public Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>138.4 350.7</td>
<td>101.8 207.9</td>
<td>Public Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>32.6 106.0</td>
<td>8.7 32.3</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>26.3 129.3</td>
<td>15.5 42.0</td>
<td>Public Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamilnadu</td>
<td>97.6 412.8</td>
<td>129.4 324.9</td>
<td>Public Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>82.1 184.4</td>
<td>34.2 54.0</td>
<td>Public Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Negating Growth in Private Sector)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>49.5 117.5</td>
<td>144.6 133.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All India</td>
<td>860.8 2829.1</td>
<td>1062.8 2101.8</td>
<td>Public Sector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Manpower Profile, India, Year Book, 2000.
2.4.5. Employment of Women in Factories, Mines and Plantations:

Be it in the public or private sector, factories, mines and plantation account for substantial numbers of women employees. Women's employment in all three of these areas has undergone significant change since 1970-71. During this period, women's employment in factories has increased by near about 2.5 lakhs. Employment in mines and plantations has declined drastically – the former from 75,000 to 39,000 and the latter from 6.39 lakhs to 4.12 lakhs. The increase of women's employment in factories is to be seen in the context of expansion of industrialisation in general over the years. So far as the mines are concerned, the policy has generally been one of excluding women from hazardous operations and hence the continued declining trend of women's employment. The problems of the plantation industry, particularly, tea and coffee plantations are stiff international competition and costs involved in replantation and rejuvenation. In the face of these problems employment generally tend to get adversely affected. Women accounting for nearly 50% of employment in plantations are also affected.

2.4.6. Women in Higher Civil Service:

The increased access to higher education for women has made it feasible for larger numbers of them to compete for higher positions in Government. Indeed, a larger numbers of women have appeared and succeeded in competitive examinations to various services. The proportion of women in Central employment rose from 67000 to 2,89,000, that is, from 2.51% in 1971 to 7.58% in 1991. Amongst the All India Services, women's repre-
sentation is the highest in the Indian Postal Service (17.5% to 21.5%). Next in rank come the Indian Audit and Accounts Service, Indian Information Service (over 15%) and Indian Revenue Service (about 10 to 12%). Representation in the Indian Foreign Service ranges from over 10% to about 14% and in the Indian Administrative Service 9% to 10%. In rest of the Services, representation is less than 7%. The lowest representation is in the Indian Police Service and Indian Forest Service (2% to 3%). Administrative, Foreign, Police and Forest Services are more field oriented involving a great deal of executive responsibilities. There is seeming bias against women in recruitment to these services.

2.4.7. Employment in the Unorganised Sector:

In the unorganised sector, the largest employment of women (over 56 million) is in the production of cereals. The other employments in which more than one million workers are engaged are cattle and goat breeding and milk production (9 million), beedi manufacture (1.7 million), textile manufacture (1.1 million), educational services (1.2 million) and domestic services (1.2 million).

According to an estimate by the National Commission on Self-Employed Women (1988); of the total women workers about 94% are in Unorganized sector alone, whereas just 6% of them are in the organized or formal sector. Thus there is no exaggeration in saying that the unorganised sector in India is the women’s sector.
The women workers in unorganised sector covers most of those activities which are carried out by small and family enterprises, partly or wholly with family labour, which are largely non-unionised. The most common characteristics of this sector are the small size of establishment, often consisting of only one individual, with perhaps a couple of hired workers, casual nature of employment, ignorant and illiterate workers, superior and dominating employer and scattered nature of establishment. This sector is either not covered by labour legislations at all or establishments are so scattered that the implementation of the legislation is very inadequate and ineffective. There are hardly any unions in this sector to act as watchdogs.

The workers of this sector work as pieceworkers, the self-employed workers, the paid workers in informal enterprises, the unpaid workers in family business, the casual workers without fixed employer, the sub-contract workers linked to informal enterprises, and also the sub-contract workers linked to formal enterprises. Some of these workers can be practically classified as the entrepreneurs who tend to be the best educated category of unorganised sector workers. These are normally the owners of the establishment who most often are the principal workers as well as the employers.

The second category of these workers can be the establishment workers who are employed by the entrepreneurs. They are usually employed on a regular, full-time basis, and have relatively high skill levels. They may have limited formal schooling as well.
The third category may constitute *the independent workers*. While they may work for wages, they are basically self-employed. Rickshaw drivers, street vendors and hawkers, bicycle, clock and shoe repairmen, producers of earthenware and leather products, and laundry men and sweet cake bakers, are but a few of the multitude of individuals who perform daily tasks in the streets, along village roads and in the rural communities. They provide simple but essential services, independently but are restricted by the generally low market value of their product or service.

The fourth and the last category of workers which may be considered to constitute the unorganised sector are *the casual workers*. These workers are the most disadvantaged category. Their jobs rely heavily on manual labour. Household workers make up the largest group, with gardeners, cleaners and sweepers also accounting for significant numbers. Construction labourers, watchmen, spinners and weavers fill other typical casual jobs. Casual workers are the least educated category. Most of them are illiterate and few have completed more than two or three years of school.

Although there are not clear definitions of the informal sector, it often refers to activities typically at a low level of organisation and technology, with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes. The activities are usually conducted without proper recognition from authorities, and escape the attention of the administrative machinery responsible for enforcing laws and regulations.
Because this sector is very diverse and encompasses many types of work, so it is very difficult to classify it into a specific group as uniform. Although the unorganised sector and organised sector are classified into separate sectors, but there is no clear divide between them since they are interdependent and provide services for each other. The unorganised sector works in cooperation with, rather than in isolation from the organised sector. Generally the difference is the fact that the workers in the unorganised sector are often largely unaware of their rights, can not organise themselves, and have little or no bargaining power with their employers and intermediaries. The workers in the unorganised sector are not capable of building up such bargaining strength because of lack of superior skills and trade unions, and therefore continue to work under inferior working conditions.

Even though, the unorganised sector has been the most vulnerable and ignored sector in India, but it holds an inevitably very important place in Indian economy. The structural adjustment programmes and technological innovations in last decade of the 20th century in India have pushed a majority of workers in this sector consequently making it the largest sector of Indian economy. According to one statistic, 93% of the India's total working force are in this sector. They along with their family members and the marginal farmers and self-employed workers, constitute 95% of the country's population, thus leaving just 5% of the population of the country covered by organised sector. The accepted figure of employment of this sector is 93% of the workforce, including agriculture and the contribution to total net value added by industry stood 63.5% in 1992-93.
Thus, there is no exaggeration in saying that the backbone of Indian workforce is the unorganised sector and not the organised one. Yet there is tendency to ignore this vast mass of work-force as these millions who belong to unorganised sector are politically powerless and economically weak. More than 60% of the population of the country depends upon the earnings of the unorganised sector workers for their livelihood. Hence there is an urgent need to give top priority to the issues and problems of the women workers of unorganised sector. Unless women's role as producers and workers are recognised by making them 'visible' and 'integrated' into the development process the pace of economic growth may be stunted or lopsided by depriving female labour force of the opportunity of its being counted as 'human capital' however potential that might be.25